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Employee engagement: a mediator between organizational inducements and industry loyalty among workers in the hospitality industry in Uganda

Changha George^a, Otengei Samson Omuudu^a, and Kasekende Francis^{b,c}

^aDepartment of Leisure, Hospitality & Tourism Management, Makerere University Business School, Kampala, Uganda; ^bSchool of Business & Information Technology, Nkumba University, Entebbe, Uganda; ^cDepartment of Human Resource Management, Makerere University Business School, Kampala, Uganda

ABSTRACT

The paper reports findings on the mediating effect of employee engagement on the relationship between organizational inducements (financial rewards and career development support) and industry loyalty among employees in the hospitality industry. A two-step approach namely; (1) Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to generate a measurement model; and (2) Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to test the hypotheses, confirmed fully mediated relationships. A proposed model is robust enough to cause a 22.6% variance in industry loyalty. The study provides a theoretical explanation for the enhancement of industry loyalty with engagement as a major driver and, presents its policy and managerial implications.

KEY WORDS

Employee engagement; organizational inducements; financial rewards; career development support; industry loyalty

Introduction

Many studies have shifted their attention from the negative employee related concepts to increasing employee engagement in the organization (Burke, Koyuncu, Jing, & Fiksenbaum, 2009; Schoffstall, Brown, & Arendt, 2017). This practical interest in workers engagement has outstripped the existing research evidence bent on negative concepts and emotions such as intent to quit employment. However, while employee engagement has received some attention in research, it is still an emerging psychological concept that needs further investigation to understand better its antecedents and consequences (Eldor, 2016; Karatepe, 2011; Saks, 2006). Moreover, many earlier works have mainly attempted to investigate this concept at firm level but macro or/and industry perspectives are grossly ignored (Maha & Saoud, 2014; Presbitero, 2017).

By “employee engagement” the researchers mean a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication and

absorption (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, & Bakker, 2002, p. 74). Employee engagement impacts firm performance through increased productivity (Eldor, 2016), job satisfaction and most importantly, organizational and industry loyalty (Maha & Saoud, 2014). Regrettably, employee mobility has remained a major challenge across the hospitality industry enterprises. Besides, an emerging and a more worrisome trend is that hospitality workers usually end up exiting the industry completely (Zopiatis, Theocharous, & Constanti, 2017). The industry, despite its growth as a professional field, is renowned for unfavorable practices toward employees and, is struck by higher job turnover rates compared to other industries (Ryan, Ghazali, & Mohsin, 2011). The sector is associated with long and unsocial working hours, uncertain career development support, unwarranted use of high levels of casual workers, and low, delayed or no payments at all. These cruel practices, inadequate and wanting industry inducements seem to negatively affect attraction, engagement and retention of hospitality graduates and employees (Brown, Bosselman, & Thomas, 2016). Certainly, the industry appears to offer employment terms and conditions, probably suitable for people on vocation or those waiting for a better opportunity elsewhere (Mkono, 2010). Employee inter-firm mobility and industry exit thus, remain a perennial challenge (Blomme, van Rheede, & Tromp, 2010).

The disastrous practices in the industry have been reported in many countries (see Zopiatis et al. 2017). In Uganda, majority of hospitality graduates and workers leave the industry for other promising sectors as they get frustrated and consequently fail to identify with their chosen career (Otengei, Changha, Kasekende, & Ntayi, 2017). This affects industry loyalty, making it potentially difficult for individuals to pursue and develop a career in the catering and hotel management profession (Barron, 2008). Despite various recommendations on best human resources management practices and initiatives that could fit the industry, no remedies seem to work so far. Undoubtedly, the potential solution seems to rotate around the concept of organizational inducements as a paramount precondition for work engagement, especially with regard employee retention and industry loyalty. Poor inducements seem to be a major reason for employee exit in the hospitality industry (Lee, Kwon, Kim, & Cho, 2016). Given this fundamental evidence, there is need to assess more complex details between organizational inducements and employee industry loyalty.

To the best of the researchers' knowledge, a dearth of studies has investigated the relationship between key organizational inducements, employee engagement and industry loyalty, especially in the hospitality industry perspective. In this study, the main concern is on employee exit from the industry rather than cross-organizational mobility within the sector, an aspect largely ignored by earlier works. All the constructs were derived from Blau's (1964) social exchange theory of employment relationship

which subsequently led to organizational support theory. The latter explains how organizational support affects the behavior of employees (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa 1986).

Consequently, the purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between organizational inducements and industry loyalty of hotel employees and to evaluate the mediating effects of employee engagement on the organizational inducements – industry loyalty relationship.

Specifically, the study was guided by the following objectives:

1. Determine the relationship between organizational inducements (financial rewards and career development support) and industry loyalty among employees in the hospitality industry in Uganda.
2. Determine the relationship between organizational inducements (financial rewards and career development support) and work engagement among employees in the hospitality industry in Uganda.
3. Analyze the relationship between work engagement and industry loyalty among employees in the hospitality industry in Uganda.
4. Determine the mediating effect of engagement on the relationship between organizational inducements (financial rewards and career development support) and industry loyalty among employees in the hospitality industry in Uganda.

Literature review and hypotheses development

The social exchange theory, employee engagement and loyalty

Blau's social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) derived from industrial-organizational psychology has been put forward as one of the most prominent to explain employment related attitude and behavior (Andrew & Sofian, 2012; Saks, 2006). The theory posits that an employment relationship is an exchange mechanism in which an employer gives inducements in return for employee commitment to the firm. The underlying tenet in the theory is the norm of reciprocity by which obligations on the part of one party to the exchange create reciprocal obligations for the other party (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960). Organizational inducements are considered invaluable and accurate tools in human resource management that elicit positive work-related employee attitudes and behavior, giving the hospitality enterprise a competitive advantage (Devi, 2009; Weaver, 2009). The social exchange theory suggests that employees reciprocate the inducements offered by the employer with the energy and time they spend in the organization (Saks, 2006) and subsequently become loyal to both, the firm and the industry in general (Lee et al., 2016). The current study extends this philosophy by examining the relationship between

organizational inducements, employee engagement and loyalty using perspectives from the hospitality industry in Uganda.

Financial rewards and employee industry loyalty

Earlier works show that organizational inducements are numerous (Muse & Wadsworth, 2012) but for the hospitality industry, financial rewards appear to be one of the most critical factors (Barron, 2008; Joo-Ee, 2016). Financial rewards are 'payments by the organizations to participants, independent of utility' (March & Simon, 1958, p. 84). As part of the total remuneration, financial rewards are noted to be an important ingredient for attraction of best talent and its retention (Mascho & Mao, 2017). Many scholars have reported financial rewards as the most influential factor in an employee's assessment of a job position's attractiveness and industry's appeal (Amissah, Gamor, Deri & Amissah, 2016). This may be because financial remuneration gives employees assurance to fulfill their basic security and economic needs, especially with today's tight economic settings. Undeniably, a number of studies have found that both hospitality students and industry employees value salary scales most (Schoffstall et al., 2017; Weaver, 2009). In an investigation of hospitality students' attitude toward their study program and their intention to stay in the industry, it was found that the respondents were afraid of poor industry inducements, and inadequate salary was on top of the list (Ezeuduji, Chibe, & Nyathela's, 2017).

In their seminal work, Akerlof (1984) and Yellen (1984) conjecture that financial inducements create loyalty and that paying a higher wage than the market average helps to retain employees. These authors also argue that people may accept a given salary when joining the industry but later on seek other jobs with a better salary. In other words, an employee keeps the industry tenure as long as he/she perceives that the remuneration is better than other industries and that the pay gives the employee satisfaction. In an investigation of front line employees in the hotel industry, it was found that financial rewards correlate positively and significantly with job satisfaction and the general attitude of the employees (Bustamam, Teng, & Abdullah, 2014). Specifically, Zopiatis et al. (2017) tested the relationship between extrinsic job satisfaction predictors, which included pay and the intention to stay in the industry and, the results revealed a positive and significant association. This is parallel to the notion that remuneration, especially financial reward is not only important for competent talent attraction but is also imperative in its retention. Actually, Mascho and Mao (2017) found that hotel employees who are not contented with the industry compensation, including financial rewards may stay but, will probably remain

disgruntled and render poor service. In this regard, hospitality firms are recommended to remunerate their employees commensurately with their education level, expertise and cost of living (Mascho & Mao, 2017).

However, despite the enormous support for attractive financial rewards, critics contend that salary and other financial incentives are only important in attracting employees to an organization but do not make them stay (Smith, 2000; Walsh & Taylor; 2007). In fact, Deeptose (1994) opines that monetary rewards per se may not be enough to satisfy workers but their absence may lead to job dissatisfaction. This is supported by Ashton (2018) who found a non-significant relationship between high pay and job satisfaction among hotel employees. Likewise, Min (2007) found that lack of competitive pay and favorable fringe benefits are not primary causes of turnover. Generally, recent works that critique the role of financial rewards emphasize that their effect on employee attitude and intentions depends on the value a particular worker attaches to the reward (Ashton, 2018). Similarly, Gunlu, Aksarayli and Perçin (2010) emphasized that pay may contribute to a person's extrinsic job satisfaction and fastens the worker to the employer because of obligation but, not necessarily as a result of affectivity. This suggests that financial rewards may lead to stay in the industry, basing on perceived employment obligation and probability of employability outside the current industry but not automatically that someone loves the industry. This view corroborates well with some research findings that have indicated an insignificant relationship between financial inducements and organization citizenship (Lee, Iijima, & Reade, 2011; Shore, Tetrick, Lynch, & Barksdale, 2006; Zhao & Zhou, 2008). Their findings proved that paying employees basing on their work output may correlate with employee loyalty but it does not predict loyalty.

In the current study, the researchers note that whereas a lot of research has been conducted on the cause-and-effect associations among the latent variables under investigation, there still remains a glaring divergence in the existing empirical findings and declarations. In addition, most of the earlier studies have been conducted in first-class economies. It would be interesting to study these relationships, in a much less developed country like Uganda. Moreover, such a study would be more informative if is conducted at the industry level capturing macro perspectives rather than firm level. Furthermore, although the foregoing discourse suggests that loyalty is a very important construct that has been adequately investigated, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, its development is just emerging and not well researched in the catering and hospitality operations. For these reasons, the following hypothesis is put forward:

Hypothesis (H1a): There is a positive relationship between financial inducements and industry loyalty among employees in the hospitality industry in Uganda.

Career development support and employee industry loyalty

Career development support includes availing opportunities such as chances for promotion, training and all other skill development related activities which enhance workers' employability both within and outside the company (Butler & Waldrop, 1999). Drawing on Amissah et al. (2016), hotels need to establish avenues and better policies for promoting and supporting workers who qualify for career advancement as a strategy to encourage employees to stay. In a study of a lodging establishment, the findings revealed that effective implementation of training programs increased job satisfaction and leads to reduced turnover (Choi & Dickson, 2009). These authors argued that training managers on best human resource management especially on career support practices helps them to effectively and efficiently perform their work and their subordinates are the ultimate beneficiaries. Indeed, hospitality establishments are urged to include career development opportunities as a way to improve their human capital, and as part of an overall business strategy to attract, develop and retain talent (Mascho & Mao, 2017).

On the contrary, Spence (1973) and Forbe (1987) in their maiden works demonstrated that career advancement exacerbates external job mobility in the Labor market. According to these scholars, career growth opportunities such as training strengthen general human capital, thus, facilitating employee exit intentions (Lazear, 1986). They reason that career development initiatives increase individuals' market value but reduce work commitment, thus inducing external employee mobility (Becker, 1962; Shaw, Delery, Jenkins, & Gupta, 1998). Many researchers have also argued that for effective career development initiatives, improvement in organizational human capital needs to be matched with an increase in compensation, otherwise it can instead promote turnover (Mascho & Mao, 2017). In fact, James, McKechnie, and Swanberg (2011) in their later works reported that career development does not predict loyalty among older workers. This is supported by many other studies which suggest that workers and prospective employees tend to be more loyal to the organization as they start work, but this declines with tenure in the industry (Ezeuduji et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2016).

Given the current economic recession coupled with high unemployment rates and, where employees are increasingly faced with job insecurity and benefit reductions as firms strategize to survive, there is need for further studies to unearth the extent to which hospitality employees adapt to the new practices and accept to stay (Lee et al., 2016). Despite the strenuous industry and economic conditions, the researchers think that well-designed career-development pathways and reliable support frameworks could still serve as positive amplifiers for employee industry loyalty. Motivated by

contradictions in literature, the researchers think there is need for further investigation to shade more light on the relationship between career development support and loyalty especially using employee viewpoints in the hospitality industry where the levels of exist are likely to be on increase. This led us to the following hypotheses

Hypothesis (H1b): There is a positive relationship between career development support and industry loyalty among employees in the hospitality industry in Uganda.

Financial rewards and employee engagement

Employee engagement is a theme related to interest in the job and amount of time dedicated to it. Yener, Yaldiran and Ergun (2012, p. 726) describe the three elements of engagement as: 1) Vigor - feeling oneself highly energetic and willing to work even in the face of difficulties. 2) Dedication - feeling a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride and pertains to strong involvement. 3) Absorption - characterized by being fully concentrated and deeply engrossed in one's work. When feeling absorbed one becomes insensible of time and has difficulties with detaching oneself from work." Financial rewards on the other hand are 'payments by the organizations to participants, independent of utility' (March & Simon, 1958, p. 84). Earlier works show that organizational inducements are numerous (Muse & Wadsworth, 2012) but for the hospitality industry, remuneration appears to be one of the most critical (Barron, 2008; Joo-Ee, 2016).

Many studies have found that both hospitality students and industry employees value salary scales most (Lu & Adler, 2009; O'Leary & Deegan, 2005; Schoffstall et al., 2017; Weaver, 2009). Jung and Yoon (2015) investigated the impact of pay satisfaction on job engagement and withdrawal in deluxe hotels and they found that pay level, rise and structure have significant effect on work engagement. Through a study on the attitude of hospitality students toward their study program and their intention to work in the industry, the respondents expressed their fears of poor industry inducements, and salary structure was on top of the list (Ezeuduji et al., 2017). According to Lee and Lin (2014), when employees feel that they are being paid less than the average Labor market rate, they become unsatisfied, make less contribution to the company and industry, and feel exhausted, wanting to quit. Lee and colleague found a significant relationship between salary satisfaction and job enthusiasm.

However, while many scholars find that good remuneration is significantly related to work engagement, some scholars have reported non-significant results (e.g., Choi & Joung, 2017). According to Giancola (2012), the role of pay in attracting, engaging and retaining employees seems to remain controversial and, that no solid evidence has been provided on the

outcomes of pay especially in terms of employee engagement in different organizational settings, firm-size, job position, and varying economic times. It is contended that linking pay with engagement is complex and, consequently, some researchers recommend analyzing the relationship in contextual settings instead of relying on universal models (Brown & Reilly, 2013). For example, existing empirical evidence shows that some hotel employees that are discontented with financial rewards may decide to stay for other reasons, but will remain disgruntled and render poor service (Mascho & Mao, 2017). Given that employee expectations are usually clear and easily distinguishable, literature on organizational behavior has pointed to the need to understand the effects of employer obligations on the attitudes and behaviors of individuals at work (Giallonardo, Wong, & Iwasiw, 2010).

In accordance with the social exchange theory and reciprocity norms, it can be posited that hospitality employees, because they usually receive less support from employers tend to exhibit less discretionary behaviors (Zopiatis et al., 2017; Ryan et al., 2011; Brown et al., 2016). The above revelations render support for Herzberg's (1958) motivation-hygiene theory. According to Herzberg's (1958) theory, job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are distinct and they are caused by different factors. The researchers note from the extant literature that research results have been inconclusive and inconsistent (Muldoon, Liguori, & Bendickson, 2013). Thus, this study assessing the view-points of hospitality employees was guided by the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis (H2a): There is a positive relationship between financial rewards and employee engagement among employees in the hospitality industry in Uganda.

Career development support and employee engagement

Career development support includes availing opportunities for promotion, training and all skill development initiatives which enhance workers' employability both within and outside the company (Butler & Waldrop, 1999). Earlier works have shown that career development interventions significantly predict employee engagement (e.g. Amisshah et al., 2016; Ashton, 2018). When employees are convinced that the existing career development structure and policy in the organization allows them to be promoted, they become more engaged in work (Presbitero, 2017; Sendawula, Kimuli, Bananuka, & Muganga, 2018). Organizational cultures that are characterized by considerable growth opportunities, skills enhancement and abundant training opportunities can contribute to employee engagement (Devi, 2009). Specifically, Presbitero (2017) in a hotel chain study found that positive changes in training bring positive changes in the level of employee engagement. Amisshah et al. (2016) recommend hotels to establish avenues

for promoting workers who qualify and that they (hotels) should be able to create fair promotion policies as a strategy to encourage employees to stay and work hard. The explanation is that when the hotel invests in employees, they might feel their importance and, they reciprocate with a higher level of dedication toward the fulfillment of the tasks assigned to them (Mascho & Mao, 2017).

However, in a study among workers in private hospitals, Tones, Pillay, and Fraser (2010) found that pursuit of further learning and development goals at work predicts intention to reduce work hours. Likewise, Poon (2013) investigated the predictive effect of perceived career support on work engagement and the results indicated that this relationship could only occur when it is mediated by affective commitment. Also in a study examining the relationship between perceived training intensity, perceived supervisory support and work effort, a non-significant association was revealed (Dysvik, Kuvaas, & Buch, 2014). Besides, recent empirical works have recently shown that career development support does not predict engagement among older workers (James et al., 2011). While young workers are usually very determined and tend to pursue their chosen career with vigor, the old workers usually decline and withdraw their enthusiasm (Lee et al., 2016; Weaver, 2009). This is in line with Ezeuduji et al. (2017) who argue that employees and prospective employees are normally more engaged and loyal as they start work, but this declines with tenure in the profession.

The above discussion demonstrates that there is a sharp dichotomy in the existing literature. Thus, coupled with the current scarcity of industry engagement frameworks and, the lack of systematic empirical evidence for workforce behaviors in hospitality firms, there is need for more context specific studies to validate the existing assumptions. Moreover, espousing the notion that employees reciprocate inducements with their energy and time in the organization (Blau, 1964), the researchers postulate that hospitality employees can positively respond to the industry inducements such as career development support with work engagement. The researchers thus, hypothesize as follows:

Hypothesis (H2b): There is a positive relationship between career development support and employee engagement among employees in the hospitality industry in Uganda.

Employee engagement and industry loyalty

Loyalty is arguably one of the greatest challenges in talent management in the hospitality industry (Thomas, Brown, & Thomas, 2017; Zopiatis et al., 2017). Yet, given the idiosyncratic nature of hospitality service, the inseparability of service from its providers, employee attitude and behavioral

intentions play a key role in ensuring quality service encounters and customer satisfaction (Amissah et al., 2016; Choi & Joung, 2017). Extant literature suggests numerous factors that may influence loyalty at firm level (Chalkiti & Sigala, 2010; Huang, Lin, & Chuang, 2006). In this study, the researchers examine the role of employee work engagement using the industry lens. By “industry loyalty”, the researchers mean an individual’s attachment to an industry and in this case, the hospitality industry. The construct is adopted from the brand loyalty concept, which refers to “an attitude a customer has toward a brand (Allen & Meyer, 1990). From service marketing perspective, loyalty consists of attitudinal and behavioral loyalty such as positive word-of-mouth, intention to stay, benefit insensitivity, and complaining (Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996).

Industry loyalty may thus, be seen to comprise of positive feelings and behaviors exhibited and expressed by workers toward their profession and industry. According to Zopiatis et al. (2017), engagement of the individual in the profession has a positive correlation with loyalty to the organization and industry. In the hospitality service environment, employees who are highly engaged will easily overcome the challenging conditions, and are more likely to stay in the industry (Lee et al., 2016; Saks, 2006). According to Devi (2009), engaged employees express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally as they carry their duties, and they are less likely to leave the job. Many other works have found a significant relationship between engagement and loyalty (Barnes & Collier, 2013; Burke et al., 2009).

However, the debate on the relationship between employee engagement and loyalty seems to remain inconclusive. Some scholars contend that employee loyalty precedes engagement (Devi, 2009; Ibrahim & Al Falasi, 2014; Nassar, 2017). Others, such as Burke and colleagues (2009) in a study of potential antecedents and consequences of work engagement, found that while dedication positively predicts job outcomes, absorption surprisingly, negatively predict these work outcomes. Notwithstanding the debate and inconsistencies, the existing theories and most empirical findings indicate that the two constructs are associated. In this study, it is hypothesized that

Hypothesis (H3): There is a positive relationship between employee engagement and industry loyalty among the employees in the hospitality industry in Uganda.

The mediating role of employee engagement

Building on earlier theorizations and conceptualizations, this study hypothesizes that employee engagement is as a result of organizational inducements (financial incentives and career development support) that then translates the latter into industry loyalty (Andrew & Sofian, 2012;

Saks, 2006; Shore et al., 2006). Most of the earlier studies provide evidence of consequences and the intervening role of employee engagement in organizations. As shown in the previous sections, existing literature suggests an association between organizational inducements and employee engagement (Amissah et al., 2016; Ashton, 2018; Simon, 2012), and between inducements, engagement and loyalty (Barnes & Collier, 2013; Burke, et al., 2009; Devi, 2009; Lee et al., 2016).

If the above are true, then it is logical to test for the mediation effect of engagement (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Hair et al., 2010). In fact, Rosenberg (1968) and Jose (2008) aver that a co-relational study that does not address the mediating mechanism ends up with facts, but with an incomplete understanding. Specifically, studies that link organizational inducements to industry loyalty with work engagement as a conduit have remained few and contradictory. A few examples include Karatepe (2013), who investigated work engagement as a mediator of the effects of perceptions of organizational politics on affective organizational commitment, extra-role performance, and turnover intentions among front line employees. The results indicated that work engagement correlates positively with affective commitment but negatively with turnover.

Besides, previous works could have been more informative if the critical indicators or observed variables and their relationship with latent variables had been confirmed. The need for a more rich understanding of pertinent factors responsible for steadfast engagement among the employees in the hospitality industry is rather unavoidable. Thus, coupled with the current scarcity of employee engagement frameworks, data and material ambiguities, and lack of systematic empirical evidence for hospitality firms, there is need for more context specific studies to authenticate the existing assumptions. Thus, the study using the employee perspectives in the hospitality sector in Uganda set out to address the following central hypotheses:

Hypothesis (H4a): Employee engagement mediates the relationship between financial rewards and industry loyalty among employees in the hospitality industry in Uganda.

Hypothesis (H4b): Employee engagement mediates the relationship between career development support and industry loyalty among employees in the hospitality industry in Uganda.

The theorized model

Bringing all of the study variables together, the researchers propose to test the theorized model (Figure 1) based on employee engagement. The model postulates the mediating role of engagement in the relationship between major organizational inducements and industry loyalty among the employees in the hospitality industry in Uganda. As a result, seven hypotheses

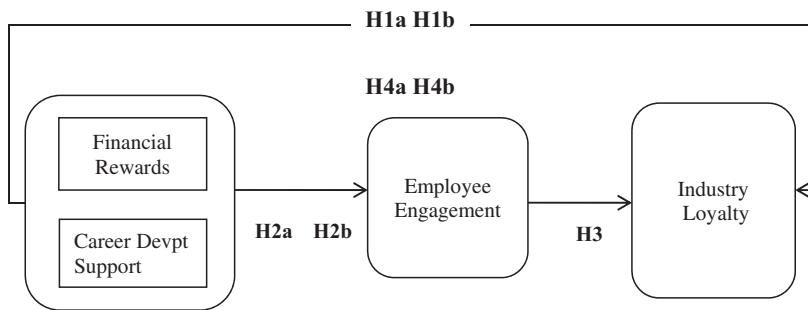


Figure 1. A theorized model of engagement as a mediator between inducements and industry loyalty. *Source:* Reviewed theories and Literature.

were developed based on the relationships identified in the literature section and these are summarized in the hypothesized model (Figure 1).

The next section presents the methods and approaches used to carry out the study.

Methodology

The research design

The study adopted a cross-sectional correlation survey design to test the study hypotheses formulated in the literature section. A positivist paradigm using a quantitative data collection approach was adopted. A closed ended questionnaire/instrument was used to collect data.

Study setting, population, sample and administration

This study's sample was based on the population of 450 member hotels of Uganda Hotel Owners Association (UHOA). A random sample of these hotels was chosen in which the researchers ended up with 210 hotels that had 8,945 employees. Based on guidelines by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a sample size of 368 was obtained. The principle of proportionate allocation was used to determine the number of hotels per region and respondents per hotel. The individual hotels and employees were selected randomly using a raffle approach conducted at each hierarchical level. The respective hotel establishments were formally contacted through the officers in charge of human resources to seek permission to access their premises and employees, in order to smoothly administer the questionnaires.

The researchers requested the human resources officers to give them a contact person to distribute the instrument and to help collect the instrument. The researchers and experienced research assistants guided the contact persons on how to distribute the instruments using simple random

sampling. The researchers made sure that all participants were aware that their involvement was strictly voluntary and that their anonymity and confidentiality would be preserved throughout the research process. The researchers with the help of two research assistants collected the completed instruments from the contact persons per hotel. Effort was made to involve all the generic hotel departments including but not limited to Rooms Division, Food and Beverages Department, Maintenance, Security and Administration and, ensuring that equal opportunity was availed as much as possible to all full-time employees as indicated in the respective human resource records.

To establish whether the 208 responses were representative of the sample population, the researchers determined the statistical power of this sample by conducting power analyses for sample size estimates. Using multiple regression/correlation analysis, the researchers performed the significance test at $(\alpha) = .01$ with an expected medium effect size (f^2) of 0.15 (Cohen, 1992). Results indicated that 128 participants were sufficient to detect large effect sizes (Cohen's $f^2 = 0.15$) for linear multiple regression analyses with two predictors at recommended power = .80 (Cohen, 1992). This suggests that notwithstanding the 169 unanswered and/or non-usable questionnaires, the 208 responses was representative enough to avoid any bias.

Results

Sample characteristics

From a total of 368 administered questionnaires, 208 usable copies were returned (see Table 1) implying a response rate of 56.5% percent. The descriptive statistics showed that majority of sampled hotels (61.5%) were located in urban areas. The results also indicated that 57.7% of the respondents from the sampled hotels were female, while 42.3% were male. Majority of the employees (81.2%) had worked in the industry for a period of not more than 10 years, while only 18.8% had worked beyond this period. In terms of relevant qualifications, most of the employees (77.9) possessed a diploma or certificate in catering and hotel management. The results also indicate that 51.4% of the respondents were born after 1980, implying that the industry is dominated by young people below 38 years of age (Table 1).

Measurement of variables and questionnaire development

Part 1 captured the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Part 2 of the instrument was designed to measure organizational inducements (i.e., financial rewards and career development support). Career development support was measured according to Presbitero (2017) and Ashton

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of respondents ($N = 208$).

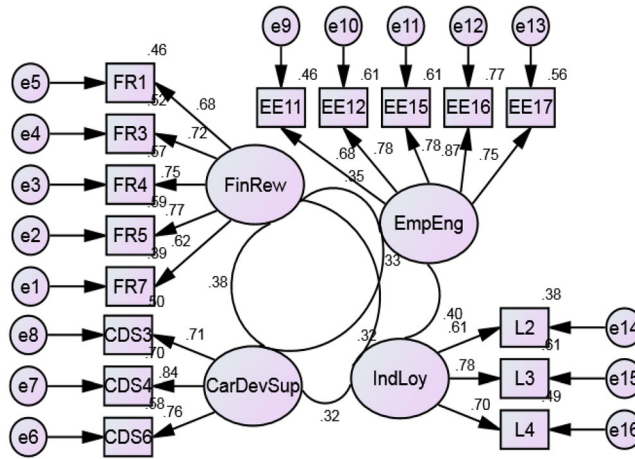
		Frequency	Percent
Work place location	Urban hotel	128	61.5
	Country side hotel	80	38.5
Job level	Manager/Supervisor	66	31.7
	Employee/Subordinate	142	68.3
Gender	Male	88	42.3
	Female	120	57.7
Marital status	Married	88	42.3
	Single	97	46.6
	Separated	13	6.3
	Divorced	8	3.8
Date of birth	Widowed	2	1.0
	Before 1946	3	1.4
	Between 1946–1966	25	12.0
	Between 1967–1979	73	35.1
	Between 1980–2000	105	50.5
Highest qualification	After 2000	2	1.0
	Certificate	103	49.5
	Diploma	59	28.4
	Bachelor's degree	35	16.8
Period spent in the hospitality industry	Masters and above	11	5.3
	2 years and below	64	30.8
	3 -5 years	54	26.0
	6 – 10 years	51	24.5
	11 -15 years	24	11.5
	Above 15 years	15	7.2

Source: Primary data.

(2018) and contained 6 items. It was measured on 5 point likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). On the other hand, financial rewards construct was measured using items adopted from Brown and Reilly (2013) and, Schlechter, Hung, and Bussin (2014). It had 5 items rated on a 5 point likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Part 3 measured employee engagement according to Saks (2006) and had 17 items rated on a five point likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Part 4 measured industry loyalty based on the works of Bloemer and Odekerken-Schröder's (2006) and Wang, Indridason and Saunders (2010). It had 13 items rated on a 5 point likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

Validity and reliability

The researchers used AMOS (version 20) to conduct a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) so that they come up with a measurement model for all the variables. This helped to confirm the dimensions and test the fit of the theoretically grounded model (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988; Medsker, Williams, & Holahan, 1994). The CFA results for the measurement model conform to satisfactory guidelines (see Figure 2 and Table 3) (Schermeier-Engel, Moosbrugger, & Müller, 2003). The NFI (>0.90) (Table 3) indicates acceptable convergent validity while the Average Variance Extracted ($AVE > 0.5$)



CMIN=169.527; df=98; p=0.000; CMIN/df=1.730;
 GFI=0.913; AGFI=0.879; NFI=0.948; TLI=0.937;
 CFI=0.949; RMSEA=0.059; AVE=0.551

FinRew: Financial Rewards
 EmpEng: Employee Engagement
 CarDevSup: Career Development Support
 IndLoy: Industry Loyalty

Figure 2. CFA for organizational inducements, employee engagement and industry loyalty. CMIN = 169.527; df = 98; p = 0.000; CMIN/df = 1.730; GFI = 0.913; AGFI = 0.879; NFI = 0.948; TLI = 0.937; CFI = 0.949; RMSEA = 0.059; AVE = 0.551. FinRew: Financial Rewards; EmpEng: Employee Engagement; CarDevSup: Career Development Support; IndLoy: Industry Loyalty.

Table 2. Discriminant validity.

	AVE	CFA squared latent variable correlations					
		FinRew& CarDevSup	FinRew& EmpEng	FinRew& IndLoy	EmpEng& IndLoy	CarDevSup& EmpEng	CarDevSup& IndLoy
Financial rewards	.505	.144	.123	.102	.160	.109	.102
Career development support	.594						
Employee engagement	.640						
Industry loyalty	.500						

Source: Primary data.

indicates acceptable discriminant validity (Table 2). Moreover, the results also indicated that the individual constructs' AVEs were all greater than the CFA-squared latent correlations (Table 2), further confirming the measurement scales' ability to discriminate between measures that are supposed to be different (Farrell, 2010). The reliability for all the variables as indicated by Cronbach's α was above 0.7. According to Sekaran (2000) and Nunnally (1978), Cronbach's α value close to 0.7 or above is satisfactory. Cronbach's α for all the study variables was above 0.7, implying that the reliability of the measurement scales had no major issues.

Table 3. Fit indices for the different models.

		χ^2	df	<i>p</i>	GFI	AGFI	NFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA	AVE	SMC for IndLoy
Cutoff		>0.5		>0.05	>0.90	>0.85	>0.90	>0.90	>0.90	<0.08	>0.5	
Model 2	CFA	169.527	98	0.000	0.913	0.879	0.948	0.937	0.949	0.059	0.551	
Model 3	SEM (1)	50.085	41	0.156	0.959	0.935	0.939	0.984	0.938	0.032		0.154
Model 4	SEM (2)	169.527	98	0.000	0.913	0.879	0.948	0.937	0.949	0.059		0.226

Source: Primary data.

Model 2, CFA (measurement model); Model 3, SEM (non-mediated model); Model 4, SEM (mediated model).

Table 4. Means, standard deviations, correlations, and reliabilities.

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
Financial rewards (1)	3.50	.75	.83	.33**	.33**	.27**
Career development support (2)	3.54	.77		.81	.276**	.25**
Employee engagement (3)	3.36	.92			.88	.33**
Industry loyalty (4)	3.70	.68				.74

Note: The bolded figures (diagonals) represent the reliability alpha coefficients.

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Common methods bias (CMB) and common methods variance (CMV)

To address the CMB which is a problem in cross-sectional data, the researchers used methodological separation of measurement variables and protecting respondent anonymity (Podsakoff et al., 2003). To test for absence of CMB, the researchers applied the marker variable approach as a post hoc statistical technique (Lindell & Whitney, 2001; Richardson, Simmering, & Sturman, 2009). Using “vicarious experience” as an ideal marker (for it had no expected theoretical relationship with substantive variables), the resulting “corrected” correlations (Table 4) became closer approximations to true relationships as compared to the uncorrected correlations; meaning that CMV inherent in this data set was inadequate to bias results (Choi & Chen, 2007). The strengths of the approach are that because it should be theoretically unrelated to any one of the substantive variables, any observed correlation between the two cannot be due to a true relationship and, thus, must be due to something else the variables have in common (i.e., CMV).

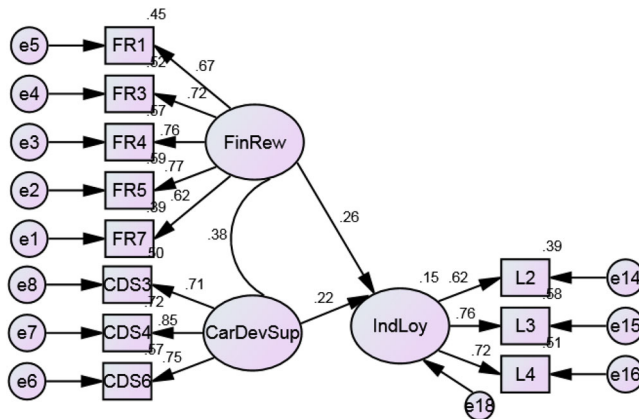
Descriptive statistics

From results of Table 4, all mean scores for the items range from 3.36 to 3.70 (showing the goodness of fit of the data) with the standard deviations ranging from 0.68 to .92 (indicating the extent to which the means represent the data) (Field, 2009). Given the small standard deviations compared to mean values, it is clear that the data points are close to the means implying that the calculated means highly represented the observed data (Field, 2009; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007). This is in line with Field (2009), who asserts that small standard deviations relative to the mean values indicate that the data points are close to the means; is a manifestation that the computed means are a good replica of the real population (Field, 2006).

Structural equation modeling (SEM)

After carrying out CFA, the researchers proceeded to construct two competing models, the non-mediated (Figure 3) and the mediated model (Figure 4) following the guidelines by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). Basing on the four criteria as guided by Morgan and Hunt (1994), the mediated model had a better fit of the data in terms of comparative fit index (0.949) compared to the non-mediated model's CFI = 0.938. In terms of percentage of significant paths, the mediated model performed relatively poorer (60%) than the non-mediated model (100%) (Table 3). Regarding parsimony assessed by the parsimonious normed fit index, the mediated model had an NFI of 0.948 compared to 0.939 for the non-mediated model. As for variance explained as measured by squared multiple correlations; the mediated model had SMC 22.6% compared to 15.4% for the non-mediated model. Basing on these outcomes, it was averred that the mediated model was a more accurate and a useful depiction of the relationships among the constructs (Table 5). Thus, the researchers proceeded to examine support for or against the hypothesized relationships using the mediated model.

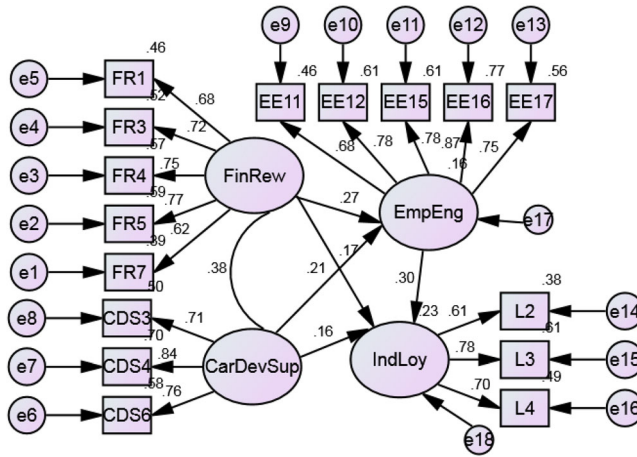
The study utilized the critical ratio (CR) and p-values for testing statistical significance of parameter estimates, which represents the parameter



CMIN=50.085; df=41; p=0.156; CMIN/df=1.222;
 GFI=0.959; AGFI=0.935; NFI=0.939; TLI=0.984;
 CFI=0.938; RMSEA=0.032

FinRew: Financial Rewards
 CarDevSup: Career Development Support
 IndLoy: Industry Loyalty

Figure 3. Non-mediated model for organizational inducements and industry loyalty. CMIN = 50.085; df = 41; p = 0.156; CMIN/df = 1.222; GFI = 0.959; AGFI = 0.935; NFI = 0.939; TLI = 0.984; CFI = 0.938; RMSEA = 0.032. FinRew: Financial Rewards; CarDevSup: Career Development Support; IndLoy: Industry Loyalty.



CMIN=169.527; df=98; $p=0.000$; CMIN/df=1.730;
 GFI=0.913; AGFI=0.879; NFI=0.948; TLI=0.937;
 CFI=0.949; RMSEA=0.059

FinRew: Financial Rewards
 EmpEng: Employee Engagement
 CarDevSup: Career Development Support
 IndLoy: Industry Loyalty

Figure 4. Mediated model for organizational inducements employee engagement and industry loyalty. CMIN = 169.527; df = 98; $p = 0.000$; CMIN/df = 1.730; GFI = 0.913; AGFI = 0.879; NFI = 0.948; TLI = 0.937; CFI = 0.949; RMSEA = 0.059. FinRew: Financial Rewards; EmpEng: Employee Engagement; CarDevSup: Career Development Support; IndLoy: Industry Loyalty.

estimate divided by its standard error and, as such operates as a Z-statistic in testing that the estimate is statistically different from zero. Based on a probability level 0.05, it is true that, the test statistic needs to be $> \pm 1.96$ (absolute value) before a hypothesis is rejected (Table 5).

Hypothesis H1a states: There is a positive relationship between financial rewards and industry loyalty among employees in the hospitality industry in Uganda.

H1a sought to establish the relationship between the organizational financial inducements and employee loyalty to the hospitality industry in Uganda. Results indicate that financial reward ($\beta = 0.168$, $CR < 1.96$) was not a significant predictor of industry loyalty among workers in the hospitality industry consequently, Hypothesis 1a is not supported (Table 5). The results imply that employee loyalty in the hospitality industry may exist independent of financial inducements. The results negate earlier findings by scholars such as Lee et al. (2016) and Muse and Wadsworth (2012) who state that employees respond to the inducements offered by the employers by becoming loyal to the firm and the industry.

Hypothesis H1b states: There is a positive relationship between career development support and industry loyalty among employees in the hospitality industry in Uganda.

Table 5. Results of competing models.

			Non _mediated model			Mediated model	
EmpEng	<—	FinRew				.270**	
EmpEng	<—	CarDevSup				.213*	
IndLoy	<—	FinRew		.256*		.168	
IndLoy	<—	CarDevSup		.216*		.158	
IndLoy	<—	EmpEng				.296**	
χ^2				50.085			169.527
df				41			98
P				.156			.000
CFI				.938			.949
NFI				.939			.948
RMSEA				.032			.059
SMC for EmpEng				.000			.163
SMC for IndLoy				.154			.226

Hypotheses and paths for the mediated model			SE	CR	P	Standardized coefficients	Decision
EmpEng	<—	FinRew	.103	3.000	.003	.270	Supported
EmpEng	<—	CarDevSup	.092	2.473	.013	.213	Supported
IndLoy	<—	FinRew	.088	1.722	.085	.168	Not supported
IndLoy	<—	CarDevSup	.078	1.696	.090	.158	Not supported
IndLoy	<—	EmpEng	.073	3.198	.001	.296	Supported

Source: Primary data.

H1b sought to establish the relationship between the career development support and employee loyalty to the hospitality industry in Uganda. Results indicate that career development support ($\beta = 0.158$, $CR < 1.96$) was not a significant predictor of industry loyalty among workers in the hospitality industry hence, Hypothesis 1b is also not supported (Table 5). The results imply that employee loyalty in the hospitality industry may exist independent of career development support; a negation of findings from prior studies such as Lee et al. (2016) and Muse and Wadsworth (2012).

Hypothesis H2a states: There is a positive relationship between financial rewards and employee engagement among employees in the hospitality industry in Uganda.

In *H2a*, the researchers sought to establish the relationship between financial rewards and employee engagement. Results as shown in Table 5 show a positive and significant relationship between financial rewards and employee engagement ($\beta = 0.270$, $CR > 1.96$), therefore, Hypothesis 2a is supported. The results confirm that positive changes that occur in financial rewards in the hospitality industry are associated with positive changes in employee engagement in the hospitality industry in Uganda; implying that hospitality employee financial rewards directly influence their engagement at work. *H2a* is therefore supported because the higher the financial reward rating of employees, the higher they rated employee engagement. The results rhyme with those of earlier scholars (e.g., Saks, 2006) who state that workers reciprocate the inducements offered by the employer with the energy and time they spend in the organization.

Hypothesis H2b states: There is a positive relationship between career development support and work engagement among employees in the hospitality industry in Uganda.

In *H2b*, the researchers sought to establish the relationship between career development support and employee engagement. Results as shown in [Table 5](#) show a positive and significant relationship between career development support and employee engagement ($\beta = 0.213$, $CR > 1.96$) thus, hypothesis *H2b* is supported. The results confirm that positive changes that occur in career development support are associated with positive changes in employee engagement in the hospitality industry in Uganda; implying that hospitality employees' career development support directly influences their engagement at work. *H2b* is hence supported because the higher the career development support rating of employees, the higher they rated employee engagement. The results are in tandem with prior scholars findings such as Saks (2006).

Hypothesis H3: There is a positive relationship between employee engagement and industry loyalty among the employees in the hospitality industry in Uganda.

H3 sought to establish whether employee engagement is associated with employee loyalty to the hotel industry in Uganda. Results indicate a positive and significant association between the two ($\beta = 0.296$, $CR > 1.96$), for this reason, Hypothesis 1a is supported. This implies that positive changes that occur in employee engagement create positive deviations in industry loyalty in the hospitality industry. These findings unequivocally suggest that individuals with an enhanced engagement exhibit a stronger level of loyalty to the organization in the industry. As conceptually stipulated, findings empirically support *H3* which proposed a positive and significant association between employee engagement and industry loyalty. The findings are in agreement with those of (Barnes & Collier, 2013; Devi, 2009; Lee et al., 2016) who argue that employees who are highly engaged will easily overcome the challenging conditions, and are more likely to stay in the industry.

Hypothesis H4a states employee engagement mediates the relationship between financial rewards and industry loyalty among employees in the hospitality industry in Uganda.

In *H4a* the researchers sought to examine the mediating effect of employee engagement on the financial rewards—industry loyalty relationship among workers in the hospitality industry in Uganda. The results in [Table 6](#) indicate that the total effect for financial rewards on industry loyalty ($\beta = 0.248$) is different from its direct effect on employee industry loyalty ($\beta = 0.168$); implying that a mediation effect of employee engagement exists on the relationship between financial rewards and industry loyalty (Hair et al., 2006). From [Table 5](#), the researchers discern that in the first model (non-mediated model), financial rewards was a significant predictor of employee industry loyalty ($\beta = 0.258$, $CR > 1.96$). However, in the

second model, when employee engagement was introduced in the relationship between the two (i.e., financial rewards and employee industry loyalty), the predictive potential of financial rewards on employee industry loyalty became insignificant ($\beta = 0.168$, $CR < 1.96$). According to Zack, Mackeen, and Singh (2009), in cases where the predictor variable loses the power to influence the criterion variable except through mediation, this implies a complete mediation. The study finds that a full mediation effect of employee engagement exists in the financial rewards—employee industry loyalty relationship, hence, hypothesis *H4a* is supported. The results demonstrate that employee engagement takes all the inputs of financial rewards and translates them into employee industry loyalty. As conceptually stipulated, findings empirically support *H4a* which proposed a mediation effect of employee engagement on the financial rewards—industry loyalty relationship. These findings are in agreement with Jose (2008) who avers that a co-relational study that does not address the mediating mechanism ends up with facts, but with an incomplete understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Hypothesis H4b states employee engagement mediates the relationship between career development support and industry loyalty among employees in the hospitality industry in Uganda.

The results in Table 6 further indicate that the total effect for career development support on industry loyalty ($\beta = 0.221$) is different from its direct effect on employee industry loyalty ($\beta = 0.158$) implying that a mediation effect of employee engagement exists on the career development support – employee industry loyalty relationship (Hair et al., 2006). From Table 6, it can be detected that in the first model (non-mediated model), career development support was a significant predictor of employee industry loyalty ($\beta = 0.216$, $CR > 1.96$). However, in the second model, when employee engagement was introduced in the relationship between the two (i.e., career development support and employee industry loyalty), the predictive potential of career development support on employee industry loyalty became insignificant ($\beta = 0.158$, $CR < 1.96$) implying a full mediation (Zack et al., 2009) of employee engagement exists in the career development support—industry loyalty relationship hence, hypothesis *H4b* is

Table 6. Standardized total, direct and indirect effects for the mediated model.

		CarDevSup	FinRew	EmpEng	IndLoy
Standardized total effects	EmpEng	.213	.270	.000	.000
	IndLoy	.221	.248	.296	.000
Standardized direct effects	EmpEng	.213	.270	.000	.000
	IndLoy	.158	.168	.296	.000
Standardized direct effects	EmpEng	.000	.000	.000	.000
	IndLoy	.063	.080	.000	.000

Source: Primary data.

supported. The findings support *H4b* which proposed a mediation effect of employee engagement on the association between career development support and industry loyalty.

Discussion of findings

The study reports insightful findings on the mediating effect of employee engagement on the relationship between organizational inducements (financial rewards and career development support) and industry loyalty among employees in the hospitality industry. Employee engagement has been studied widely and the concept is viewed as an employee's level of absorption and dedication in the job. It portrays the vigor and attention that a worker has toward his or her occupation. As discussed in the literature review, employee engagement has many attractive outcomes for workers as well as employers in the hospitality industry. For example, when hotel employees are engaged, they tend to exhibit high levels of absorption, helping them to focus and direct their attention, time, and effort to accomplish the tasks assigned to them. Furthermore, when the employees are engaged, they have a positive temperament toward their duties and profession which helps them to be effective and efficient in performing their assignments.

It is also true that employee engagement is influenced by a wide range of factors but in this study, the focus was on the key organizational inducements (financial rewards and career development support). The study results have shown financial rewards to be positively associated with employee engagement. Put differently, employees reporting high levels of improvements in financial rewards also reported high levels of engagement. This implies that when employees are provided with a competitive pay package such as basic salary, allowances or variable pay in the hospitality industry, they are likely not to only perceive working in the industry as captivating, but also as one of the exciting things that gets them highly absorbed into the industry affairs and activities. This finding adds credence to those of Amissah et al. (2016) who argue that financial rewards are an influential factor in an employee's assessment of a job position's attractiveness and industry's appeal. Furthermore, for employees in the hospitality industry to perceive themselves as active members in terms of effort and time devoted to work, there is necessity for management to provide them with a competitive pay package and allowances. In this study the researchers find that when employers provide medical allowances, retirement and pension benefits to the employees, they (workers) will find jobs exciting, become captivated at work and get involved in the industry's affairs. These findings are consistent with those of Jung and Yoon (2015) who investigated the impact of pay satisfaction on job engagement and withdrawal in

deluxe hotels and, found that pay level, rise and structure have significant effect on work engagement outcomes. The study hence demonstrates that when employers in the hospitality managers adopt best financial rewarding systems as a way of recognition their employees for excellent performance, there is a likelihood that employees will get deeply engrossed in their jobs and industry affairs. The findings align very well with those of earlier scholars such as Schoffstall et al. (2017) and Weavier (2009) who found that both hospitality students and industry employees attach a lot of value to salary scales. In other words, the employees' level of engagement will rise in circumstances where they perceive receiving better pay compared to similar positions in other sectors.

Similar findings were obtained in relation to changes in career development support. The study established that positive changes in career development support yielded a positive and significant influence on employee engagement among employees in the hospitality industry. High levels of reported improvements in career development support were reciprocated by high levels of employee engagement. This implies that when employees in the hotel industry for example, perceive the existence of promotion opportunities to higher positions, they become more energized and get more absorbed into hotel work and industry activities. The finding is in agreement with Sendawula et al. (2018) who argue that when employees are convinced that the existing career development policy allows them to be promoted to higher positions, they become more engaged in hotel and industry work. Thus, perceptions of likely promotion to higher positions in the individual hotels and the industry generally, make the employees increase their effort, time and dedication in industry matters. This finding augers well with that of Presbitero (2017) who asserts that positive changes in training bring positive changes in the level of employee engagement. The study demonstrates that employees in the hospitality industry tend to get highly motivated to work harder when the employers provide opportunities for further training, learning and, growing professionally. The findings support earlier findings by Mascho and Mao (2017) who argue that when the hotel invests in employees, they feel important hence reciprocate with a higher level of dedication to their jobs and the industry. Indeed employer commitment to in-service training and career development of employees renders them more captivated at work.

The study also found engagement to significantly and positively influence employee loyalty to the industry. This implies that when employees get absorbed and dedicated to work and generally become enthusiastic, then they will consider working in the hotel industry a first choice. This finding is in tandem with many earlier studies. For example, according to Zopiatis et al. (2017), engagement of the individual in the profession has a positive

correlation with loyalty to the organization and industry. As discussed earlier, in the hospitality service environment, employees who are highly engaged will easily overcome the challenging conditions, and are more likely to stay in the industry (Lee et al., 2016; Saks, 2006). The study finding demonstrates that employees may not easily accept a job from another industry even if a better pay is offered. These finding also lends support to those of Lee, et al. (2016) and Saks (2006) who indicate that employees who are highly engaged will easily overcome the challenging conditions and are more likely to stay in the hotel industry. The study reveals that getting employees in the hospitality industry highly dedicated, involved and generally engaged at work, creates emotional attachment to the industry. The current result is also in agreement with Devi (2009) who avers that when employees are engaged, they express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally as they carry their duties, and they are less likely to leave the job and/or industry.

Regarding the study's central hypothesis, the results show that employee engagement fully mediates the relationship between organizational inducements (both financial rewards and career development support) and exhibition of loyalty to work in the hotel industry. The study finding demonstrates that employee engagement takes all of the inputs from both financial rewards and career development support; and translates them into employee industry loyalty. This implies that among the employees in the hospitality industry, the variations that occur in the exhibition of loyalty to the industry as a result of organizational inducements (financial rewards and career development support), are completely wiped out with the introduction of employee engagement. The study addresses Rosenberg (1968) and Jose's (2008) concern that co-relational studies that do not address the mediating mechanism end up with facts, but leave researchers in an incomplete understanding of phenomena. In light of the above finding, it means that both financial rewards and career development support may not influence employee exhibition of loyalty to the hospitality industry in Uganda without the inputs of employee engagement. The findings hence support earlier studies that found an association between organizational inducements and employee engagement (Amissah et al., 2016; Ashton, 2018), and between engagement and loyalty (Barnes & Collier, 2013; Lee et al., 2016) by demonstrating a mediator effect of engagement on the organizational inducements—loyalty association. The researchers argue that employee engagement is critical to building both financial rewards and career development support that are significant in eliciting loyalty levels among employees in the hospitality industry. This indicates that employee engagement acts as a mechanism or as a conduit through which organizational inducements (both financial rewards and career development support)

influence the outcomes of employee exhibition of loyalty in the hospitality industry in Uganda. This finding was hinted at by Karatepe (2013) but not much is reported in previous research on hotel industry loyalty hence represents an excellent contribution to the field of human resource management in the hospitality industry.

However, the study did not find a significant relationship between both financial rewards and career development support and; industry loyalty. These findings are inconsistent with earlier studies such as those of Amissah et al. (2016), Ezeuduji et al. (2017), Schlechter et al. (2014), Schoffstall (2017), Choi and Dickson (2009), Brown et al. (2016) and; Mascho and Mao (2017). The reason for the divergence in findings may not be easily explained in this work. It may therefore necessitate exploring the two relationships probably in a different sector and/or in a different locality to confirm or disconfirm this finding. Furthermore, a qualitative study may be necessary in future, either in the same sector or in a different context using similar variables to further validate the current findings.

Conclusions

The study constructed a research model for clarifying the relationships between the variables of interest, namely: financial rewards, career development support, employee engagement and industry loyalty among hotel workers in Uganda. The study found a positive and significant association between financial rewards and employee engagement. The study also found a positive and significant association between career development support and employee engagement. Additionally, employee engagement had a significant and positive impact on industry loyalty among hotel workers. Probably, the most important finding was that employee engagement fully mediated the relationships between both financial rewards and career development support and; industry loyalty among hotel employees. However the study failed to confirm or re-confirm the positive association between financial rewards and career development support and; industry loyalty. This led to the conclusion that financial rewards and career development may not on their own influence exhibition of industry loyalty among hotel workers except through employee engagement. However, engagement can be effective in influencing industry loyalty through the accumulated improvements on both financial rewards and career development support. Generally, this implies that industry loyalty may not be completely achieved unless hotels deliberately make improvements on financial rewards and career development support, which in turn gets employees engaged and eventually exhibit high levels of allegiance.

Implications

This study has practical implications for hotel managers. Because conformist perception recommends that financial rewards and career development lead to employee loyalty at work, most organizations, including hotels have conventionally given attention to increasing salaries annually, sending their employees for further studies and attending workshops. Their core concentration is principally on providing the traditional inducements. Whereas this move deals with the foundation of the problem directly, there seems to be another feasible approach to promoting employee loyalty at work. As this study points out, financial rewards and career development did not wield any influence on industry loyalty. However, approaches that made employees become engaged at work came into play; then both financial rewards and career development were able to influence industry loyalty.

This implies that managerial actions should go further than the typical financial inducement practices and career development workshops—that are thought to tackle the foundation of the problem. Management should also include those initiatives or other ways with the aim of making the employee feel that they have managers' support.

Generally, managers need to keep the workers hopeful through underscoring organizational vision and giving guidance on their career advancement as a sign of wishing them well in their chosen profession. When this is done, it makes the employees feel that they are cared for; hence become an integral part of the hotel eventually increasing their engagement at work which translates into loyalty to the industry.

Notwithstanding being virtually impracticable to achieve total loyalty from the employees, the execution of enabling HR practices can undoubtedly improve employee engagement hence improving their exhibition of industry loyalty. Managers should therefore be able, for instance, to conduct special training sessions or invite motivational speakers to present talks that are tailored to common employee challenges in order to improve their attitude toward work and their profession. Some hotel employees tend to feel bad when it comes to performing such tasks as laying the beds, carrying plates, cleaning public areas or even guestrooms. Assisting workers understand the nature of their profession and industry practices such as working on late shift, low pay especially at entry point et cetera, will go a long way to help them appreciate the professional challenges as being normal and that every profession has its own challenges. When this is done, the employees will learn to concentrate on achieving their long term career goal through dedication and extra effort. This will increase the employees' engagement at work leading to loyalty for the industry. The nature of the industry is such that most activities in the hotel sector seem repetitive and

employees can feel bored. Managers should initiate competitive exercises that create some sort of fun for employees that make employees feel happy at work and lead to better performance and love for the organization and industry. For example they can compete on table or bed laying. The employees themselves can be asked to identify the parameters to consider when judging who does the work best.

This will not only create fun but also becomes a motivator to the employees; it will help them in their career development process; not only rendering them to become absorbed in their work but in the end results into loyalty for the organization.

Research limitations and future research directions

The findings of this study are subject to some limitations that provide the proposals for future research. First, although the constructs have been defined as precisely as possible by drawing on relevant literature and validated by practitioners, the measurements used may not perfectly represent all the dimensions. Furthermore, the study may suffer from mono-method bias since all of the data were collected using self-report questionnaires. Scholars may attribute the findings to individuals' tendencies to respond to similar types of measures in similar ways. Whereas this bias might have been a danger, it is improbable. Further research in this area needs to be conducted to examine financial reward and career development, employee engagement and industry loyalty behaviors in other perspectives, taking into account the effect of different organizations and environments. Precisely, larger samples from different professions and occupations might offer a foundation for more robust outcomes that help managers to manage organizational inducements and hence employee industry loyalty. Despite possible limitations, the results of the present study provide valuable insights into the effect of financial reward, career development initiatives and engagement toward the exhibition of industry loyalty among hospitality employees.

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