

INFLUENCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN HOSPITALITY. CASE STUDY: FOUR SEASONS

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Abstract

The tourism industry is one of the most dynamic and competitive in the world, and companies operating in this sector must be able to provide high-quality services and respond quickly and efficiently to customer demands. In this context, organizational culture becomes a key factor in the success of tourism companies. It can directly influence how the company achieves its objectives and how it adapts to market changes. The aim of this paper is to explore the importance of organizational culture in tourism companies. In this regard, the project will focus on analyzing the main elements of organizational culture and how they can influence the success of the company and customer satisfaction. Additionally, the project will examine how tourism companies can develop a strong organizational culture that enables them to remain relevant and competitive in a constantly changing market. The paper will begin by presenting the concept of organizational culture and how it can be defined and measured. Furthermore, the main elements of organizational culture, such as customer orientation, employee personal development, effective communication, and social responsibility, will be examined. Additionally, the importance of leadership and management involvement in developing a strong organizational culture will be analyzed. In conclusion, it will be argued that a strong organizational culture is essential for the success of tourism companies and that developing such a culture should be a priority for any company wishing to be competitive and provide quality services to customers. The project will also provide specific recommendations for tourism companies to help them develop a strong organizational culture and achieve their long-term objectives. In this context, qualitative and quantitative research was conducted on the organizational culture of the Four Seasons hotel group. The purpose of this research was to evaluate the level of employee satisfaction, identify practices and cultural traditions that contribute to the company's performance, and suggest recommendations for improvement. The sample consisted of 100 employees from all major departments of the Four Seasons hotel group, selected globally. The research revealed a correlation between the company's values and organizational culture with its commitment to quality and customer satisfaction, as well as an identification of employees with the company's values and organizational culture and high satisfaction in this regard. These results suggest that encouraging and strengthening the organizational culture of the Four Seasons company through employee training and development programs, performance recognition and reward programs, and programs to promote organizational culture among customers and business partners can contribute to its success and performance.

Keywords: organizational culture, hospitality, tourism industry, Four Seasons Hotels.

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Literature review

Organizational culture is a crucial component of an organization, affecting both its effectiveness and the members' quality of work life (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Schein, 1992; Cameron & Quinn, 1999; Schein & Schein, 2016; Miranda-Wolff, 2022). According to Schein (1992), organizational culture is a phenomenon made up of distinct parts. The most frequently mentioned aspects of organizational culture, according to Schein's model, are artifacts, norms, attitudes, values, and fundamental presumptions (Schein, 1992). To put it another way, the fundamental attitudes, values, and beliefs that permeate an organization, as well as the behavioral patterns that develop because of these common meanings and the symbols that convey the relationship between these attitudes, values, and actions of organizational members (Denison, 1990).

Differentiations in values, beliefs, practices, and organizational methods result from the cultural traits of the society's organizations. The distinctions between the various organizations are determined by these differences. Consequently, it is believed that organizational culture reflects social culture. The management literature defines organizational culture as shared values, conventions, and understanding behaviors among organizational members (Beyer & Trice, 1987). Organizational cultures, according to Hofstede (1998), are qualities that organizational members show through their verbal or nonverbal behavior.

The development of organizational culture takes place over time. It is the outcome of the accumulation of experiences that people acquire through socialization; it offers continuity, lessens employee uncertainty, and affects their job satisfaction and emotional health; it is a source of motivation and can be a competitive advantage (Lukálová, 2010).

Organizational culture is a critical factor that influences the behavior, attitudes, and performance of employees within an organization. In the hospitality industry, where guest satisfaction and service quality are paramount, organizational culture plays a crucial role in shaping the experiences of guests and the job satisfaction of employees. Understanding the role of organizational culture in the hospitality industry is essential for hospitality managers to create a positive work environment that fosters employee engagement, improves guest experiences, and enhances organizational performance.

The hospitality industry encompasses a wide range of sectors, including hotels, restaurants, resorts, cruise lines, and event management, among others. According to Pizam (2018), the concept of hospitality is an organizational culture that forms within an organization and serves to identify it. When compared to other industries, the hotel industry has a distinctive and particular culture (Dawson; Abbott; Shoemaker, 2011). Companies that provide lodging, food, and beverages as well as meeting space for visitors, business travelers,

and locals in the area where they are located make up the hospitality industry (Pizam, 2009).

According to Barrows, Powers, and Reynolds (2012), the hotel industry is made up of a variety of businesses that provide people who are away from home with shelter, food, and entertainment. The hospitality sector has its own distinctive characteristics, such as the front-line staff members who not only deliver tangible goods but also intangible ones like manners and experiences (Kao; Tsaur; Wu, 2016). The hotel industry places a high priority on service (Gjurasic; Loncaric, 2018). The perception of service quality is developed during the production, delivery, and consuming stages (Kao, 2016), and in this industry, excellent service influences a guest's decision to return to the hotel (Gjurasic; Loncaric, 2018). Hotel staff cooperation and support are essential for enhancing service quality (Gjurasic; Loncaric, 2018). Human resources are one of the key advantages of the hospitality and tourist sector (Kusluvan et al., 2010). The hospitality industry is characterized by the complexity of managing guest experiences, which forces human resource managers of businesses in this sector to develop novel approaches to managing relationships with both employees and visitors (Azic, 2017). Promoting knowledge management and service innovation has the ability to boost organizational performance and help the hotel industry reach its strategic objectives (Kasemsap; Sood, 2017).

Extensive research has been conducted on organizational culture in the hospitality industry, shedding light on the importance of cultural factors in shaping employee attitudes and behaviors, as well as guest satisfaction. Organizational culture is a critical factor that influences the behavior, attitudes, and performance of employees within an organization (Denison & Spreitzer, 2014; Schneider et al., 2016). According to the findings of a different study, the fervor, devotion, and absorption of employee engagement characteristics affect contextual performance. Worker job performance is influenced by vigor and absorption. When it comes to contextual performance, vigor exhibits the highest level of contribution, followed by absorption and devotion, whereas absorption exhibits the highest level of contribution when it comes to task performance. Experimentalism, autonomy, and trust were discovered to be the three organizational culture subvariables that most significantly predicted enhanced contextual performance and worker task performance (Bhawana Bhardwaj & Namrita Kalia, 2021). It might also be argued that having a strong organizational culture would improve the trust between hotel owners and staff, which would presumably affect the latter's dedication to the organization and performance (Justwan et al., 2018). The role of organizational culture in promoting diversity and inclusion in the hospitality industry has also been studied (Kang et al., 2018). Organizations with a positive organizational culture, characterized by diversity and inclusion values, leadership support, and formalized diversity programs, are more likely to have a more inclusive work

environment. In the hospitality industry, understanding the role of organizational culture is essential for creating a positive work environment that fosters employee engagement, improves guest experiences, and enhances organizational performance. A study by Yurdanur Yumuk (2020) found that hotel businesses have two types of organizational culture, such as hierarchical culture and clan culture. In the research conducted by Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara and Ting- Ding (2016), it was found that clan culture and adhocracy culture dominate in hotel business. In the research conducted in 5-star hotels, it was found that workers alienate themselves from their organization mainly on the dimensions of meaninglessness and powerlessness. Also, the type of organizational culture should be adopted as the basis for person- organization fit. In organizations where workers' opinions and suggestions are valued and managers take on a mentoring role, progress is more likely to occur.

Organizational culture – key element in tourism companies

The tourism industry is one of the most important industries in the world, with a significant impact on the global economy. Companies in this field face unique challenges, such as ensuring quality services to customers, efficiently managing personnel, and maintaining a positive image in front of clients. To address these challenges, organizational culture is a key element in tourism companies.

Defining organizational culture

Organizational culture refers to the values, beliefs, norms, and behaviors that govern the behavior of employees within a company. These elements are learned and shared among employees, contributing to the creation of a unique identity for the company and how it operates. Organizational culture can be influenced by various factors, such as the company's history, external environment, organizational leaders, and employees' experiences. As culture is created and managed, the objective should be to align the organization's values, vision, and mission and articulate them appropriately for all staff members. When thoroughly cultivated throughout the organization, company culture can serve as a catalyst to help guide the behavior employees exhibit towards each other. Simultaneously, it can encourage more pleasant behavior towards guests and customers, creating a positive environment that guests will want to experience again and again. Culture is defined as a set of shared understandings among members of an organization that influence decision-making processes and are shared and transmitted to new members of the organization. In addition to the expressed values, vision, and mission, organizational culture refers to the collective beliefs, ethics, and behaviors that make up the business structure. It is more about a feeling that is created than specific programs that are implemented. It is affected by how the organization is led and has a significant

influence on the organization's success. In tourism companies, organizational culture can have a significant impact on the quality of services provided to customers. Employees who identify with the company's values and norms will be more motivated and dedicated to providing quality service to customers. Additionally, a strong organizational culture can help create a positive work environment where employees are encouraged to express their ideas and opinions, develop professionally and personally, improve their skills, and cooperate effectively to achieve the company's objectives. A strong organizational culture can also contribute to maintaining a positive image in front of customers. Customers who experience superior quality services will be more likely to return in the future and recommend the company to others. Additionally, a strong organizational culture can help increase employee loyalty and reduce absenteeism and workforce turnover.

Key elements of organizational culture in tourism companies

A positive hotel culture attracts talent, engages hoteliers in their work, and influences performance. A successful hire is more than a candidate with the right technical skills to perform specific tasks or duties. A good cultural fit between employee and employer is crucial to ensure performance, satisfaction, and engagement. This cultural personality of the hotel business is influenced by everything. Hotel leadership, hotel management, workplace practices, policies, people, and much more have a significant impact on a hotel's culture. The biggest mistake hotels make is allowing workplace culture to form naturally without first defining what they want it to be. Culture is as important as strategy.

The best hospitality organizations have a culture of quality, guided by the belief that ultimate performance resolves itself when all organization members commit and practice quality management. This focus entails understanding what customers want and delivering services accordingly by minimizing and eliminating perceived problems, annoyances, and deficiencies. Hospitality organizations that create an environment for establishing and maintaining a culture of quality are long-term survivors. Culture creates the organization's environment and influences the nature of long-term plans that move the organization toward its vision. Culture also dictates policies and processes that enable the organization to live its mission every day. By bringing all these elements under the umbrella of organizational culture, business success becomes inevitable.

There are certain key elements of organizational culture that are particularly important in tourism companies. These elements include customer-oriented service. Tourism companies must be able to provide quality services to customers to achieve long-term success. This involves the ability to understand customer needs and expectations and provide personalized and

detail-oriented services. Organizational culture should encourage employees to be sensitive to customer needs and willing to go the extra mile to please them.

Another important category refers to customer relationship management. In a competitive industry, maintaining loyal customers is essential for long-term success. Organizational culture should focus on developing customer relationships so that a solid base of loyal customers can be built. Employees should be trained to approach customers in a friendly tone and try to establish a personal connection. Moreover, in a dynamic industry like tourism, communication is essential for long-term success. Organizational culture should encourage open and transparent communication among all employees so that challenges can be quickly addressed, and efficient solutions found to current issues.

Tourism companies must take social responsibility, as their impact on the environment and local communities can be significant. Organizational culture should encourage employees to be aware of their impact on the environment and take steps to reduce it, such as reducing waste and energy consumption. Additionally, companies should be involved in local communities and support social and sustainable development projects. Innovation is an important element for the success of a business in hospitality. The tourism industry is constantly changing and evolving, and companies must be able to adapt and innovate to remain relevant and competitive. Organizational culture should encourage creativity and innovation so that employees can find new solutions and offer innovative services to customers. Finally, leadership and management involvement are crucial for a strong organizational culture. Managers must be role models and encourage and support employees in achieving company objectives. Additionally, management involvement in developing organizational culture can be beneficial for employees and for the company's success.

The influence of organizational culture on the strategic management of the four seasons hotel group

Founded in 1960, Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts is dedicated to enhancing the travel experience through continuous innovation to the highest standards of hospitality. Currently operating 119 hotels and resorts and 44 residential properties in major urban centers and residential destinations in 47 countries, with over 50 projects in planning or development, Four Seasons consistently ranks among the world's best hotels and most prestigious brands in reader surveys, traveler reviews, and industry awards.

Isadore Sharp from Toronto, Canada founded Four Seasons. The first Four Seasons hotel opened in 1961, and from there the chain began to expand. Due to the development of the hotel and tourism industry, Four Seasons managed to become international and entered the USA and England, as well as expanded in

Canada, during the 1970s. As mass tourism developed in the 1980s, the Four Seasons brand became recognized in countries worldwide. Four Seasons created private residences and added new locations to their portfolio, allowing them to go public in 1986. Furthermore, the hotel chain expanded into Europe and Asia in 1992, surpassing 10,000 guest rooms and 20,000 employees worldwide. By the early 2000s, the company held 50 properties on every continent except Antarctica. More than ever, Four Seasons Private Residences and other branded residential offerings were integrated into urban Four Seasons locations. The brand's strength had become a promise of a quality lifestyle. The story of Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts is one of continuous innovation, remarkable expansion, and a unique dedication to the highest standards. The Canadian company has transformed the hospitality industry over 60 years by combining personalized and authentic care with an unwavering commitment to excellence. In the process, Four Seasons has redefined luxury for the modern traveler.

The primary objective is to be recognized as the company that manages the best hotels, resorts, and residential clubs wherever they are. Four Seasons creates properties of lasting value using superior design and finishes and supports them with a deeply ingrained service ethic. This enables Four Seasons to meet the needs and tastes of customers and maintain its position as the world's first luxury hospitality company. Four Seasons' greatest asset and the key to success are its people (employees). The company believes that each employee needs feelings of dignity, pride, and satisfaction in what they do. Because guest satisfaction depends on the united efforts of many, the greatest efficiency is achieved when working together in cooperation, respecting each other's contribution and importance.

Four Seasons demonstrates its beliefs most significantly by how it treats each other and the example it provides to one another. In all interactions with guests, clients, business associates, and colleagues, the principle of "We treat others as we would like to be treated" is kept in mind.

The organizational culture of the Four Seasons hotel group

The leadership of Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts truly understands the value of its human capital and, therefore, prioritizes employee satisfaction and motivation. While employees are assigned challenging objectives, the management addresses their concerns and avoids pressuring them, which could lead to employee burnout. The balance between task demands and employee orientation is achieved through: assigning challenging objectives and providing rewards to maximize task performance, offering the necessary training, mentoring, and guidance to employees to accomplish their assigned objectives, discouraging employees from making overtime hours a common practice at the workplace, motivating and training employees to manage stress and time, which

is important for both task performance improvement and psychological well-being.

When an organization successfully creates alignment between its structure, culture, and business strategies and understands the complex association between underlying assumptions, core values, and observable behaviors, it can use organizational culture as a tool to gain strategic benefits. Organizations with a strong work culture secure their position in the hyper-competitive market, and Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts is an example in this regard. Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts ("the Company") has earned an enviable reputation for delivering high-quality services to customers and fostering an excellent employee relations climate. Such a reputation must be carefully maintained by ensuring a clear understanding and personal responsibility for the key principles and behaviors it is based on. The ongoing effectiveness of the company depends on recruiting, training, and developing engaged, qualified individuals known for each position; individuals who earn the trust and respect of coworkers and managers, demonstrating the highest standards of integrity and professionalism.

At the core of the employee experience and social impact is the promotion of diversity and the encouragement of a culture of inclusion and belonging. It does not tolerate any form of discrimination - no one should be treated differently based on race, gender, age, religion, nationality, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, or any other perceived differences. To ensure that all employees feel valued and belong to Four Seasons, they have accelerated their global Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DIB) strategy in recent years. Progress in 2021 included the following categories:

Strategy and Vision - Every year, they distribute a transparent DIB Journey Map, which presents their annual plan to all employees, linking the global employee experience with the group's business objectives.

Leadership - Leaders, from mid-level managers to the executive team, participate in annual education workshops focused on advancing diversity, promoting inclusion and belonging, and creating psychological safety.

Listening and Communication - At the core of their approach is ensuring the dissemination of important messages and stories, understanding employees' sentiments and diverse needs, and obtaining feedback on the DIB approach. In the annual global employee pulse survey, they include specific questions regarding DIB and publish a quarterly DIB newsletter.

Systems and Policies - Education is fundamental to their approach, ensuring that employees have consistent language and knowledge to discuss DIB and promote these values. They have hosted eight DIB Speaker Series sessions for employees, where external experts and Four Seasons leaders discussed current DIB issues.

Brand and Partnerships - They continue to strengthen DIB in the brand's external marketing, including creating profiles and providing a platform for diverse experiences. Through the global Four Seasons brand's social media channels, collaboration with influencers and content creators, and brand marketing, including Four Seasons Magazine, they continue to share authentic DIB stories in a manner that celebrates diversity among guests, residents, and employees globally.

The Golden Rule - Four Seasons' guiding principle is the Golden Rule. People live each day with deep empathy and always treat others as they themselves wish to be treated. Their commitment to the Golden Rule comes to life through how they treat guests, residents, partners, communities, and the environment around them, and, of course, how they treat each other.

Learning and Career Development - Their approach to learning and development ensures that employees feel confident and prepared to be their best. Whether creating a creative cocktail or supporting essential business group functions, employees will have the tools, motivation, and support needed to become the best craftsman, leader, and/or business partner possible.

Four Seasons provides a place where employees can develop an extraordinary career. Career paths offer many growth options and the opportunity to try out various roles and functions. The global portfolio offers an extraordinary opportunity to work worldwide or the option to develop a career locally while learning from industry leaders. Learning and growth offerings include a learning professional at each property to drive employee development; on-the-job training; luxury service training; managerial and executive development programs; Global Task Force opportunities, offering short-term missions in other locations; a wide array of digital learning, including internal virtual courses, LinkedIn Learning, eCornell, and virtual coaching; a competitive tuition reimbursement program, allowing employees to pursue formal learning courses; educational partnerships with academic leaders, including Cornell School of Hospitality Management and École Hôtelière de Lausanne. The Four Seasons Manager in Training (MIT) program is designed to bridge the gap between the education participants receive in hospitality management university programs and the operational reality of leadership in a luxury hotel environment. During the 12–18 month program, MIT participants will rotate through two operational leadership experiences, depending on the chosen division. Additionally, MIT participants will be exposed to all aspects of the leadership experience, be assigned a strategic project, have a partnership with a senior leadership mentor, and receive feedback throughout the program.

Advantages and Benefits - Four Seasons offers a variety of benefits to support employees at all stages of life. It provides competitive medical and dental coverage and vacation plans, as well as ongoing personal support through Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs). Additionally, each hotel offers

other additional benefits and perks to support well-being. Moreover, the global employee travel program, a market leader, allows employees to travel the world while discovering all that the group's properties have to offer, learning best practices, discovering new and innovative ideas, and at the same time building connections with colleagues from around the world.

The code of ethics - Four Seasons has adopted a Code of conduct and business ethics, which has been approved by its Board of directors and senior management. The Code reflects, among other things, Four Seasons' most current assessment of internal and external bribery risks and the fundamental standards that Four Seasons imposes on those who provide services to and for it—including employees, contractors, and agents—and are required to adhere to when acting on behalf of Four Seasons. If a law conflicts with this code, employees must comply with the law. If a custom or local policy conflicts with this Code, employees must adhere to this Code. Compliance with laws, rules, and regulations, both in letter and in spirit, is the foundation on which the company's ethical standards are based and is essential for its reputation and continued success. All employees must comply with the laws of the various jurisdictions in which the Company operates. While not all employees are expected to know the details of these laws, it is important to know them sufficiently to determine when it is necessary to seek advice from supervisors, managers, or other appropriate personnel. Members of the corporate legal department are always available to assist employees in understanding applicable legal requirements.

Anticorruption laws - Employees are prohibited from engaging in acts that could be considered "bribery" and/or improper payments. "Bribery" refers to the direct or indirect offering, promising, or giving of any financial or other advantage, or anything of value, to influence them to behave improperly or to reward them for improper behavior, in connection with business or employment activities. Employees must comply with all applicable laws ("Anti-corruption laws") that prohibit "bribery" and improper payments, including the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (United States), the Corruption of Foreign Public Officials Act (Canada), the Bribery Act (United Kingdom), and any similar laws applicable. Examples of activities that may raise ethical questions and may be problematic under anti-corruption laws include, but are not limited to:

Facilitation payments - Certain laws prohibit payments to government personnel to facilitate or expedite routine actions, such as obtaining a building permit, that are not legitimate payments as part of a formal and transparent process for expediting government actions. This prohibition does not apply to payments that are specifically permitted by applicable written law.

Gifts - Business gifts are customary courtesies designed to build goodwill and constructive relationships between business partners and may include things like tickets to sporting or cultural events and other goods or services. In

some cultures, they play an important role in business relationships. However, gifts may constitute the basis of an offense under certain anti-corruption laws when these courtesies:

Compromise or appear to compromise the recipient's ability to make fair and objective business decisions;

Are intended or appear to be intended to be an inducement or reward for improper behavior, to gain an unfair advantage, or to unfairly influence a business relationship;

Are known or suspected to violate the recipient's applicable gift and hospitality policies.

Therefore, gifts may be offered only where they are reasonable, proportionate, and offered in good faith and where the purpose of the gift is to enhance the Company's and/or the hotel's image, promote the Company's and/or the hotel's products and/or services in an ethical manner, or to strengthen relationships with the recipient in the ordinary course of business.

Political and charitable contributions - Political and charitable contributions must not be used as a means of making payments that would otherwise be prohibited under anti-corruption laws and must not be made at the request or with the agreement of government personnel, where the intent is to influence government personnel and to obtain or retain business or a commercial advantage for the company; or where the intent is to induce or reward improper performance of functions or activities by any individual. Political donations must always be made in accordance with applicable laws governing political donations. It should be noted that restrictions on contributions are not limited to monetary donations but may also apply to the provision of corporate facilities, sponsoring political events, providing corporate services at a reduced rate, and contributions to organizations other than political parties with political purposes.

Receipt of loans, benefits or advantages - Employees responsible for purchasing goods or services on behalf of the Company or the hotel must exercise particular care to avoid soliciting or accepting any advantage from a supplier or other third party in circumstances where this could influence or might influence a purchasing decision.

Conflicts of interest - A "conflict of interest" exists when an employee's private interests interfere in any way with the interests of the Company or the hotel. A conflict of interest may arise when an employee takes actions or has interests that may make it difficult for an employee to perform his or her work for the hotel objectively and efficiently. Conflicts of interest may also arise when an employee or their family members have a material interest in a transaction or receive undue personal benefits because of the employee's position at the hotel. Employees are not allowed to work for a competitor as a consultant or board member and must not have any beneficial interest in any

hotel, restaurant, or other accommodation, food, and/or beverage services, whether competitive or not, with the company or the hotel, unless approved in writing by the general manager or, in the case of planning committee or higher level, by the regional president, operations. Employees must disclose to their supervisor any job offer accepted by them from a party with which the Company or the hotel has a business relationship.

Confidentiality - If an employee has access to confidential information, they are not allowed to use or share that information for any purpose other than carrying out hotel activities. Employees will not use the Company's private information or any private information about or relating to guests, residents, or fellow employees obtained as a result of their employment at the hotel for personal purposes.

Protection and proper use of company assets - Employees should protect the company's and the hotel's assets and ensure their efficient use. Theft, negligence, and waste directly impact the profitability of the company and the hotel. Any suspected incident of fraud or theft must be promptly reported. They have an obligation to maintain confidentiality regarding intellectual property information, even after employees cease to have a relationship with the hotel or company. Company and hotel assets (such as funds, products, or proprietary information) may only be used for legitimate business purposes. Company and hotel assets must never be used for illegal purposes.

Competition and fair treatment - The company seeks to excel and surpass any competition fairly and honestly, through superior performance rather than unethical or illegal business practices. Employees are required to respect the rights and deal fairly with the Company's/hotel's competitors, as well as with individuals with whom the Company/hotel have a business relationship. No employee shall unfairly benefit from anyone through illegal behavior, manipulation, concealment, abuse of proprietary information, misrepresentation of material facts, or any other intentional practice of unfair treatment.

Discrimination and harassment - The diversity of individuals is an extraordinary asset for the company. The company is firmly committed to providing equal opportunities in all aspects of employment and will not tolerate any discrimination or illegal harassment of any kind. Examples include derogatory comments based on racial or ethnic characteristics and unwanted sexual advances. Employees are encouraged to speak to their supervisor or human resources director when a colleague's behavior makes them feel uncomfortable and to report any discrimination or harassment.

Health and safety - The company strives to provide all employees with a safe and healthy working environment. Employees have the responsibility to maintain a safe and healthy workplace by following safety and health rules and practices and reporting accidents, injuries, and unsafe practices or conditions to a supervisor or department head. Violence and threatening behavior are not

allowed. The use of illegal drugs in the workplace will not be tolerated. Employees must report to work in a condition to perform their duties without the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol.

Accuracy of company records and reporting - The company's and hotel's accounting records are based on producing reports for directors, shareholders, government agencies, and individuals with whom the Company conducts activities. All financial statements of the Company, accounting records, must properly reflect the Company's activities, comply with applicable legal and accounting requirements, as well as the Company's internal control system. The Company does not allow the intentional misclassification of transactions regarding accounts, departments, or accounting records. Employees must avoid exaggeration, derogatory remarks, or inappropriate characterizations that may be misunderstood. This requirement applies equally to communications of any kind, including internal and external emails, informal notes, internal memos, and official reports.

Use of electronic systems - Access to and use of hardware devices, software, applications, databases, networks, email, internet resources, and similar technologies ("Electronic Systems") are provided by the company to assist employees in carrying out their duties. Employees may access electronic systems, documents, or messages using only the assigned username and password. Occasional and incidental personal use is permitted, but never for personal or inappropriate purposes, including accessing, downloading, storing, or sending any information that could be offensive to another person, such as explicit sexual messages, exaggerated jokes, indecent proposals, derogatory comments based on racial or ethnic characteristics, or any other message that could reasonably be considered harassment. Documents and electronic messages (including voicemail, email, and SMS messages) sent, received, created, or modified by employees are considered company property, and employees should understand that they are not "personal" or "private."

Reporting any illegal or unethical behavior - The company is strongly committed to conducting its activities in a legal and ethical manner. Employees are encouraged to speak with supervisors, managers, or other appropriate personnel about any observed illegal or unethical behaviors and when they have doubts about the best course of action in a particular situation. The company has established procedures to allow employees to file, on a confidential and anonymous basis (to the extent possible in accordance with applicable law), good faith complaints regarding violations of the Code. Employees who are genuinely concerned about illegal or unethical behaviors can report their concerns through EthicsPoint, Inc. ("EthicsPoint"), the third-party reporting services provider of the company. The company ensures that any complaint is addressed through a fair process, considering the interests of the Company, the person filing a complaint, and the person or persons against whom the

complaint is filed. In general, individuals identified in a complaint will: be promptly informed of the complaint (but will not be provided with information that could identify the complainant) in a timely manner (considering the need to ensure that relevant information is not destroyed) and be given the opportunity to correct the information in a complaint if it is inaccurate.

Research on employee satisfaction in relation to the organizational culture of the four seasons hotel group

Research methodology

In conducting the research, methodology represents the essential factor in approaching the proposed topic. The methodology used in this scientific approach considers the utilization of a set of knowledge accumulated to obtain results and achieve elaborated objectives. The research began with the formulation of the research question, "What are the values, practices, and cultural traditions of Four Seasons, and to what extent do they contribute to the performance and satisfaction of employees?".

Research objectives

The research objectives were formulated in accordance with the proposed topic, considering the specific characteristics of the field, existing literature, as well as the analysis and understanding of the organizational context of the Four Seasons hotel group. Thus, the objectives were formulated considering the need to investigate the organizational culture of the company and its impact on employee satisfaction, as well as to identify cultural practices and traditions that need to be improved or changed to enhance performance and satisfaction levels. Additionally, the objectives were adapted to be achievable through the methodology and resources available for the research.

Theoretical objectives

Understanding the values and organizational culture of the Four Seasons hotel group.

Evaluating the level of employee satisfaction with the organizational culture of Four Seasons.

Identifying cultural practices and traditions that need to be improved or changed.

Identifying ways to encourage and strengthen the organizational culture of Four Seasons.

Practical objectives

Examining the core values of the company, such as ethics, commitment to quality, and customer orientation, as well as identifying cultural practices and traditions that characterize the organization. Analyzing data regarding the level of employee satisfaction with the values, practices, and cultural traditions of the

organization and identifying factors contributing to employee satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Identifying cultural practices and traditions that could be improved or changed to enhance the company's performance and employee satisfaction through the analysis of less favorable results obtained from the research.

Identifying ways in which the company can encourage and reinforce the values, practices, and cultural traditions that contribute to its performance and success. These methods may include employee training and development programs, performance recognition and reward programs, as well as programs to promote organizational culture among customers and business partners.

Research hypotheses

Employees of the Four Seasons company identify with the values and organizational culture of the company and are satisfied with it.

The cultural practices and traditions of Four Seasons contribute to its performance and the satisfaction of both customers and employees.

Identifying cultural practices and traditions that need to be improved or changed can enhance the company's performance and the level of employee satisfaction.

Encouraging and consolidating the organizational culture of Four Seasons through employee training and development programs, performance recognition and reward programs, and programs to promote organizational culture among customers and business partners can contribute to its success and performance.

Research variables

Demographic variables of employees, including age, gender, level of education, previous work experience, and roles within the company.

Cultural variables including organizational values, practices and traditions, such as commitment to quality, attitude towards customers, teamwork, and respect for cultural diversity.

Employee satisfaction variables including the level of satisfaction with the company's organizational culture, as well as their satisfaction with job requirements, relationships with colleagues and management, work-life balance, satisfaction with benefits and salary, as well as opportunities for professional development.

Variables for encouraging and consolidating organizational culture, including employee training and development programs, performance recognition and reward programs, as well as programs to promote organizational culture among customers and business partners.

Research steps

The research was scheduled in the following stages, which took place throughout the academic year 2022 - 2023:

Study and documentation regarding the "Organizational culture of the Four Seasons hotel group";

Collection of feedback from employees within the Four Seasons hotel group;

Centralization and analysis of the obtained results;

Drawing conclusions;

Drafting of the research report.

Research subjects

The conducted research was qualitative but also had quantitative components and took place between 2015 and 2023. The selected sample, consisting of 100 feedbacks, was large enough to provide relevant statistical data, and the analysis of these feedbacks across multiple categories represents a quantitative method of data analysis. At the same time, the collected feedback provided a subjective perspective of employees' experiences and opinions about various aspects of the organization, which represents a qualitative method of data collection. For the selection of participants, a practical sampling model was used, specifically simple random sampling. The participant sample consisted of 100 employees from the Four Seasons Hotel Group from all major departments, selected globally.

Description of research methods and tools/techniques

In conducting the research, the starting point was represented by understanding the organizational culture of the Four Seasons hotel group. To achieve the proposed objectives, the following methods, and tools specific to this approach were used:

Documentation from the preliminary stage included adequate research to gain an in- depth understanding of the organizational context. This involved studying existing literature, examining previous research and studies conducted on organizational culture, especially those focusing on the hotel industry and the Four Seasons hotel group. Additionally, preliminary documentation involved analyzing internal reports and documents, studying financial and performance reports, company policy and procedure manuals, as well as other internal documents providing a deep understanding of the organizational culture and work practices of the company. A brief analysis of the competition was also conducted, examining the organizational cultures of competitors in the hotel industry to understand what practices and cultural traditions Four Seasons could use to improve its performance and employee and customer satisfaction, as well as to determine the group's market position in terms of organizational culture.

Research was the main method of acquiring primary information, on which the scientific approach was based. Research on the organizational culture and employee satisfaction of Four Seasons was applied to a total of 100 employees of the group. The research includes the analysis of important categories, divided into 6 categories: compensation and benefits, relationship with management, job security and promotion, work-life balance, work environment, and finally, organizational culture.

An important step in conducting the research, after the data collection stage, was processing the obtained information, which involved systematizing the data and treating them statistically to obtain the necessary system of statistical indicators for analysis. In this context, the analysis was performed in the EXCEL program, commonly used in research in the Social Sciences field, and specific formulas were used to facilitate further analysis. The analysis of the obtained information led to the elaboration of the research conclusions, based on which the final report was drawn up. The final report mentions both the research conclusions and a series of proposals for ameliorative actions required in the identified situation. Additionally, the report includes references to research directions that could continue the study of the addressed theme in this paper, organizational culture and its effect on the level of satisfaction of employees and customers.

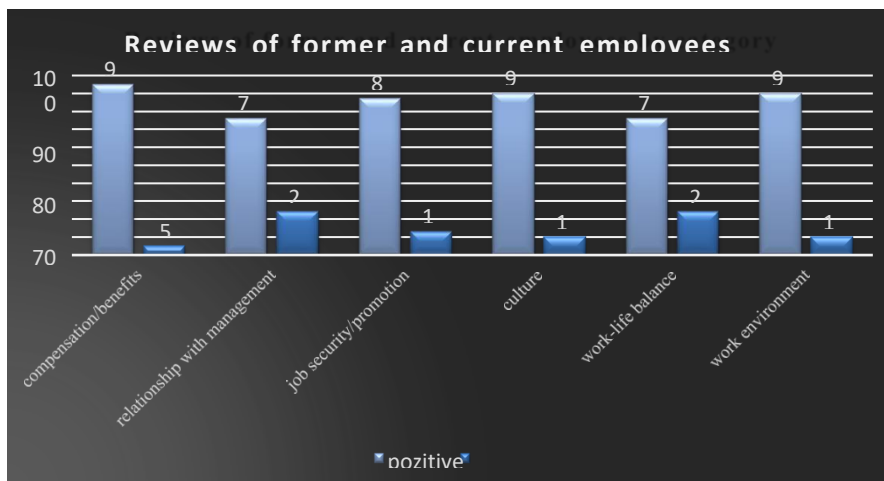
Research results and interpretation

Presentation and analysis/data processing

The initial aspects of the research aimed to identify the experiences of all employees in relation to each of the 6 categories mentioned earlier, namely how many of the analyzed feedback and the percentage in which they declare themselves satisfied/dissatisfied.

Thus, the research begins with a question regarding the percentage of employees (former or current) of the Four Seasons hotel group who declare themselves satisfied/dissatisfied with the following categories: compensation and benefits, relationship with management, job security and promotion, work-life balance, work environment, and finally, organizational culture.

Chart 3.1 Reviews of former and current employees by category



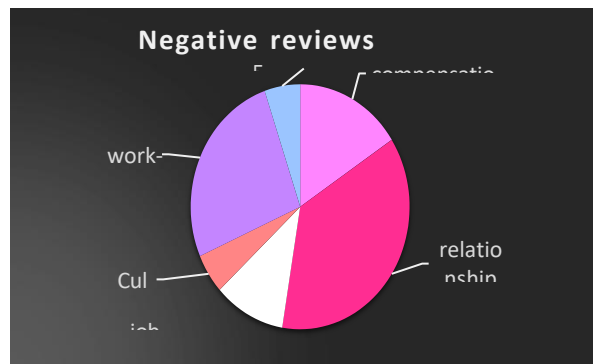
Source: Elaborated by the authors, based on the results of the feedback analysis

Analyzing the selected feedback, it can be concluded that all categories were considered positively by the majority of employees (over 70%), specifically compensation/benefits with a percentage of 95%, work environment with 90%, culture with 90%, job security/promotion with 87%, relationship with management with 76%, and lastly, work-life balance with 76%.

The categories with the highest percentage of negative feedback, namely 24%, are the relationship with management and work-life balance. These results are influenced by the industry, as many of the employees who rated work-life balance negatively stated that they are aware that such a demanding schedule applies anywhere in the hotel industry. The fewest negative feedbacks, 5%, were given to the compensation and benefits category, with many respondents ranking Four Seasons as a top employer considering this category. For culture and work environment, negative feedback accounted for 10%, while for job security/promotion, the percentage of negative feedback is 13%.

Another relevant aspect was identifying the reasons why current employees are dissatisfied, in order to detect the practices and cultural traditions that need to be improved or changed.

Chart 3.2 Negative reviews from current employees



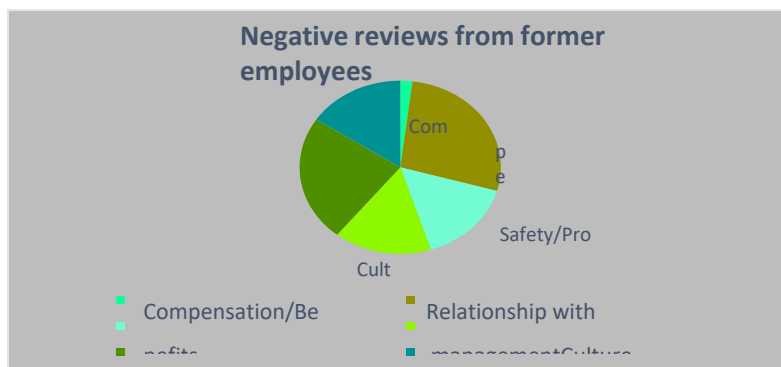
Source: Elaborated by the authors, based on the results of the feedback analysis

The above graph shows that the main reasons for current employees' dissatisfaction are the relationship with management, with a percentage of 37%, and work-life balance, which registered a percentage of 26%. It can be concluded that increased attention needs to be paid to the communication relationship between management and staff, as well as the fact that employees desire more time for their personal lives, with many stating that the biggest issue is the need to be available even during off-hours to respond to work-related demands at any time. Another conclusion drawn from the analysis of the above graph is that only 5% represents the negative percentage assigned to the categories of work environment and culture, demonstrating that the social

environment in which they operate is appreciated by the majority of current employees. Additionally, it can be affirmed that the values and organizational culture of Four Seasons are in line with its commitment to employee satisfaction, with the entire hotel group adhering to the golden rule of treating others as they would like to be treated.

Another analysis involved examining the reasons why employees resigned, specifically the categories that former employees rated negatively.

Chart 3.3 Negative reviews from former employees

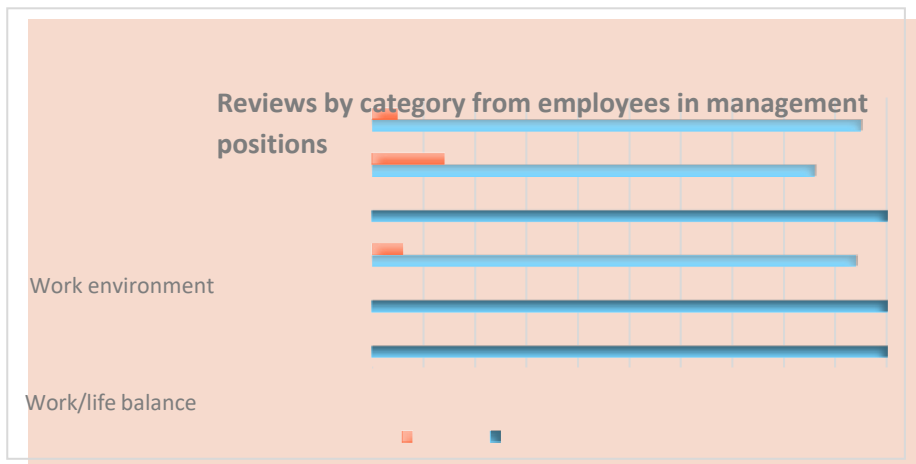


Source: Elaborated by the authors, based on the results of the feedback analysis

Analyzing the reviews provided by former employees, it can be observed that the primary reason considered most negative among the proposed categories is the relationship with management, which registered a percentage of 27%, followed by work-life balance, which registered a percentage of 23%. Three categories recorded the same percentage (16%), namely work environment, culture, and safety/promotion at the workplace.

The category that recorded the lowest percentage of dissatisfaction among former employees is represented by compensation and benefits, which registered a percentage of 2%.

Former employees also highlight the main reasons for dissatisfaction as the relationship with management and work-life balance, which are the same as those found among current Four Seasons team members. However, the negative percentages are significantly lower than the positive ones, indicating that although improvements can be made in these two categories, the hotel group does not face serious issues regarding employee satisfaction. For an in-depth analysis, a comparison was made between the reviews from employees in managerial positions and those in executive positions. Thus, the feedback of those in management roles was analyzed first, focusing on their level of satisfaction with each of the 6 categories.

Chart 3.4 Reviews by category from employees in management positions

Source: Elaborated by the authors, based on the results of the feedback analysis

Employees in management positions have given 100% positive feedback to the categories of compensation and benefits, relationship with management, and culture. They provided positive feedback in the percentage of 94% for safety and promotion at the workplace, 95% for the work environment, and 86% for work-life balance. The work-life balance category received the highest negative feedback, namely 14%, followed by safety/promotion at the workplace with 6%. It can be observed that those in leadership positions did not give negative reviews for the categories of compensation and benefits, relationship with management, and culture. It can be concluded that holding a leadership position entails numerous responsibilities, which require employees to spend a considerable amount of time at work and to be constantly dedicated, as reflected in their negative ratings for the work-life balance category. However, the positive responses to other important categories such as the work environment and organizational culture reflect their satisfaction with being part of the team and their alignment with the company's values and organizational culture.

Another important graph represents the reviews of employees in executive positions from the Food & Beverage department. Food & Beverage is considered a department that requires a lot of physical work, extensive time spent with guests, and is one of the departments with the highest turnover rates in a hotel. Therefore, it was deemed appropriate to analyze the opinions of F&B executives, specifically those occupying the following positions: waiter, bartender, line cook, chef, pastry chef, waiter assistant.

Chart 3.5 F&B employee reviews, executive positions

Source: Elaborated by the authors, based on the results of the feedback analysis

From the above graph, it can be observed that employees in executive positions in the Food & Beverage department rated compensation-benefits and culture as the most positive categories, with a percentage of 93%, followed by safety-promotion at the workplace, with a percentage of 92%, the work environment with 89%, relationship with management with 74%, and lastly, work-life balance with 69% positive ratings. Employees in executive positions in the F&B department gave the highest negative percentages to the categories of work-life balance - 31% and relationship with management - 26%. The rest of the categories proposed for analysis, namely compensation-benefits, culture, and safety-promotion at the workplace, were rated as negative in small percentages of 7 – 8%. It is noteworthy that the Four Seasons hotel group succeeds in conveying its culture to employees, making them identify with its principles and actions. The compensation-benefits and culture categories received the highest percentages of positive reviews from both categories of employees, with management positions and executive positions in F&B, which may conclude that the bonus system is fair for all employees. However, the fact that both categories of employees gave negative feedback in the highest percentages to the work-life balance category leads to the conclusion that the employees' work schedule needs to be carefully monitored, and there is a need to provide more free time for personal activities.

Interpreting the results of the research

The core values of the company are focused on service quality, respect for both customers and employees, innovation, and commitment to sustainability. These are crucial values for the organization's success and should be further promoted and reinforced to the employees. The data has indicated a high level of employee satisfaction with Four Seasons' organizational culture and practices, but there are also some weaknesses, such as the level of workplace

stress and the ability to express opinions within the organization, especially in front of those in leadership positions. It is recommended that these aspects be taken into account and improved to increase employee satisfaction and engagement. Among the most important positive aspects of employee satisfaction are the opportunities for personal and professional development. Employees mentioned that they had access to training and personal development programs, as well as mentors who helped them improve their skills and advance in their careers. These programs are perceived as significant benefits by employees, contributing to their overall satisfaction. Through the analysis of all reviews, it was found that employees received periodic performance evaluations as well as constant feedback from their superiors. These practices helped employees improve their performance and feel valued within the organization. However, the research also highlighted certain aspects that could be improved to increase employee satisfaction. Among the most significant negative points is the high level of workplace stress, with many mentioning that the workplace is quite stressful, leading to fatigue and demotivation. They consider that work-life balance is lacking. It is important for the organization to identify the causes of this stress and take measures to improve working conditions and reduce fatigue. Additionally, some employees stated that they do not always feel confident expressing their opinions in front of leadership, which can lead to frustration and dissatisfaction. It is crucial for the organization to create an open environment and encourage employees to voice their opinions.

Research conclusions

Validation / invalidation of research hypotheses

Following the conducted research, it can be observed that the formulated hypotheses are validated. Regarding the first hypothesis, data analysis showed that the values and organizational culture of Four Seasons are indeed in line with its commitment to quality and customer satisfaction. Employees and managers of the company emphasized the importance of this commitment and how it is integrated into all aspects of the organization's activities.

Concerning the second hypothesis, the research indicated that employees of the Four Seasons hotel group do identify with its values and organizational culture and are highly satisfied with it. This was reflected in the research results regarding employee satisfaction with the organizational culture, as they provided positive feedback in this category.

Regarding the third hypothesis, data analysis revealed that the practices and cultural traditions of Four Seasons are indeed important for its performance and for the satisfaction of customers and employees. This was reflected in the positive feedback given by employees regarding the services and products offered by the company, as well as in the customer appreciations.

As for the fourth hypothesis, the research showed that identifying the practices and cultural traditions that need improvement or change can enhance the company's performance and the satisfaction level of its employees. This was reflected in the recommendations made by employees and managers in the reviews provided to improve certain aspects and practices.

Regarding the fifth hypothesis, data analysis demonstrated that encouraging and consolidating the organizational culture of Four Seasons through training and development programs for employees, performance recognition and reward programs and programs to promote the organizational culture among customers and business partners can indeed contribute to its success and performance. This was reflected in the recommendations made by employees and managers in the reviews to consistently strengthen and promote the organizational culture, as well as in their testimonies regarding the positive influence of the company's culture on their performances and motivation to meet the highest quality standards.

Recommendation for future research

Following the research carried out on the organizational culture at the Four Seasons hotel group, the following recommendations could be useful for future research:

Expanding the sample: If the research is continued or repeated in the future, it might be useful to expand the sample of participants so that a more complete picture of organizational culture at the global level can be obtained.

Benchmarking: If data from other similar companies is available, future research could analyze and compare the organizational culture of Four Seasons with other similar companies in the industry to identify any differences or similarities in cultural values, practices and traditions.

Use of mixed methods: Instead of using only qualitative or quantitative methods, future research could use mixed methods such as case studies and surveys to get a complete and more accurate picture of organizational culture. Investigating internal relationships: In future research, it may be useful to further investigate the internal relationships between employees and company management through interviews to determine the extent to which these relationships contribute to organizational culture.

For future research, the perspective of Four Seasons customers and how they perceive the company's organizational culture and its impact on their satisfaction could also be considered. Moreover, newer and more advanced research tools such as sentiment analysis, social network analysis or more sophisticated data analysis techniques could also be used for future research in order to gain a more complete picture of the company's organizational culture.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the research conducted on the organizational culture of the Four Seasons hotel group aimed to evaluate employee satisfaction, identify organizational values and culture, practices and cultural traditions, as well as proposed improvements to consolidate and promote the organizational culture. Through qualitative and quantitative methods, feedback was collected from 100 employees from all major departments, selected globally.

The research results indicated that the values and organizational culture of Four Seasons align with its commitment to quality and customer satisfaction. Employees also identify with the company's values and organizational culture and are satisfied with them. Additionally, the company's practices and cultural traditions contribute to its performance and the satisfaction of both customers and employees. Additionally, identifying practices and cultural traditions that need improvement or change can enhance the company's performance and employee satisfaction.

Therefore, it is recommended that the Four Seasons hotel group continues to encourage and strengthen its organizational culture through employee training and development programs, performance recognition and reward programs, and organizational culture promotion among customers and business partners to ensure its continued success and performance.

Overall, the research has made a valuable contribution to understanding the organizational culture and employee satisfaction within the Four Seasons hotel group. These findings can help improve the organizational culture and performance of the company, as well as increase the satisfaction of employees and customers.

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