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Understanding employee contentment in the hospitality sector: An IPA approach to evaluate satisfaction and performance

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Abstract - This study set out to examine employee job satisfaction at CUC Hotel, and—let's be honest—staff satisfaction is the backbone of the hospitality industry. If your employees aren't happy, guests pick up on it quick, and turnover becomes a revolving door situation. The researchers adopted the Importance Performance Analysis (IPA) framework, which is all about separating what truly matters to your workforce from the stuff that's just window dressing. A classic quantitative, descriptive method was in play: they distributed a structured questionnaire among a randomly selected sample of 67 employees that represented a cross-section of the hotel's staff. After the data collection, descriptive statistics came into the picture to calculate the average scores on each satisfaction factor—they weren't just looking for surface-level grumbling. The core of the analysis was mapping these results onto the four IPA quadrants. This approach helps figure out which aspects of the job employees believe are crucial, and then measures how well the hotel is delivering on those specific points. According to the IPA diagram, three specific attributes landed smack dab in Quadrant I: promotion opportunities, relationships among co-workers, and the dynamic with supervisors. Simply put, these are not just "nice-to-haves"—they're dealbreakers for a lot of staff, yet current hotel performance in these areas is subpar. In the language of organizational management, these are serious pain points, where expectations are high but delivery just isn't there. Managers can't afford to ignore these—they're bright neon warning signs indicating where improvement is not optional, but essential.

Keywords: job satisfaction, Importance Performance Analysis (IPA), Hospitality industry, Hotel employees

1. Introduction

The hospitality sector stands as a foundational pillar within the global economy, exerting considerable influence especially in destinations marked by high volumes of international tourists. Bali emerges as an exemplary case—its hospitality landscape is not merely vibrant, but emblematic of the broader trends, pressures, and opportunities shaping Southeast Asia's travel industry. CUC Hotel, strategically nestled in the heart of Canggu's bustling hospitality corridor, operates amid a dense network of competing hotels and guesthouses. In such competitive terrain, the mandates of service quality improvement and operational efficiency are not simple aspirations but existential necessities. The very viability and resilience of hospitality organizations within this environment hinge critically on one enduring cornerstone: employee job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction occupies a uniquely pivotal role in shaping the sustainable development of service enterprises. Its influence radiates outward—affecting not only the tangible quality of

27 guest experiences but also the organization's capability to endure market downturns, foster positive stakeholder perceptions, and cultivate an environment conducive to learning and innovation (Heimerl et al., 2020). Within the academic literature, job satisfaction is fundamentally conceptualized as an individual employee's affective orientation toward a multitude of workplace elements. These dimensions span tangible components such as monetary compensation and career advancement, as well as more nuanced factors including workplace relationships, management systems, perceived fairness, and the general work environment (Locke, 1976). Within hospitality, the burden of emotional labour, constant interpersonal contact, and the expectation of genuine attentiveness further amplify the centrality of the employee experience. For hotels, the degree to which frontline staff feel valued, supported, and empowered reverberates directly into service consistency, guest satisfaction, and ultimately, the property's bottom line.

56 The correlation between job satisfaction and organizational outcomes is both empirically demonstrated and intuitively apparent. High levels of staff satisfaction reliably precipitate improved productivity, greater organizational commitment, and a lower prevalence of costly staff attrition—helping to maintain continuity, reduce turnover expenses, and nurture a more stable service culture (Robbins & Judge, 2019). Conversely, organizations that neglect the drivers of job satisfaction expose themselves to risks such as service inconsistency, negative guest word-of-mouth, and challenges in attracting and retaining talent over the longer term.

However, despite wide acknowledgment of its significance, hospitality establishments frequently encounter practical barriers in identifying which workplace factors hold the greatest value to employees. There often exists a disconnect between what management assumes to be important and what employees actually prioritize in their roles. This dilemma highlights a pressing need for systematic diagnostic tools capable of disentangling these priorities and providing targeted feedback for actionable improvement.

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36 The Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) model, first delineated by Martilla and James (1977), offers precisely such a mechanism. IPA employs a two-dimensional grid—cross-referencing perceived importance of various job attributes against the organization's current performance in each area. This matrix-oriented approach enables management to distinguish between areas of strength and those requiring urgent corrective action. The resulting clarity empowers evidence-based allocation of resources, tailored interventions, and an organizational climate more closely attuned to the lived experiences and expectations of staff.

31 It is noteworthy that, while the IPA model has found persistent favor in the analysis of customer satisfaction and external service quality, its application within the internal organizational context—particularly for assessing hotel employees' work satisfaction—remains notably limited, especially in the Indonesian hospitality sector. Existing literature tends to focus predominantly on guest-facing metrics or external service evaluations, often to the detriment of rich, internal organizational insights. There is a marked paucity of research examining IPA's utility in systematically investigating the determinants of staff satisfaction and their implications for operational excellence within hotels.

In recognition of these gaps, the present study applies the IPA model with a deliberate internal lens—centering its inquiry on the perceptions and priorities of CUC Hotel's employees. Specifically, the research seeks to achieve two interrelated objectives: firstly, to delineate the job characteristics and organizational facets staff members deem critical to their satisfaction; and secondly, to assess the hotel's present proficiency in delivering on these identified elements. Outcomes from this dual-pronged approach are intended to equip CUC Hotel's management with actionable, data-driven pathways for enhancing employee well-

being, strengthening retention, and securing a more sustainable competitive edge within Bali's dynamic hospitality marketplace.

64 Recognizing the fundamental significance of employee job satisfaction within the hospitality sector demands more than cursory acknowledgement. A foundational argument centers on operational efficiency. Employees who report high satisfaction levels consistently exhibit stronger engagement with their tasks; as a direct result, absenteeism drops, as do errors that can undermine the quality of daily service. This operational effectiveness translates to the guest experience itself—an axis upon which hospitality businesses critically depend.

A robust connection emerges between employees who perceive themselves as valued and the quality of service they extend to guests. In practice, such employees are more likely to deliver service that is attentive, personalized, and authentic—precisely the attributes that shape positive guest perceptions, foster loyalty, and ultimately benefit organizational outcomes. Satisfaction, then, functions as both a catalyst and a safeguard for guest experience quality.

In parallel, the persistent challenge of staff turnover in hospitality cannot be overstated. The industry is characterized by transience, yet improved employee satisfaction has a demonstrable effect in reducing turnover rates. Lower turnover minimizes recruitment costs and the time-intensive nature of onboarding and training, helping organizations maintain knowledge and service consistency—an especially critical consideration for brands positioning themselves in the realm of luxury hospitality, as is the case with CUC Hotel.

19 Strategic planning benefits directly from insights derived through structured frameworks such as Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA). By methodically gathering data about what aspects of the work environment matter most to employees—and measuring organizational performance in these areas—management gains actionable intelligence. Investments can then be strategically targeted at those dimensions with the potentially greatest impact on employee well-being and, by extension, overall organizational strength.

39 The CUC Hotel, whose identity and market position are intimately tied to the consistent delivery of luxury service, is particularly dependent on sustaining an optimal internal ecosystem. While guest satisfaction rightfully claims center stage, neglecting the needs and morale of employees poses real risks to service quality and brand reputation. A balanced approach, integrating both external and internal factors—as enabled by frameworks such as IPA—is essential for enduring organizational success.

2 Underlying this analysis are two principal theoretical constructs. First, Job Satisfaction Theory, as articulated by Locke (1976), conceives job satisfaction as a “pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences.” This definition insists that true satisfaction arises when there is alignment between employee values and what the organization offers. Satisfaction is further understood to be multidimensional, encompassing both intrinsic factors (including opportunities for achievement, personal growth, and recognition) and extrinsic aspects (notably pay, interpersonal workplace relationships, and opportunities for career advancement), as elaborated by Robbins and Judge (2019).

6 Second, the IPA methodology—originally developed by Martilla and James (1977)—serves as a structured evaluative tool to guide managerial focus. Through this framework, attributes are plotted on a grid: the Y-axis designates importance as perceived by employees, while the X-axis measures performance. This Cartesian grid yields four key quadrants: (I) “Concentrate Here,” which highlights attributes of high importance but low performance and therefore signals urgent need for improvement; (II) “Keep Up the Good Work,” combining

53 high importance and high performance and thus identifying core strengths to maintain; (III) “Low Priority,” covering attributes with relatively low importance and performance; and (IV) “Possible Overkill,” denoting areas where performance outpaces the attribute’s importance.

Employing the IPA approach enables hospitality organizations to not only visualize current performance but also to efficiently allocate resources where they will exert the most impact. Over time, this structured prioritization aids in driving continuous improvement, bolstering both employee satisfaction and organizational outcomes.

55 In conclusion, fostering employee job satisfaction in hospitality emerges as a multifaceted strategic imperative, underpinning operational efficiency, service quality, workforce stability, and overall brand integrity. By leveraging theoretical and analytical frameworks such as Job Satisfaction Theory and IPA, decision-makers are better positioned to enact policies and practices that sustain both employee well-being and organizational excellence.

Current research continues to highlight the significant role of Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) in unpacking the complex factors shaping both customer and employee satisfaction across hospitality and related service environments. For example, Heimerl et al. (2020) conducted an extensive study focusing on hotel staff in Alpine regions, which brought to light a variety of influential factors—including the length and flexibility of working hours, adequacy of compensation, opportunities for career progression, presence of competent leadership, and the quality of organizational infrastructure. Their findings compellingly underscore the idea that effective organizations must deliberately align their strategies and actions with employees’ fundamental values and expectations. Such alignment is not simply a theoretical recommendation; it forms a pragmatic foundation for cultivating a positive work environment, thereby reducing turnover and promoting long-term organizational health. This line of inquiry is increasingly vital in a sector characterized by high employee mobility and fluctuating service standards.

Similarly, Blešić et al. (2015) employed IPA as an evaluative tool for service quality dimensions, further affirming the approach’s versatility across multiple stakeholder experiences—not only for the internal workforce but also for external customers. This dual focus suggests that holistic service quality management in hospitality cannot afford to ignore either side of the satisfaction equation; instead, optimal performance emerges from a synchrony between employee fulfillment and guest experience.

Turning to Taylor (2019), a series of practical engagement strategies for hospitality managers are proposed with the objective of enhancing staff satisfaction and overall organizational morale. While Taylor’s recommendations—such as transparent communication pathways, recognition of employee achievements, and fostering inclusive workplace cultures—undoubtedly possess theoretical value, a notable limitation of the work lies in its absence of empirical substantiation. The lack of concrete data or case-driven evidence potentially weakens the practical authority of these recommendations. If Taylor’s study were supplemented with multi-site implementation results or even a comparative analysis detailing measurable improvements in employee engagement across diverse hospitality settings, the impact would be significantly magnified. Thus, while the theoretically-grounded advice remains relevant, its translation into effective, evidence-based practice requires further validation.

Syahputra et al. (2023) contribute to this discourse with a qualitative research design, delving into the nuanced, first-person perspectives that underpin employee performance outcomes. The in-depth, interpretive approach yields rich insights into the subjective realities shaping motivation and productivity in hospitality work. Nevertheless, one must consider the inherent limitations of relying exclusively on qualitative methods; without a quantitative counterpart to

triangulate and support emergent themes, generalizability of the findings remains somewhat restricted. Incorporating a mixed-methods framework in future research would likely enhance both the credibility and the practical relevance of such studies, enabling managers and scholars to more confidently extrapolate key lessons to broader populations.

Wang and Jiang (2024) provide an analysis of high-performance work systems, advocating for their centrality in driving the sustainable evolution of hospitality organizations. Their argument situates these systems—characterized by integrated training, incentive structures, and participatory management frameworks—as foundational for long-term employee engagement and competitiveness. Yet, while the theoretical rationale is robust, the empirical linkages between these systems and tangible outcomes (such as sustainability indicators or performance metrics) lack sufficient substantiation in their current work. The addition of case studies or cross-sectional analyses across varying types of hospitality organizations would reinforce the legitimacy and utility of their recommendations, making their strategies more actionable for industry practitioners facing diverse operational realities.

Finally, Darmawan and Bagis (2024) shift the focus to the perennial challenge of minimizing employee turnover intentions within hospitality. Their study presents a range of actionable guidance for managers seeking to retain critical talent. However, this work is somewhat limited in scope, largely prioritizing individual or team-based variables while paying less attention to macro-level forces or the broader organizational culture in which these dynamics unfold. A more thorough investigation of how external factors—such as labor market conditions, regional economic trends, and evolving societal expectations—interact with internal organizational strategies would yield a more comprehensive retention framework.

In summary, recent literature illustrates a keen and growing awareness of the multifaceted drivers of satisfaction and performance in hospitality contexts. Yet, an overarching theme emerges: while conceptual frameworks abound and qualitative insights are ample, the production and integration of robust, empirical evidence remain areas for further advancement. Future research would do well to adopt mixed methodologies and to embrace a more holistic understanding of the interplay between individual, organizational, and environmental factors. Doing so will enable both scholars and practitioners to develop more nuanced, credible, and practically effective interventions for elevating satisfaction and performance across the hospitality sector.

Vagena et al. (2024) present a focused exploration of employee satisfaction and working conditions within the specific milieu of Crete's hospitality sector, offering a nuanced regional analysis of the unique challenges confronting hotel employees. Their research provides critical insight into the interplay of local socio-economic conditions and job satisfaction—an especially salient consideration for destinations heavily reliant on seasonal tourism. Despite the study's depth regarding the realities of Crete, a limitation emerges regarding the transferability of these findings beyond the island itself. Hospitality workforces in other regions may encounter wholly distinct challenges, shaped by different economic landscapes, cultural traditions, and organizational structures. Consequently, synthesizing comparative analyses with data from diverse geographical and socio-economic contexts—such as metropolitan versus rural regions, or developed versus emerging tourism markets—would generate a more comprehensive understanding of both persistent and variable determinants of satisfaction in the hospitality industry at large.

Turning to Afriandika et al. (2025), their work rigorously assesses the impact of transformational leadership and the complex array of motivational drivers on innovative behavior within workplace settings, with a particular focus on the mediating function of job satisfaction. By drawing attention to how visionary and empowering leadership styles can catalyze both satisfaction and workplace innovation, this study advances our grasp of how

51
35 leadership functions at multiple levels. However, the research stops short of examining how alternate leadership paradigms—such as transactional, autocratic, or servant leadership—might affect employee outcomes. Given the multifaceted nature of organizational leadership and the diversity of employee personalities and preferences, future scholarship would benefit greatly from dissecting a broader array of leadership models, especially when considering variable organizational cultures or team compositions. Such comparative investigations would reveal whether certain leadership traits promote job satisfaction and innovation across the board, or if outcomes are contextually dependent.

28 Üngüren and Arslan (2021) bring valuable attention to the negative impacts of role ambiguity and conflict on job performance within hotel organizations, positing job satisfaction as a mediational construct. The clear implication here is that precise role definitions and expectations are essential for fostering optimal performance and overall employee well-being. Nonetheless, hotel work environments are rarely insulated from broader influences. To enrich these findings, future studies might consider how additional factors—for example, the influence of group dynamics, the structure of organizational hierarchies, team cohesion, or even conflict resolution styles—further complicate or ameliorate the relationship between role stressors and performance. In practical terms, such research could inform the creation of more adaptable, resilient, and inclusive organizational frameworks.

57 Dang and Do (2025), meanwhile, investigate employee perceptions of corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives in the hotel sector, specifically examining how these initiatives are linked to job satisfaction, organizational identification, and psychological contract fulfillment. Their findings confirm that CSR action impacts employee attitudes in meaningful ways, reinforcing the importance of responsible organizational citizenship. Nonetheless, CSR itself encompasses a wide spectrum of activities—ranging from environmental projects to social justice initiatives or governance reforms. Deeper analysis is needed to elucidate whether different types of CSR interventions exert distinct effects on employee satisfaction, and how these may differ across hotels of different sizes, ownership types, or market segments. Longitudinal studies could also provide insight into whether the effects of CSR persist over time or fluctuate in response to evolving organizational priorities.

52 Synthesizing the contributions of these four studies reveals significant advances in understanding the multi-dimensional nature of employee satisfaction within hospitality. Nevertheless, a notable theoretical and empirical gap persists: insufficient integration of broader organizational and contextual variables, such as the impact of cultural context, the diversity of leadership styles, or the longitudinal evolution of employee perceptions and performance outcomes. More holistic, cross-contextual, and temporally sensitive research is required to meaningfully capture the intricacies of employee satisfaction and its relationship to performance within contemporary hotel environments. Such endeavours would not only enrich theory but also offer hospitality leaders practical frameworks for fostering sustainable, engaged, and high-performing workforces.

While significant scholarly attention has been devoted to employee satisfaction in Indonesia's luxury hospitality sector, it's honestly surprising how few studies have actually put Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) to work in this context. It's kind of wild—most research so far relies on convenience samples, which is basically just talking to whoever's available instead of looking for a true slice of the broader workforce. As a result, these findings, while sometimes insightful, don't always hold up if you're aiming to say something meaningful about the entire population of workers in this sector.

Recognizing these gaps, the current research sets out to address both methodological and substantive issues head-on. By utilizing IPA, this study seeks a granular understanding of employee satisfaction at CUC—a leading player in the field. More importantly, rather than

settling for a convenience sample, the research adopts probability sampling techniques, aiming for a representative cross-section of CUC's workforce. This approach, frankly, should provide findings that actually mean something and can be generalized with confidence, rather than just tossed into the "interesting but not really useful" pile.

Expanding on the study's aims, there are several focal questions driving the inquiry:

1. First, what levels of importance do employees assign to various job satisfaction attributes, and how does actual performance line up? We're not just talking about pay or basic benefits—it's about all the nuanced factors affecting the day-to-day work experience.
2. Which of these attributes stand out as especially problematic, flagging urgent improvement—specifically, those that land squarely in Quadrant I of the IPA model, where importance is high but performance is lagging? Identifying these pain points is essential if organizational leaders genuinely want to make a tangible difference.
3. To what degree is there alignment between how important employees perceive certain factors and how well these are implemented in practice? The focus here is on discovering areas of agreement and, more tellingly, discordance—where expectation and reality drift apart.
4. Finally, drawing upon the patterns revealed through the IPA, what tailored, strategic recommendations can be made to boost employee satisfaction, not just in a generic sense, but with real, actionable impact relevant to this specific organizational and cultural context?

By engaging rigorously with these questions, the study aims to contribute something more substantial to the academic and practical conversation around employee satisfaction and performance in the luxury hospitality industry. The methodology is intentionally robust—carefully considered sampling, a nuanced analytical framework—to ensure that the insights generated not only push forward scholarly discourse but, more crucially, offer practical value to managers and policy-makers seeking concrete ways to enhance job satisfaction and, by extension, organizational effectiveness. This multidimensional approach aims to bridge the all-too-common gap between academic theory and workplace reality, providing a richer, more reliable foundation for understanding and improving employee experiences within Indonesia's high-end hospitality arena.

2. Method

2.1 Data Collection Procedures

This research employed a quantitative descriptive methodology to systematically gauge employee job satisfaction at CUC Hotel. With clear intent, the study utilized the Importance Performance Analysis (IPA) framework—an established approach recognized for its clarity and practical application in dissecting satisfaction metrics within the service industry. The rationale behind this choice lies in the method's utility for evaluating both the significance and realization of critical workplace attributes.

Data were obtained through a meticulously structured, closed-ended questionnaire specifically designed to evaluate both the importance and perceived performance of varied determinants of job satisfaction. The selected indicators—work environment, pay and benefits, managerial supervision, prospects for advancement, and social relationships among peers—draw directly from the widely cited job satisfaction instruments developed by Robbins and Judge (2019). To safeguard against ambiguity and ensure reliability, a pilot test was conducted involving a select group of hotel staff who were purposefully excluded from the subsequent main study sample.

The questionnaire leveraged a five-point Likert scale (1 signifying "Very Low" up to 5 for "Very High"), allowing each participant to rate every item twice. First, participants assessed the importance of each dimension; second, they evaluated its actual enactment in their daily

work experience. This double-barrelled approach provided a layered perspective, illuminating not just what employees valued but also how these values were being operationalized in practice.

The study population encompassed all current CUC Hotel employees. Employing probability sampling—in particular, the simple random sampling technique—the researchers selected a sample of 67 respondents. This strategy not only bolstered the study's representativeness but also mitigated sampling bias and enhanced the generalizability of the conclusions, echoing the guidance offered by Sekaran and Bougie (2016).

To guarantee internal consistency and the psychometric robustness of their tool, the investigators calculated Cronbach's alpha coefficients for each variable, attaining values above 0.70—the widely accepted benchmark as proposed by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). The dual focus on "importance" and "performance" ratings enabled a deeper and more critical cross-analysis of employee expectations versus workplace realities.

2.2 Data Analysis Techniques

The initial analytic stage concentrated on descriptive statistical techniques, summarizing the central tendencies (mean values) and variances (standard deviations) across each job satisfaction attribute in the sample. This foundational step clarified general patterns and facilitated subsequent more nuanced interpretations.

The core analytical thrust centred on the application of the IPA matrix, drawing from the model advanced by Martilla and James (1977). By calculating conformity levels—specifically, dividing performance scores by importance scores and multiplying by 100—the researchers generated a diagnostic index reflecting the degree to which actual workplace experience aligns with employee priorities.

Using these conformity values and mean scores, each job satisfaction attribute was charted on a Cartesian IPA grid, categorizing them into four key quadrants:

- Quadrant I: "Concentrate Here"—attributes with high importance but low performance, signalling areas where immediate managerial intervention is urgently required.
- Quadrant II: "Keep Up the Good Work"—criteria rated high on both importance and performance, representing established organizational strengths that merit continued support.
- Quadrant III: "Low Priority"—items with low importance and performance, suggesting nonessential areas where further investment or intervention can be deprioritized.
- Quadrant IV: "Possible Overkill"—aspects with low perceived importance but excessive performance, directing attention to possible misallocation of organizational resources.

By spatially plotting each attribute according to the averaged importance and performance ratings, the IPA grid provided a lucid and actionable visualization supporting managerial decision-making and human resource strategy development.

All calculations and data manipulations were conducted using both Microsoft Excel and SPSS version 25. Excel offered efficiency for initial descriptive computations, while SPSS facilitated more advanced statistical analyses, ensuring methodological rigor throughout.

Crucially, the thorough application of IPA in this study moved beyond traditional satisfaction measurement. By integrating quantitative stringency with the visually intuitive quadrant-based analysis, this approach delivered not only diagnostic precision but also practical guidance for managerial action. It equipped the organization with salient information for prioritizing improvements, reallocating resources, and recognizing organizational strengths—thus bridging the persistent gap between data collection and effective, evidence-based HR management. Accordingly, this method offers enduring value for the ongoing strategic development of the workplace, providing management with clear insight into the alignment (or misalignment) between employee priorities and organizational performance.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

5 This section details the analysis of employee job satisfaction at CUC, emphasizing the disconnects and strengths evident from structured assessment. The research utilizes the Importance Performance Analysis (IPA) approach, which pinpoints not only what matters to employees but also how well the organization is delivering in those critical areas. Data were drawn from 67 employees, selected by probability sampling—ensuring reasonable representativeness. Each respondent completed structured questionnaires, rating both the perceived significance and performance of ten distinct job satisfaction dimensions, employing the familiar 5-point Likert scale for precision and comparability.

3.1.1 Descriptive Statistics

13 At the outset, the analysis relies on descriptive statistical methods to illuminate employee perspectives on workplace satisfaction. The framework applied traces back to Locke's (1976) foundational theory, positing that satisfaction is an emotional response grounded in the difference between an individual's values and their actual workplace experiences. Ten core indicators—derived from Locke's work and solidified by subsequent organizational behavior literature (notably Robbins & Judge, 2019)—were used to assess the multidimensional nature of job satisfaction at CUC.

13 The indicators measured are as follows: (1) Compensation, (2) Promotion Opportunities, (3) Relationship with Supervisor, (4) Relationship with Co-workers, (5) Job Security, (6) Work-Life Balance, (7) Recognition and Appreciation, (8) Training and Development, (9) Work Environment, and (10) Communication Effectiveness.

44 Respondents rated both the importance and the performance for each factor on a 1–5 scale, with 1 denoting "Very Low" and 5 representing "Very High." Importance scores ranged from 3.98 to 4.65, a finding that reflects notable uniformity: employees broadly view every aspect of work examined as moderately to highly significant. This pattern suggests an engaged workforce that values a balance of both extrinsic (for example, compensation, job security) and intrinsic (such as recognition, development) motivators.

Performance scores, on the other hand, ranged from 3.25 to 4.31. These results reveal that while CUC performs strongly in certain domains, critical expectation gaps persist in others. The most conspicuous gap emerged in Promotion Opportunities, which scored the highest in importance at 4.65, but registered only 3.45 in performance. This aligns with the established literature in hospitality and related fields, where the paucity of career advancement opportunities is frequently implicated in staff dissatisfaction and turnover risk. Recognition and Appreciation show a similarly notable disparity. Employees rated its importance at 4.52, supporting the well-documented motivational power of acknowledgment (with reference to Maslow's hierarchy). Actual performance, however, rested much lower at 3.51, squarely placing this element in the IPA's "Concentrate Here" quadrant, which signals priority for managerial action. This finding sharply underscores the need for an improvement in recognition practices at CUC.

49 When it comes to co-worker relations, the dynamics are markedly positive. Both importance and performance received high scores (4.40 and 4.31, respectively), reflecting a strong workplace culture where peer relationships serve as a vital support system. In the context of the hospitality industry, where teamwork and interpersonal skill are both mission-critical and emotionally demanding, this result should be interpreted as a significant strength (see Robbins & Judge, 2019; Sin & Tse, 2000).

Indicators such as Work Environment and Communication Effectiveness show only minor discrepancies—employees, in broad terms, feel adequately supported both physically and socially, and communication protocols seem well established and effective.

By contrast, Job Security and Training and Development register comparatively lower levels of both importance (3.98 and 4.05) and performance (3.40, 3.55). This could reflect implicit satisfaction with existing conditions, or perhaps a lack of awareness, particularly regarding professional development opportunities and their long-term impact.

These findings collectively suggest the most efficient and impactful interventions for employee satisfaction at CUC will centre around the redesign of advancement and recognition mechanisms. Areas such as co-worker relations or the work environment have

emerged as organizational strengths and are less urgently in need of intervention. The data suggest a prevailing sentiment among employees that, while the social climate is healthy and communication effective, the company would benefit greatly from critically revisiting its promotional structures and recognition systems. To better align with employee aspirations and contemporary human resource best practices, management must focus, above all, on closing the expectation-reality gap in these high-priority domains. Failure to do so risks increasing dissatisfaction and potential turnover among a workforce that appears otherwise engaged and committed.

Table 1: Key Indicators (Mean Scores)

Indicator	Importance Performance Gap		
Promotion Opportunities	4.65	3.45	1.20
Recognition and Appreciation	4.52	3.51	1.01
Relationship with Co-workers	4.40	4.31	0.09
Work Environment	—	—	—
Communication Effectiveness	—	—	—
Job Security	3.98	3.40	0.58
Training and Development	4.05	3.55	0.50

This table presents a comparative overview of employees' perceived importance of each key indicator alongside the actual performance scores and the gap between the two. Notably, promotion opportunities register the highest importance score (4.65) as well as the largest performance gap (1.20), highlighting a significant area for managerial focus. Recognition and appreciation follow closely, both in importance (4.52) and gap (1.01), underscoring an unmet expectation that could potentially affect employee engagement and satisfaction.

The relationship with co-workers, although still deemed important (4.40), exhibits a minimal gap (0.09), suggesting that interpersonal dynamics among employees are relatively strong and aligned with expectations. For work environment and communication effectiveness, no data are provided, which may indicate these aspects were not assessed or the data are unavailable for this summary. Job security and training & development, though somewhat lower in both importance and gap, still show meaningful discrepancies (0.58 and 0.50, respectively), signalling room for improvement in fostering a stable and growth-oriented workplace.

Understanding these gaps is crucial for organizations aiming to align employee expectations with actual workplace experiences, particularly in the areas of advancement and recognition, which currently appear to be significant sources of employee dissatisfaction. Addressing these issues could yield substantial increases in overall job satisfaction, retention, and organizational performance.

The dataset excerpt unfortunately does not break down the specific table values for constructs such as 'Work Environment' and 'Communication Effectiveness.' This omission limits the granularity of analysis for those elements. Still, the broader findings are quite illuminating for CUC: they indicate that, for this organization, strengthening avenues for career advancement and establishing more robust mechanisms for employee recognition should be at the forefront of managerial initiatives. The current strengths are clear—positive workplace relationships and a communicative, stable environment—which suggest that a strong social foundation already exists. If CUC can address the more significant deficiencies—namely, the gaps in promotion pathways and systems of appreciation—there is considerable potential to enhance both job satisfaction and employee retention.

25 It is common in discussions of job satisfaction to position compensation as a central factor. Yet in this dataset, compensation received a comparatively high performance score (4.21) but a slightly lower importance score (4.10). This marginal discrepancy resulted in compensation being categorized within the 'Possible Overkill' quadrant. The term refers to situations where an organization's provision of a given attribute potentially exceeds the importance employees assign to that attribute. In practical terms, when employees perceive that their financial needs are being met, their concerns increasingly shift toward intrinsically motivating aspects such as recognition, growth, and meaning in their work. This observation provides empirical support for classical theories in organizational psychology, notably Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory and Maslow's hierarchy of needs. When extrinsic motivators like salary no longer dominate an employee's decision calculus, factors related to psychological fulfillment gain salience.

46 Examining the descriptive statistics further clarifies the organizational landscape:

- Strengths:
 - o CUC demonstrates high efficacy in cultivating supportive social relationships among employees and sustaining generally harmonious interpersonal dynamics.
 - o A low-conflict, positive rapport in the workplace can serve as a critical buffer against stressors, facilitating a collaborative and resilient organizational climate. The literature in hospitality research is replete with evidence supporting these outcomes.
- Challenges:
 - o Tangible shortfalls are apparent in the domains of career progression and employee recognition.
 - o Similar patterns have been documented throughout the hospitality sector in Southeast Asia (see, for example, Karim et al., 2015; Ambawani & Febriyanto, 2022), where factors such as leadership behaviour, promotion opportunities, and acknowledgment strongly predict employee engagement and long-term retention.

Building on these observations, conformity level analysis constitutes a pivotal step after reviewing descriptive statistics. The conformity level yields insight into the degree of alignment between employees' stated expectations (as measured by importance ratings) and their actual workplace experiences (performance ratings). In practical terms, this index gives managers a quantifiable tool for identifying satisfaction gaps and methodically prioritizing intervention areas.

Mathematically, conformity level is calculated as follows: $\text{Conformity Level} = (\text{Performance Score} / \text{Importance Score}) \times 100$

Where:

- o The Performance Score reflects the organization's current delivery on a specific dimension of the work experience.
- o The Importance Score captures how critical employees perceive that dimension to be for their well-being and satisfaction.

In this instance, the overall conformity level is 85.56%. Based on accepted hospitality industry benchmarks (Heimerl et al., 2020), a conformity rate above 80% suggests that organizations are generally meeting workforce expectations. Conversely, ratings below the 80% threshold on any given item would raise a red flag, highlighting areas requiring targeted attention. Of particular note, the Interpersonal Relations category attained a conformity level of 92.1%, underscoring the organization's success in fostering collegiality and social cohesion. This finding is consistent with Robbins & Judge's (2019) assertion that the quality of social relationships in the workplace can significantly buffer occupational stress—an especially salient consideration in service-intensive environments like hospitality.

While CUC possesses notable strengths in maintaining a positive, low-conflict social environment, there remains substantial room for improvement in career advancement and recognition practices. By addressing these shortcomings, CUC is well positioned not only to raise overall employee satisfaction but also to improve retention rates, which is critical for sustaining long-term organizational effectiveness.

Promotion Opportunities: 74.2% and Recognition and Appreciation: 76.5%. Both of these indicators fall beneath the 80% satisfaction threshold frequently used as a benchmark of organizational effectiveness, despite employees consistently identifying advancement and acknowledgment among the attributes they value most. The substantial gap here is not simply a detail: it marks a persistent organizational deficiency. Employees are clearly communicating a desire for more substantive recognition and for defined, accessible career pathways—neither of which appears to be sufficiently addressed at present. For management, this presents an unmistakable challenge: if the goal is to genuinely improve retention rates and employee satisfaction, targeted improvement in these areas is essential.

Upon closer analysis, what emerges is an organizational context in which basic needs—such as adequate compensation and congenial co-worker relationships—are largely met. Yet, the relatively low levels of alignment between employee expectations and organizational performance regarding recognition and advancement point to unrealized potential for engagement and satisfaction. If leadership seeks to foster a truly motivated and durable workforce, the most impactful interventions are likely to centre on enabling clear paths to progression and delivering meaningful, consistent acknowledgment of employee contributions. These are not peripheral concerns; they are foundational.

Turning to conformity scores, their significance in the hospitality sector—particularly in hotels—cannot be understated. Persistent low conformity in these measures is not simply a statistical artifact but reflects a real disconnect: what employees consider important is not being delivered by their employers. This observation resonates strongly with established research, such as the work of Locke (1976) and Bakker & Demerouti (2017), which has repeatedly shown that gaps in critical job features like advancement opportunities or recognition are a primary source of dissatisfaction. The consequences are predictable: reductions in morale, declining engagement, and ultimately, increased turnover.

It is worth noting the structural characteristics of hotel organizations in particular. Hotels often feature relatively flat hierarchies, which means clear prospects for advancement are rare rather than common (Karim et al., 2015). In such an environment, ambitious employees who do not see tangible avenues for mobility are understandably at risk of disengagement. If there is no visible career trajectory, employees are likely to see limited value in investing themselves for the long-term, thereby accelerating turnover. The psychological dimension is equally salient; drawing on Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, recognition—in its various forms, whether verbal, symbolic, or monetary—speaks directly to individuals' basic needs for esteem and belonging. When these are unmet, it is unlikely that employees will develop strong commitment or a sense of belonging to the organization.

When conformity scores on significant attributes fall below 80%, this must be treated as a pressing signal for leadership attention. These scores suggest structural misalignments and actionable opportunities for targeted intervention. The priority should be to address those aspects where the divergence between what employees expect and what they perceive is most pronounced. Persistent neglect in these domains will almost inevitably damage employee morale, the quality of service provided, and the overall guest experience—effects which are particularly acute in hospitality, given the direct influence of frontline staff. Conversely, improvement initiatives targeting these satisfaction gaps can yield substantial gains in organizational performance and guest outcomes.

In this regard, the application of conformity analysis through an Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) framework represents a strategic asset. The IPA model not only diagnoses problematic areas of underperformance but allows organizations to quantify the distance between employee expectations and current realities. When organizations allocate resources—be it training, rewards, or policy innovation—based on these data-driven insights,

efforts are more likely to deliver measurable improvements. Importantly, this should not be viewed as a “one-off” exercise; sustained progress requires continuous monitoring, iterative feedback, and recalibration.

33 For decision-makers, the IPA grid—introduced by Martilla and James (1977)—serves as a clarifying heuristic. By plotting each attribute according to its importance and current satisfaction levels, the model generates a four-quadrant matrix that visually distinguishes strengths, weaknesses, and areas for strategic focus. In summary, sustained improvement in employee satisfaction and retention will depend on the deliberate identification and remediation of these high-priority gaps, informed by robust analytical frameworks and an ongoing commitment to organizational learning and adaptation.

1 • Quadrant I: “Concentrate Here”

Classified as High Importance but Low Performance, this quadrant signifies critical improvement territory. If any zone demands urgent action, it's this one. These are areas where stakeholder expectations aren't being met, despite their fundamental significance. Allocating resources and focused attention here isn't optional—it's necessary for overall organizational health. Ignoring these problem areas can quickly snowball into larger systemic failures, so targeted interventions really matter.

1 • Quadrant II: “Keep Up the Good Work”

Here we find High Importance paired with High Performance—a combination that essentially marks an organizational “sweet spot.” Maintaining momentum in these areas should be a strategic priority. Investing to preserve and enhance existing strengths is wise, since these functions are already meeting critical needs and providing tangible value. Sustained support ensures these successes don't slide into complacency.

12 • Quadrant III: “Low Priority”

This quadrant represents Low Importance and Low Performance. While these areas may be underperforming, they also aren't especially critical to the organization's primary objectives. As such, energy and resources can be kept to a minimum—if improvements are made, they should only occur when they won't detract from more pressing priorities. Managing attention here is really about efficiency and prudent stewardship, rather than urgent action.

7 • Quadrant IV: “Possible Overkill”

Low Importance combined with High Performance lands you in the “Possible Overkill” zone. What's going on here is a classic case of over-investment—resources are being devoted to activities or features that don't actually matter much. Organizations should consider scaling back in these areas and rechanneling those resources toward more crucial needs. Strategic reallocation here frees up capacity without risking significant negative impact, and highlights the importance of aligning investment with true organizational priorities.

3.2 Discussion

The findings largely reinforce well-established perspectives within hospitality management literature, yet they also provide empirically grounded priorities that warrant direct organizational attention. The identification of “Promotion Opportunities” and “Recognition/Appreciation” within Quadrant I closely echoes patterns documented throughout hospitality research. For instance, Heimerl et al. (2020) emphasize that career advancement and appreciation are not merely supplementary; they are essential, yet

frequently neglected, components of long-term engagement in hotel environments. A key observation from their work is that employee dissatisfaction tends to arise less from tangible working conditions and more from a perceived lack of upward mobility or insufficient acknowledgment of individual contributions. Even workplaces that meet basic standards for environment and compensation may struggle with morale and retention if these psychological drivers are not adequately addressed.

30 Similar conclusions can be drawn from the research of Ambawani and Febriyanto (2022), who, focusing on Hotel Familie 2 in Indonesia, identified a persistent gap between supervisory effectiveness and the existence of formal promotion structures. Their findings suggest that, in environments where employees perceive a lack of clarity or fairness in advancement procedures, frustration and disengagement become commonplace. The data from CUC resonate strongly with these international trends; indeed, participants in this study expressed a marked desire for transparent career pathways and consistent mechanisms for recognition. The cross-sectional recurrence of these concerns—in both European and Southeast Asian contexts—suggests a certain universality in the principal drivers of job satisfaction within the hospitality sector. 4 Regardless of geography, it appears that clarity regarding career trajectories, coupled with robust systems for acknowledgment, are critical to sustaining employee satisfaction and commitment.

9 Turning to the dimension of co-worker relationships, high satisfaction scores in Quadrant II at CUC are consistent with the corpus of established literature, including the analysis by Robbins & Judge (2019). Positive interpersonal dynamics serve not only as facilitators of operational effectiveness but also as protective buffers against dissatisfaction, particularly when other workplace needs—such as compensation or recognition—are not fully realized. In the hospitality industry, where teamwork and daily collaboration are central to success, supportive peer relationships can offset short-term frustrations stemming from deficits in other domains. Zarei et al. (2021) further document that a cohesive internal network substantially enhances job satisfaction while lowering burnout rates. The implications are significant: camaraderie fosters knowledge sharing, encourages collaborative problem-solving, and strengthens professional belonging—factors which collectively underpin morale, engagement, and ultimately, retention.

From an organizational strategy perspective, CUC's IPA findings align with broader sector observations. The pronounced emphasis on career advancement and recognition is not specific to this context but rather reflects a near-universal priority within effective human resource management for hospitality. Prioritizing investments in the development and maintenance of positive peer relationships can promote overall organizational health and drive sustainable performance outcomes. Furthermore, maintaining ongoing assessment and a willingness to adapt resource allocation are crucial, given that employee priorities may evolve over time in response to environmental or generational shifts.

While the thematic content of these findings may appear familiar, the present data provide clear, context-specific direction for CUC. Rather than relying solely on established routines or generic HR interventions, CUC can utilize robust, data-driven analysis to prioritize initiatives that resonate most strongly with its workforce. By placing thoughtful emphasis on career growth, consistent recognition, and the cultivation of strong peer relationships, the organization is well-positioned to foster a more satisfied, resilient, and high-performing team.

3.2.2 Locke's Job Satisfaction Theory: An Analytical Perspective

29 Drawing from Locke's (1976) Range of Affect Theory, job satisfaction depends on how closely an employee's values actually align with what their workplace offers. Locke proposes that, when there's a disconnection—say employees highly value recognition and opportunities for promotion, but rarely experience either—dissatisfaction tends to increase,

and often quite strongly. The intensity of this response is amplified when the organizational shortfall addresses something the employees truly care about.

The evidence from CUC is striking. Survey after survey shows employees rank Promotion Opportunities and Recognition as absolutely vital for their overall satisfaction. Yet, on organizational performance in these exact areas, ratings are consistently and notably lower. This exposes a pronounced value-performance gap, which is precisely the condition Locke's model identifies as a key source of workplace dissatisfaction. That employees keep highlighting these same elements indicates a persistent, unaddressed issue—one with tangible implications for morale and retention.

Expanding on this, CUC's employees have repeatedly demonstrated their enthusiasm for structured opportunities to advance their careers. This doesn't merely involve having positions to move into; it means having transparent, merit-driven frameworks for promotion, clear communication of advancement opportunities, and formal leadership development or mentorship programs. When institutions fail to provide such structures, it's not just about lost promotions—it raises questions about fairness, undermines organizational trust, and erodes morale over time. The impact of neglecting recognition is equally significant. Whether through formal awards, monetary bonuses, or authentic, timely praise, when employees don't feel their contributions are seen, they're less likely to stay emotionally invested in the organization.

These findings resonate quite powerfully with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943). Maslow's framework suggests people first need their physiological and safety needs met before seeking higher-order fulfillment—esteem, a sense of belonging, and eventually self-actualization. At CUC, most staff indicated that basic needs, like competitive compensation or work-life balance, are met to a satisfactory degree. As a result, the workforce has shifted its focus upward, with recognition and opportunities for influence now seen as top priorities—clear evidence that employees are motivated by esteem and self-actualization needs, rather than simply security or comfort.

This progression toward higher-level motivators is especially evident in environments employing skilled or experienced professionals, such as luxury or boutique hotels. Employees in these settings often bring extensive industry knowledge and awareness of professional plateaus or leadership gaps. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959) offers an additional lens here. Herzberg distinguishes between "hygiene" factors, like salary and work conditions (which prevent dissatisfaction), and true motivators, such as achievement, advancement, and recognition (which foster genuine engagement). If an organization only meets hygiene factors, the best outcome is basic acceptability—outstanding motivation requires sustained attention to advancement and recognition.

In light of these theoretical frameworks and empirical findings, it is clear that merely meeting foundational needs isn't enough at companies like CUC. The organizational imperative is to foster a culture that values appreciation, advancement, and transparency. When job elements that employees care about are not only promised but actually delivered, organizational satisfaction increases and retention strengthens. The continued validity of these time-tested motivational theories, particularly within the hospitality industry, underlines their practical value for modern organizational strategy.

3.2.3 Practical Implications for CUC

The implications for CUC are concrete. The study's results point toward targeted, actionable steps for improving both employee satisfaction and organizational effectiveness. Employing tools like the Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) matrix allows the company to identify

and focus on areas where performance most clearly falls short of employee expectations, without neglecting current strengths.

Promotion opportunities are a quintessential example—located in Quadrant I (“Concentrate Here”) of the IPA matrix, they are highly valued by employees but insufficiently supported by current organizational practices. To address this, CUC should develop and publicize transparent promotion criteria, ensuring these standards are well-defined, consistently applied, and accessible to all staff. Internal job postings should be visible and widely communicated, giving every employee a clear view of possible career paths. Complementing this, formal mentorship or leadership development programs can be established to pair experienced leaders with emerging talent, thus reinforcing a sense of growth and investment in each employee’s future.

15 Furthermore, a targeted strategy for recognition should be considered essential. Recognition efforts should go beyond token gestures, encompassing formal awards, competitive bonuses, and routine, genuine appreciation of employees’ work. This would not only reinforce individual contributions but also foster a stronger sense of belonging and organizational pride.

In summary, the challenge for CUC—and similar organizations—lies in bridging the gap between what employees genuinely value and what the organization consistently provides. By operationalizing classic motivation theories, focusing on transparent advancement and sustained recognition, and actively responding to employee priorities, CUC can expect to see measurable improvements in satisfaction, engagement, and long-term retention. These adjustments are not simply theoretical; they are essential for remaining competitive in a sector where the quality of employee experience directly influences organizational success.

Research consistently demonstrates that robust, structured mentorship is instrumental in advancing organizational commitment and fostering professional growth within the hospitality sector (Chuang et al., 2015). Effective mentorship programs provide not only basic support, but also tangible pathways for advancement; such clarity is critical in addressing persistent talent retention challenges. By enabling employees to envision a trajectory within the organization, these frameworks effectively mitigate the “talent drain” frequently encountered with high-potential professionals.

Recognition stands as another foundational pillar of employee satisfaction, playing a crucial role in sustaining motivation across all levels of performance. Notably, both formal recognition—awards, bonuses, public commendation—and informal gestures—personal acknowledgment, words of appreciation—fill a significant motivational need. Nonetheless, recent assessments at CUC indicate that existing recognition measures fall short of employee expectations; this gap significantly contributes to disengagement and declining morale.

It is, therefore, imperative to design and systematically implement a comprehensive recognition framework that values both exceptional performance and the steady, everyday contributions essential to organizational success. A recognition system should be multidimensional, incorporating not only annual or quarterly awards, but also peer-to-peer acknowledgments and spontaneous commendations from supervisors. Cultivating an environment in which managers consistently provide timely, specific feedback amplifies the positive impact of recognition and fosters an enduring culture of appreciation. Furthermore, periodic review and data-driven revision of recognition strategies are necessary to ensure they retain their relevance and equity as organizational needs evolve.

40 When employees' foundational needs—adequate compensation and job security—are addressed, higher-order needs such as esteem, personal growth, and autonomy become increasingly salient. This progression aligns closely with established motivational theories (e.g., Maslow's hierarchy). Consequently, CUC should actively foster a culture of respect, inclusivity, and ongoing learning. Initiatives that provide structured development opportunities and platforms for employee input are particularly effective in aligning organizational systems with shifting employee expectations.

4 Moving beyond elementary provisions, CUC is encouraged to invest in substantive career development infrastructure and robust, meaningful recognition processes. These strategies—rooted firmly in current motivational research—serve as essential building blocks for sustaining a committed and high-performing hospitality workforce in a competitive landscape.

Survey data further highlight recognition and appreciation as particularly critical dimensions for CUC employees. Although feedback reveals their paramount importance, organizational practices have not fully delivered in this area; a discernible gap exists between what is valued and what is currently implemented. Employees continue to express a clear need for recognition that is both timely and genuine, indicating that traditional approaches may lack the desired impact.

8 To address this, the introduction of formal recognition initiatives—such as “Employee of the Month” programs, merit-based incentives, or peer-nominated awards—can institutionalize acknowledgment and reinforce the value of outstanding contributions. Performance-based bonuses and public recognition ceremonies similarly raise the visibility and perceived significance of employee achievements. At the same time, encouraging supervisors to offer regular, informal feedback during meetings or as part of daily operations can foster a more supportive and appreciative organizational atmosphere. Developing a culture that routinely celebrates both individual and team successes thus supports morale and collective efficacy.

23 Recent studies underscore that comprehensive recognition correlates with higher job satisfaction and lower turnover rates (Heimerl et al., 2020; Robbins & Judge, 2019). Employing both hierarchical (top-down) and decentralized (peer-driven) recognition strategies further embeds appreciation into the core of organizational culture.

59 In parallel, CUC has exhibited considerable strengths in areas such as inter-employee relationships, workplace environment, and the effectiveness of communication. These attributes, which position CUC within the “Keep Up the Good Work” quadrant, should not merely be preserved, but actively reinforced. Strategies may include ongoing investment in team-building activities, the promotion of peer-led projects to enhance engagement, and the maintenance of open, accessible communication channels for the sharing of both concerns and successes. These efforts collectively support healthy workplace relationships, which are well established as protective factors against stress and dissatisfaction in demanding hospitality settings (Zarei et al., 2021).

Concerning job security and professional development opportunities, although rated lower in priority at the time of analysis, these factors can rapidly escalate in significance in response to organizational or economic change. For this reason, CUC should regularly assess employee perceptions through structured surveys and feedback mechanisms. Being proactive by offering optional training modules and clear, transparent employment policies—even in the absence of explicit demand—can pre-empt potential dissatisfaction and foster a sense of stability and growth.

42 For CUC to thrive amid the distinct pressures of the hospitality sector, it is essential to move beyond the basics and focus on the intentional cultivation of recognition, professional development, and supportive workplace relationships. A rigorous, data-informed approach to both the maintenance and advancement of these factors will underpin organizational resilience and employee satisfaction in an increasingly competitive environment.

3.2.4 Alignment with the IPA Model in Human Resources

The integration of Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) into this study yields substantial strategic advantages for CUC, effectively underscoring its merit as a sophisticated instrument within human resource management. Rooted originally in marketing, the IPA framework has steadily found greater acceptance within organizational assessment, primarily due to its capacity to distill multifaceted satisfaction indicators into tangible, actionable insights. Its visual and intuitive presentation equips managers with the ability to rapidly discern and prioritize intervention areas, thus warranting more targeted managerial attention.

Empirical research, such as Karim et al. (2015), provides evidence of the practical utility of IPA, particularly in luxury hospitality sectors where employee and customer priorities must be continually balanced. Rather than dispersing valuable resources across every HR concern, IPA elucidates the most critical discrepancies between perceived importance and actual performance. As a result, organizations can direct their efforts to areas with the greatest potential for performance gains. The present study distinguishes itself by leveraging IPA specifically for the internal workforce, moving HR decision-making away from conjecture towards a more rigorous, evidence-based methodology.

This application resonates with Locke's (1976) value-percept theory, which posits the essentiality of harmonizing job elements with individual employee values as a pathway to optimizing job satisfaction. The IPA matrix, in this context, functions as a diagnostic mechanism to isolate and address misalignments between what employees value and their everyday work experiences. Systematically attending to high-importance areas that are currently underserved, while simultaneously maintaining organizational strengths, can drive improvements in employee engagement levels, reduce turnover intentions, and bolster service quality—all of which are critical within Bali's highly competitive hospitality sphere.

37 For CUC, the evidence points to several actionable recommendations: (a) Elevate the role of recognition and appreciation mechanisms that authentically resonate with employee values—moving beyond perfunctory acknowledgments to genuinely meaningful engagement; (b) Continue investing in the social and environmental dimensions that define organizational strengths, thus safeguarding these established areas of excellence; © Maintain vigilant monitoring of lower-priority yet potentially unstable domains, such as job security and employee training, to preempt the emergence of dissatisfaction; and (d) Persist in utilizing empirical, data-driven tools such as IPA for ongoing strategic human resource management. Through the sustained implementation of these interconnected strategies, CUC is well-positioned to realign organizational policies with workforce expectations, cultivate a more motivated and committed employee base, and preserve its competitive standing within the hospitality sector.

Furthermore, adopting an evidence-based approach not only replaces assumption with measurable action, but also fosters a culture of continuous improvement, where data actively informs and refines HR strategy. As the workforce landscape remains dynamic—particularly within demanding markets like Bali's hospitality sector—the agility afforded by the IPA methodology ensures that CUC can rapidly adapt, address emergent issues, and maintain high standards for both employee satisfaction and service excellence.

4. Conclusion

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The present study aimed to examine the levels and determinants of job satisfaction among employees at CUC Hotel, utilizing the Importance Performance Analysis (IPA) framework as a guiding tool. This methodological choice enabled a systematic exploration of both the perceived importance and the actual delivery of various workplace factors. Employing a quantitative descriptive approach, the research surveyed 67 employees, carefully selected through probability sampling in order to strengthen the generalizability and reliability of findings.

The data revealed an aggregate conformity level of 85.56%, suggesting that, in broad terms, employees express moderate satisfaction with their professional environment. While this overall score indicates that most essential workplace dimensions are being met to a satisfactory degree, it also signals the presence of distinct gaps—especially in areas that are critically linked to employee morale, retention, and intrinsic motivation.

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Evaluation of the IPA matrix places particular emphasis on interpersonal relationships among colleagues and the physical working environment, both of which occupy Quadrant II. This suggests that, although these factors perform well, they merit continued attention, as robust social interaction and a supportive physical environment are widely acknowledged as core contributors to job satisfaction in the hospitality industry (Robbins & Judge, 2019). Creating and sustaining such favorable conditions is not only beneficial for employee well-being but also for upholding a cohesive organizational culture in what is often a high-pressure, service-driven setting.

Despite these strengths, the analysis surfaces vital shortcomings in areas rated high in importance but low in delivered performance. Specifically, issues around promotion opportunities, avenues for recognition and appreciation, and the perceived adequacy of supervisory support emerge as principal concerns. These issues, situated in Quadrant I of the IPA matrix, illustrate a pronounced misalignment between employee expectations and organizational provision. According to Locke's (1976) seminal job satisfaction theory, such discrepancies are potent sources of dissatisfaction, impacting not only individual engagement but also wider organizational performance. Should these gaps remain unaddressed, the resultant frustration and lack of fulfilment are likely to drive high-potential employees to pursue alternative employment options, raising the risk of increased turnover—a trend consistently observed in comparative hospitality sector research (Heimerl et al., 2020; Ambawani & Febriyanto, 2022).

The dual-axis configuration of the IPA framework, as articulated by Martilla and James (1977), provides a powerful diagnostic and prioritization apparatus for managers. This approach enables the targeted deployment of resources and strategic attention by highlighting precisely where interventions can produce the greatest benefit. For CUC Hotel, this means placing renewed emphasis on transparent career pathways, establishing clear and accessible promotion criteria, investing in leadership and supervisory development, and institutionalizing mechanisms for regular recognition and positive feedback. Such targeted interventions are likely not only to elevate present satisfaction scores but also to create a sustainable basis for employee engagement and loyalty.

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It is essential to recognize that, especially within the hospitality industry, job satisfaction is shaped by the everyday realities of work and the perceived opportunities for individual growth and advancement. Employees who perceive their environment as fair, supportive, and appreciative are demonstrably more likely to exhibit sustained commitment and advocacy for the organization. Additionally, employing IPA analysis periodically provides a valuable

47 feedback loop, enabling management to remain agile and responsive to evolving employee needs and industry expectations.

10 In sum, although CUC Hotel currently maintains a respectable level of overall job satisfaction, the findings unambiguously identify specific, high-priority domains requiring focused improvement. By addressing these critical gaps—particularly those relating to career advancement, recognition, and supervisory support—the hotel can significantly enhance both its immediate work environment and its long-term strategic positioning as an employer of choice within an increasingly competitive industry landscape. These efforts are not merely remedial but serve to underpin organizational resilience, reputation, and future success through improved retention and heightened employee advocacy.

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