



**THE IMPACT OF CREATING LOYALTY IN
EMPLOYEES TO CREATE A COMPETITIVE
ADVANTAGE FOR ORGANISATION WITHIN THE
HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY**

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ABSTRACT

This study is an examination of the impact of creating loyalty in employees to create a competitive advantage for organizations within the Hospitality industry in Dublin. To answer the issues of the study, a descriptive survey research design was employed in the present study. The sample for this research includes of randomly selected 133 workers in five selected hotels in Dublin. An electronic questionnaire-based was employed to gather required data, and out of which 114 employees fully participated in the study. The retrieved data were coded with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences, and analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation, and linear regression. The results from the study indicated that while employees' benefits and reward system are statistically significant in creating loyalty in employees as a source of competitive advantage, Flexible-work-arrangement is insignificant in creating loyalty in employees. It was concluded that both employees' benefits and reward systems are a strong predictors of employees' loyalty to create a competitive advantage. Thus, this study recommended that to ensure high retention of a skilled workforce, the management in the hospitality industry needs to give proper attention to employee's welfare, strategically design a reward system, formulate and implement employee' pension and medical plan to bring about the loyalty of employees.

Keywords: Employees' Loyalty, Employees' Benefits, Reward System, Flexible-Working-Arrangement, Competitive Advantage.

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List of Abbreviation

ELTY= Employee's Loyalty

EBFIT= Employee's Benefits

RWDSYS= Reward System

FWA= Flexible-Work-Arrangement

SPSS= Statistical Package for Social Sciences

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

In the contemporary business environment, creating loyalty among the workforce in the quest of attaining a firm's competitive advantage has attracted academic discourse due to the intense competition in the ever-changing business environment. The idea that the better use of resources (human and material) is a source of competitive advantage according to the Resource-base-view (RBV). For this reason, organizations are beginning to design and implement several capacity-building policies, coupled with motivational mechanisms in a bid to maximize the commitment of its workforce that ultimately provide firms with distinctive benefits.

Employees are the main driver of organizational success and are the only factor of production that ensures efficient utilization of other factors of production to attain the expected outcome. The roles of employees in the business concern of a firm underline the need to create a commitment of the skilled workforce to remain with the organization. The term 'Employee loyalty' could simply be described as the commitment of the organizational members to the achievement of the overall goals and objectives of the firm. Iqbal, Tufail, and Lodhi (2015) supported the notion that loyalty in employees is the commitment of the workforce towards the prosperity of the firm; with these employees perceiving that their continuous working with the firm is best for them too.

Different scholars have identified several indices in creating loyalty amidst employees. For example, Sekyi, Boakye, and Ankumah (2016) denote that a conducive working environment, superior and subordinate relationships, effective communication coupled with teamwork, employee's engagement and participation in decision making,

compensation schemes, as well as career development policies can be tailored to instilling loyalty in employees (Sekyi et al., 2016). This notion suggests that employees are committed when working in a good and conducive environment; thereby putting all their effort into ensuring that the organization accomplishes its set goals. A friendly relationship between the managers and employees, investing in employee's capacity building to bring about core competency, rewarding employee's efforts for a job well done, as well as involving employees in decision-making could encourage employee's loyalty and high retention of a competent workforce.

On the other hand, the competitive advantage of a firm can be described as those situations that place a firm in an advantageous position. Meaning that a firm attains a competitive advantage when it creates a distinctive value(s) that is difficult for competitors to replicate. This according to Ghemawat and Rivkin (2006) is the capability of a firm to cultivate enthusiasm amid customers to pay beyond the cost incurred in producing a firm's offering. There is a notion that the "sources of competitive advantage have shifted from financial resources to technology resources and now to human capital" (Jassim, 2014 p. 387).

This suggests that the successful operation of a firm is not determined by its size of financial budget, nor the utilization of modern technologies for production processes but is largely dependents on employee's attitudes to work, worker's core competencies, employee's trust as well as staff commitment. Employees are therefore the source of a firm's competitive advantage that underlines the need to design and implement those commitment mechanisms to help expand loyalty in employees as a source of a firm's competitive advantage within the hospitality industry.

Researchers have examined worker's loyalty and discovered that it tends to be influenced by various factors, vis-à-vis; employee's benefits, reward system, as well as flexible-work-arrangement (Tomčíková, 2016; Stalmašeková, Genzorová and Čorejová, 2017; Capnary, Rachmawati, and Agung, 2018; Aziz-Ur-Rehman and Siddiqui, 2020). Worker benefits are a significant piece of the compensation bundle that is crucial to both the firm and employee's decision of employment and retention (Amah, 2010). Pay leaves, Insurance benefits, Retirement benefits, and Employee service can ensure fulfilling and expanding employee's loyalty to the firm (Amah, Nwuche, and Chukwuigwe, (2013). This suggests that increased retention and loyalty of employees can be accomplished when worker's benefits are appropriately planned and actualized.

Likewise, the reward system provides mechanisms for employee's loyalty. As per Fay and Thompson (2001, p.80), rewards systems have a basic job in deciding the firm's capacity to draw in high potential employees and to hold high performing workers to accomplish more prominent degrees of quality performance. This recommends that properly remunerated employees will encourage high loyalty and retention of a skilled workforce. Nevertheless, flexible-work-arrangement is a procedure identified with recruiting and retaining employees. Flexible-work-arrangement (FWA) has three general classifications, in particular, "flexibility in scheduling (scheduling), flexibility in the location (tele-homeworking), and flexibility in time (part-time)" (Possenried and Plantenga, 2011, p.217). In other words, the flexibility of work is given as a type of variety when working, which enable workers not to feel exhausted and stay loyal to their organization. Based on the foregoing, the author of this dissertation is aimed at examining

the impact of employee loyalty as a source of competitive advantage of firms in the hospitality industry.

1.2 Research Rationale

The Irish hospitality sector is one of the fastest-growing industries in terms of employment creation and contribution to the economic growth of Ireland. According to the EOLAS magazine (2018), the industry contributes 5.78 billion euros to the economy, as well as helping to create 225,000 jobs. Despite the significant contribution of the -sector to the nation's economy, the hospitality industry is confronted with high turnover, low employee loyalty and retention, recruitment of new, appropriately skilled workers, and setting them into the organization culture. Davern (2018) supported the notion that the Irish hospitality sector is known for its low remuneration/pay, unsociable working environment, long working hours, lack of manpower planning and development, as well as high employee turnover.

Meanwhile, employee benefits and reward systems are some of the time deferred or delayed due to the cost reduction measures by the management of an organization. This has led to high staff turnover, low spirit, and absence of worker's loyalty which prompts them to change to other promising industries. By appropriately organizing and actualizing pay and leave, insurance benefits, retirement benefits, and worker's service benefits will help with the loyalty of workers in the conveyance of superior service in the hospitality sector. Additionally, the absence of flexible work arrangements is progressively promoting higher turnover because of its negative impact on a worker's emotional wellness, stress, and the employee's work-life balance. The capacity to execute flexible

working hours could expand the sense of responsibility, work-life balance of the workers in the organization, as well as attracting and retaining skilled workers in rendering quality service.

Numerous studies have been undertaken into employee loyalty and a firm's competitive advantage in separate research studies. For example, a study conducted in Turkey by Dede and ve Sazkaya (2018) in an attempt to examine how employee's empowerment and innovative behavior can bring about loyalty in employees by adopting a survey method; the authors found a direct association between the study variables (i.e. employee's loyalty, employee's empowerment, and employee's innovative behavior). Another study done by Antoncic and Antoncic (2011) on the link between employee loyalty and firm's growth amid the manufacturing industry; the study discovered through a survey approach that employee's loyalty is a strong predictor of a firm's growth. Tariq, Ilyas, and Abdul Rehman (2017) assessed how organizational attributes could bring about loyalty in employees using a cross-sectional study in the telecommunication sector; the study depicted that employee's involvement and engagement; firm's support and equality are strong predictors of employee's loyalty.

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no study has attempted to examine the link between employee loyalty and the firm's competitive advantage amid the Irish hospitality industry. Given this gap raised and the problems identified, the present dissertation is aimed at filling the gap in knowledge by providing new insight on how firms in the hospitality industry could create loyalty in employees as a source of competitive advantage.

1.3 Research Objectives and Methodology

This study is aimed at the examination of the impact of creating loyalty in employees to create a competitive advantage for organizations within the Hospitality industry. A study of five selected hotels in Dublin, Ireland, was undertaken. The shortage of skilled and qualified workforce and high employee turnover in the hospitality industry has prompted this study to investigate how the indices of employee's loyalty (i.e. employee's benefits, reward system, as well as flexible-work-arrangement) can bring about high loyalty of the skilled staff to help achieve firm's competitive advantage is the main focus of this study.

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Establish how employee's benefits can create loyalty in employees, creating a competitive advantage in the hospitality industry
2. Investigate the effect of a reward system in creating loyalty in employees and how this helps to create a competitive advantage for firms in the hospitality industry
3. Find out the impact of flexible-work-arrangement in creating loyalty in employees to creating a competitive advantage for firms in the hospitality industry.

The current dissertation will adopt a quantitative technique and the instrument for the research will be an online questionnaire, designed by the researcher to gather relevant data on the constructs of the study (the employee's benefits, reward systems, flexible-work-arrangements, and the employee's loyalty). As for the statistical analysis, both the descriptive and inferential statistics will be employed, the descriptive statistics were used to describe the nature of the construct, while inferential statistics vis-à-vis; correlation and linear regression will be used to test the relationship and impact of employee's benefits, reward system, and flexible-work-arrangement on employee's loyalty.

1.4 Background of Irish Hospitality Sector

The Irish hospitality sector is one of the fastest-growing industries in terms of employment creation and contribution to the economic growth of Ireland. The industry has 18,377 firms operating in the hospitality sector in Ireland and employs about 177,000 employees (Creagh, 2018). Companies operating in the hospitality sector cut across hotels, hostels, restaurants, pubs, bars, catering services, and among others. Given the negative perception attributed to the hospitality sector relating to the perceived lack of growth of career opportunity, low wages, and salaries, as well as the unsocial working environment. Several strategies have been employed in a bid to redress the negative perception of the sector; among these efforts are manpower planning and development programs to create loyalty of the members of staff and attract skills. The Irish hotels are chosen due to the proximity to the researcher, as well as considering the relevance of the sector to the growth of the Irish economy.

1.5 Research Structure

This research study is segmented into seven sections. The first chapter of this study commenced with the background to the study where the construct of the study was discussed, the issues of the study were discussed which was linked to the aim and objectives of the research study. The second chapter is a literature review relating to the study; which was divided into conceptual, theoretical, and empirical studies. The third chapter is an outline of the research questions and research hypotheses formulated based on the objectives of the study. The fourth chapter discusses the methodology adopted in solving the problems of the study, method of data collection, and ethical considerations.

The fifth chapter data analysis and results using tables. The sixth chapter presents the research findings which are justified and linked to the previous studies. The last chapter underlines the conclusion, recommendations based on the findings, and suggestions for further studies.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section is a literature review of how to create loyalty in employees as a source of competitive advantage within hotels in Ireland. This section is divided into theoretical and conceptual clarification. This section clarifies and discusses the variables of the study, which is backed up with relevant theories and empirical review of prior studies relating to the study variables.

2.2 Review of Theories on Loyalty

2.2.1 Reinforcement Theory

The reinforcement theory (RT) is a theory of motivation propounded by Skinner and his partners (n.d.). The RT underlines that a person's conduct is a component of its results. This means that it depends on the law of impact of either negative/positive, i.e, a person's conduct with positive outcomes will be repeated, while a negative conduct outcome tends not to repeat its self. Practically, employees tend to be loyal to their organization when there is a proper reward system, benefits as well as flexible work arrangement, which is a source of competitive advantage for the firm. But in a situation where a firm fails to give due attention to these motivators, this will invariable leads to low retention and loyalty.

Although, the RT has some weakness because it neglects the inward condition of the individual, i.e., the internal emotions and drives of people are overlooked. The RT centers around what befalls a person when he makes some move. In this way, as per Skinner, the firm's outside environment must be structured successfully and emphatically to inspire the worker. This theory is an effective device for examining those factors that control a

person's conduct. Notwithstanding, it doesn't concentrate on the reasons for a person's conduct. Therefore, it cannot be used for the current study.

2.2.2 The Expectancy Theory

The expectancy theory (ET) was propounded by (Vroom, 1964). The ET endeavors to clarify what drives and inspire an individual to perform a task that is attributed to the perceived expected result. In other words, the worth employee's placed on perceived expectations can be accomplished if a certain measure of effort is applied. This suggests that the firm's capability to create loyalty in employees can be a source of competitive advantage. Apart from proper salaries, effective compensation packages, employee benefits, and flexible work scheduling are crucial mechanisms in bringing about loyalty in employees.

The ET distinguishes three components that bring about worker's motivation. The first of these elements is the "effort as the function of performance expectancy" this is represented as (E-P expectancy), meaning that the perception of an individual employee's effort is emphatically associated with their level of job performance. The ET underlines that workers will be effectual when they perceive that they have the fundamental capacity that they will get a valuable reward that is dependent upon their actual performance and the prize will be in proportion to their level of performance.

At the point when an employee expects that their job accomplishment will result in receiving the absolute rewards (outcome), such workers are probably going to be inspired to applying additional effort. The third segment of the expectancy theory is Valence, this underlines how much an employee appreciates a specific reward. To wrap it up, the extent

to which an employee values staff's benefits, reward system, and flexible work arrangement they will receive for their performance, the same extent they would be more inspired to get the reward(outcome) and this will help create loyalty in employees. This theory is more suitable for explaining loyalty in employees, therefore, it will form the theoretical framework for the current dissertation.

2.3 Employee's Loyalty

Numerous authors (Meyer and Allen, 1991; Solomon, 1992; Aboudaya and Mcheik, 2019) have given different definitions of worker's loyalty and consider it to be the dedication of workers to the success of the organization and accepting that working for this cooperation is their objective. Loyalty means an individual's commitment and attachment to a specific item (eg. An individual or group of individuals, an obligation, etc.). Likewise, worker loyalty to the firm has previously been seen as terminology. In any case, it isn't so much a mentality that is significant to firms, rather, it is the main concern worker's activity (Meyer et al., 1991). As per Solomon (1992), worker dedication is the eagerness to stay with the firm. As verified by the Loyalty Research Center (1990) cited in Aboudaya et al. (2019), workers don't just plan to stay with the association, yet they don't effectively scan for other job opportunities and are not receptive to offers.

The notion that the organizational citizenship behaviors mirror the commitment to a firm towards the advancement of its purpose and corporate image to the general public (Bentten Court, Gwinner, and Meuter, 2001). Workforce loyalty is the appearance of a firm's dedication, and the general quality of an employee's relationship with and contribution in a specific corporation (Mowday, Porter and Steers, 1982). Aboudaya et al., (2019) citing Mowday, Porter, and Steers (1979) underline that worker's loyalty is the

present conviction and acknowledgment of the firm's objectives and qualities, a readiness to apply extensive exertion in the interest of the firm, and a powerful urge to keep up participation in the association. In other words, worker's loyalty can be best depicted concerning a procedure, where certain mentalities offer rise to explicit practices that could be intended or actual.

The success of any firm and developed nations rely upon the availability of a skilled workforce. Subsequently, it is important to have the ability to attract and keep high caliber workers with enhanced performance through sustained worker's loyalty (Matzler and Renzl, 2006). Loyalty in its principal sense has a passionate nature of connection and response to an item (eg. A firm or organizations). A loyal individual remains through extreme occasions and doesn't flee when the person in question understands the circumstance will continue being intense later on. A loyal worker is one that is happy to accomplish more than just what is delegated. As indicated by Hart and Thompson (2007), loyalty that is dependent on cognizance underlines that: "An individuals' perception that both parties to a relationship have fulfilled reciprocal expectations that (1) denote enduring attachment between two parties that (2) involve self-sacrifice in the face of alternatives that (3) are laden with obligations of duty" (p 300).

Worker's loyalty is characterized as the worker's connection to the firm's goals and objectives, as well as organizational values. It is recognized that higher worker's loyalty expands the probability to retain workers (Chen, Chen, Tsui and Chiang, 2016). The idea of worker loyalty implies that the worker is aimed at attaining a firm's goal instead of their interest, and exhibits practices of connection and mental belongingness tailored to the firm's interest (Koç, 2009). The idea also incorporates, supporting, and embracing the

firm's objectives and remaining with the firm under extreme conditions (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, and Bachrach, 2000). At the end of the day, worker's loyalty is a bond towards an individual, a group, or an association and it incorporates the sentiments of belongingness; an exceptional want to be included in something, ready to contribute even though giving up of one's priorities, and trust; electing oneself to work with the groups of individual, and working with leaders, as well as the laydown regulations (Ceylan and Özbal, 2008).

Graham (1991), as cited in Dede and Sazkaya (2018) characterizes worker loyalty as a patriotic workforce to their managers and company in which they demonstrate representative conducts by protecting the firm from any form of danger, work in participation with colleagues for the firm's interest, and improve the firm's goodwill. The degree of feeling loyalty towards a firm might be high, moderate, or low. In a low degree of firm loyalty, the individual isn't quick to embrace the firm's objectives and goals, and will not feel like a part of the firm. In the high degree of worker loyalty, individual confidence in their firm is high, the effort shows exertion and reflects a desire to remain a part of the firm in the future. In a medium degree, worker's loyalty to their firm is between these two extremes (Koç, 2009).

There have been critical changes in the business world and the employees over the most recent few decades. Before, enlisted workers were of the view that their occupation was a lifetime and the managers anticipated their unrestrained devotion to the organization. So also, the employees were committed to their firms. This idea of work loyalty had bit by bit changed with the appearance of globalization when workers started to confront rebuilding, a firm's relocation, and reduction of the workforce through downsizing.

Moreover, due to the firm's ignorance of the norms, common commitments are being reexamined, lifetime job appointments and dedication have diminished, switching from one job to another is viewed as a norm, and individuals are continually making progress toward more noteworthy pay rates or superior working conditions. Loyalty and trust have become progressively more unpredictable to acquire and retain in the working environment. Loyalty appears to be getting progressively more difficult to retain, regardless of whether it is worker loyalty to an organization or client's loyalty to a brand, product, or services.

From the review of extant literature, loyalty has two primary measurements which are the 'inner' and 'outer'. The inner measurement is the passionate segment like sentiments of mindful, alliance, and duty. This measurement should be supported to be appealing to workers. The outer measurement has to do with how loyalty substantiates itself. This measurement involves the practices that show the enthusiastic segment and is the piece of loyalty that changes the most. The initial step is to reclassify loyalty as interior sentiments that can be showed in several ways. Rather, what happens frequently can be seen where the managers of an enterprise feel that they are loyal to their workforce and that the enterprise has policies set up to mirror that workers don't comprehend what the executives are attempting to do. Then again, workers who feel they are exceptionally loyal to their organizations may not be exhibiting it in a manner the executives would understand as such.

The idea of loyalty is unique as compared to what it was before. As opposed to corporate loyalty, workers show their dedication through their daily endeavors towards the entity (Pandey and Khare, 2012). This suggests the need to scratch beneath the surface to see if

somebody is steadfast or not, this idea of loyalty applies to workers also. Staff's loyalty underlines the progression of workers of the new age and the way that these exceptional and talented workers are increasingly needed by the organization. In contrast to employees from earlier ages which have one of a kind necessities and are not hesitant to make strong career moves. This pattern is attributed to lessening the firm's commitments and new enterprises are confronted with challenges as they have to strive harder to gain staff loyalty. Being a business owner, there is a need to comprehend why the workers are sincerely associated with your business, and it's commonly significantly more than pay rates, manpower planning, and development. Studies revealed that genuinely loyal workers are the best representatives since they are fully involved in the attainment of a firm's goals because they feel admired (Aboudaya and Mcheik, 2019). Having clarified what employee's loyalty entails, the next discussion is on the factors enhancing employee loyalty.

2.3.1 Determinants of Employee Loyalty

The variables that increase worker's loyalty are seen as HR mechanisms, for example, properly designed employee's reward systems and employee's benefits such as welfare packages, insurance, pension benefits, health benefits, while the elements that cause the lack of employee's loyalty are working under tension with an excessive workload, the disparity at the work environment, rigid work hours, and the code of dressing (Ioanid, Danalache, and Negoita, 2016). Guillon and Cezanne (2014) opined that worker loyalty depends on a connection of trust, a solid feeling of belongingness, and the ability to remain inside the organization. Relational trust and worker fulfillment are a critical determinant of representative loyalty (Matzler and Renzl, 2006). Likewise, worker's loyalty is

contended to have a connection with quality service delivery, client loyalty, and satisfaction which at last enhances the firm's profitability (Yee, Yeung and Cheng, 2009).

Frederick and Reichheld (2006) in their survey concluded that worker's loyalty, for the individuals who plan to remain with a firm for more than two years, can be impacted by numerous variables like compensation packages and salaries, working conditions as well as job fulfillment. Worker's loyalty is very significant for firms considering that an increased worker's turnover is costly. The author further expresses that one of the best approaches to improve worker loyalty is to ensure that workers perceive themselves as a crucial piece of the organization. His survey research reveals that 55 percent of the workers concluded they are satisfied with the way their organization takes care of human resources.

An investigation was done by Sekyi, Boakye, and Ankumah (2016) on the "factors influencing employee loyalty in the hotel industry in Takoradi, Ghana". The reason for the examination was to explore the significance of staff benefits and the methods used by the management of the hotels in improving employee loyalty. Utilizing the descriptive and exploratory approach among 80 workers, the examination discovered that the principle techniques utilized by the management of the hotel in bringing about loyalty in employees include; the provision of insurance cover to the members of staff, employee's recognition and participation in decision making, equitable treatment, manpower planning policies, employee's benefits, and teamwork. Having reviewed the factors enhancing employee loyalty, the next discussion is on a firm's competitive advantage.

2.4 Competitive Advantage of a Firm

There is a lack of agreement among authors as to what constitutes a competitive advantage. Nevertheless, several definitions of competitive advantage underline value creation. From the prior perspective on Porter (1985), competitive advantage underlines the firm's capability to formulate and incorporate superior competitive strategies within the business environment. Barney (1991) portrays a firm as having an upper hand when it is executing a value-creating procedure which is not currently actualized by any present or potential contender. Ulrich and Lake (1991), have proposed that perceived client's worth and uniqueness are two basic components of competitive advantage. Tushman and Nadler (1986) stress that firms attain competitive advantage by adequately managing the present time and at the same time making advancement for tomorrow. Treacy and Wiersema (1993) see a competitive advantage to encompass merchandise leadership, operational greatness as well as client closeness as value controls.

In recent times, Awwad (2008) opines that making a competitive advantage includes deciding those elements that will improve a company's competitive position in the commercial center. Awwad (2008) recognizes cost-effectiveness, quality, fast conveyance, and adaptability as abilities that make a competitive advantage. Passemard and Kleiner (2000) saw that competitive advantage is made through advancements that have an enhancement for effectiveness, innovation, new interest, new market section, and changes in guidelines (Awwad, 2008). Huselid and Becker (2011) contend that competitive advantage is driven by workforce profitability, imagination, and optional exertion, which are thus influenced by the degrees of employee's aptitudes and inspiration. Otieno (2012) depicts competitive advantage as the increased capacity through special

traits and/or assets being deployed with more significance than others in a similar industry or market. This competitive advantage includes access to exceptionally prepared and gifted human abilities, modern technologies, new products or services, as well as an enhancement of production processes.

AUlrich and Lake (1991) outline four abilities open to organizations in attaining competitive advantage. These incorporate money-related abilities, strategic abilities, innovative abilities, and the firm's abilities. They keep on characterizing firm capacity as a company's capacity to oversee individuals in attaining competitive advantage and emphasized that workers are a crucial means of gaining upper hand. Molina, del Pino, and Rodriguez (2004) utilized the accompanying factors to decide the company's degree of intensity; a piece of the overall industry, profitability, returns on asset and investment, innovative arrangement, budgetary administration, product and service quality, after-sales service benefits, client dependability, provider faithfulness, area of the foundation, worker duty and reliability, workforce capability and goodwill of an organization.

Having clarified what a firm competitive advantage entails, the next discussion is on how competitive advantage can be attained through workforce loyalty.

2.4.1 Competitive Advantage Through Employees Loyalty

Since workers are the primary resources in the endurance and prosperity of a firm, it is critical to keep worker's inspiration and loyalty high. The loyal and inspired workforce will work enthusiastically for the firm and add to the improvement of the optimum firm's performance (Narteh and Odoom, 2015). Employees who are involved in decision making assume a significant position in expanding a firm's competitive advantage (Bhatnagar,

2007). According to Jassim (2015), firms can accomplish a competitive advantage by coordinating the accompanying foundation beneath:

Defining objectives and targets: This contains a definite articulation of the general objectives and their relationship to the organization's destinations. The absence of clear objectives and targets represses successful planning. The absence of planning contributes to unreasonable resource distributions and work schedules. The key staff ought to be effectively engaged with characterizing the particular task to be accomplished, the planning, the material resources, the duties, and their participation in the quest for attaining the objective and goals of a firm.

Recruitment of competent workforce: This underlines how a firm can coordinate the hiring of a competent workforce. A large portion of the executives utilizes a definite job analysis and description to hire competent workers.

Concentrating on accomplishing workforce commitment: This likewise talks about the need to acquire dedication from the entire workforce concerning the issue of planning, coordinating, and attaining set goals. This dedication can be improved and kept up by the high cooperation of workers towards the accomplishment of results, estimating criteria, and work schedule. When employees are involved in the goals and objective, they can attain comprehension of the work to be performed, develop a sentiment of importance, creates proficient interests in the work, and wants to succeed to accomplish the set goals.

Monitoring or instructing workforce: There is a need to implement and execute an appropriate training framework and procedures of work execution records to be presented to boards for review and action plan.

Measurability of performance: The ability to assure exact estimations of performance records, particularly the work in progress against scheduling and spending plan.

Interesting Work condition: There is a need for the managers to oblige the professional commitment of supporting the workforce while arranging their tasks. The adequacy of the work relies upon the manager's capacity to expertly stimulate workers to perform the job task. This can prompt an increased worker's involvement, free flow of information, reduced workplace conflict, as well as a more grounded responsibility.

Structuring an effective communication: Effective communication is fundamental for effectual work performance. It is the duty of the leaders and at last the supervisor to give the proper communication devices and strategies aimed at accomplishing the organizational goals and objectives.

Limiting working environment dangers: The management must encourage a workplace that is low conflict, power battles, and ridiculous workload. An environment of shared trust is essential for the workforce to discuss issues and concerns sincerely affecting them.

The structure of a performance appraisal and reward system: This ought to be proportional to the obligations of the workforce. In other words, there is a need to offer the employees a fair reward system to bring about employee's loyalty and trust.

An examination is done by Nasiri, Najafbagy, and Nasiripour (2015) on "the impact of employee loyalty on the success of commercial organizations: A case study on the dealerships of heavy equipment in Iran". The motivation behind the investigation was analyzed by how worker's loyalty can bring about organizational success among the firms operating in the heavy equipment industry. The examination embraced a survey method

with a sample of 280 workers. Retrieved data were analyzed with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences, and the result of the Pearson moment correlation and regression analysis reveals that the success of an organization can be attained by worker's loyalty. The outcome further uncovered a significant and positive relationship between the study variables (i.e. employee loyalty, service quality, customer satisfaction and loyalty, organizational success).

2.5 Employee's Benefits

These are programs a firm utilizes in enhancing the financial reward that workers get, to secure the workers and their families from monetary hazards. Staff benefits are a significant piece of the compensation bundle. Benefits are added to different types of financial rewards like wages and pay rates that are expected to improve the nature of work-life for the workforce and enhance their collaboration and profitability (Amah, Nwuche, and Chukwuigwe, 2013). Staff benefits are characterized as any type of remuneration given by the firm other than wages or pay rates that are fully paid or paid in a portion by the firm. Worker benefits are fundamental for the improvement of relations of corporate organizations. As indicated by Christoph (1996) cited in Ekere and Amah (2014), staff benefits encompass retirement plans, childcare, older person care, clinical program, annuity security, and employee's vacation and holiday pay. The reason for the staff benefits is to build the monetary security of an individual's worker, as well as improving worker retention across the organization.

Few studies have been done concerning the staff benefits in bringing about the loyalty of employees. The vice presidents of MetLife discussed the link between employee benefits

and staff loyalty in the 9th annual study of employee benefits trends. The company's survey reveals that satisfied employees who are satisfied with the benefits offered by the company develop a strong loyalty. It was further noted that those workforces who derive utility from the staff benefits offered by the organization are exhibiting (threefold) an increased sense of loyalty to their organization (Leopold, 2011).

Health care and retirement benefits are a crucial mechanism for employee's loyalty. Previous studies reveal that 59 percent of workers accepted that life insurance, dental, as well as disability benefits are very significant in determining their loyalty. Additionally, 37 percent of firms also perceive these benefits as a crucial source of employee loyalty and retention. This suggests that the nonmedical benefits (i.e. life insurance, dental, and disability benefits) are usually underrated by most firms (Leopold, 2011). Having looked at the employee's benefits, the next discussion is on the relevance of employee benefits.

2.5.1 The Need for Employee's Benefits

As indicated by Amah et al (2013) worker benefits are provided for various reasons which include: To compensate and elevate worker loyalty to the company they work; To discourage workers from forming a union; To ensure the compensation bundle is appealing enough to attract and retain a skilled workforce; To accommodate worker's very own welfare following the paternalistic conviction that workers are unable to deliver their own needs; To give workers compensation with a flexible tax (for example; tax-efficient compensation bundle); To give workers aggregated tax-exempt venture returns (for example; other forms of remuneration or benefit); To fulfill lawful prerequisites (for example; retirement savings framework, pension).

Also, benefits have consistently been viewed as a workforce prize and it can make a feeling of continuous firm's appreciation. Staff benefits, nonetheless, are to serve the worker and also beneficial to firms in a long period (Amah, 2010). But few managers see the need to deliver issues identified with the staff's benefits. Staff benefits can help create the right emotion for the workforce to perform their duties and remain loyal to the organization. This will, in the long run, bring about lower turnover and increased worker's performance.

As per Amah et al. (2013), there are three objectives to benefit programs. The first is to meet the most reduced physical and mental requests of workers so they could completely be involved in the firm's operations. The second is to contend with different competitors at an equivalent level. At the point when similar worker's benefits are employed by competitors, it is important to offer a similar degree of benefits program to remain competitive in the industry. The third goal is to give both social and employee welfare assistance.

Amah (2010) concurred that the workforce needs to get something beyond their regular pay rate for the job performed. Other than the salaries and wages received, workers, anticipate that different rewards for working with the firm. The additional rewards put forth a strong effort in performing their duties. Amah (2010) accepts that the loyalty of the workforce can be supported when they get something other than pay. Everybody works with a desire for certain prizes. Worker's benefits are basic for the advancement of the firm's industrial relations. As per Amah et al., (2013), worker's pay and work environment represents the hygiene factors that influence the worker's motivation and in

this way impacts their performance within the firm. This leads to the consideration of different benefit types.

2.5.2 The literature on Employee Benefits and Employee's Loyalty

Staff benefits differ and serve distinctive needs. Different benefits are legally required. From the review of extant literature, staff benefits can be broadly categorized into the following: 1) Paying workers for the time they work; 2) payment for sick leave, staff's vacation, as well as maternity leave; 3,) Insurance benefits which cover workers with work-related accidents and illness benefits; 4) Post-work benefits like annuities as well as profit-sharing plans; 5) Employee's service benefits such as advising, sponsored childcare, transport, etc. (Ekere et al., 2014).

As per Marsh and Kleiner (1998) cited in Ekere et al. (2014), a portion of the worker's benefit incorporates manager commitments to "Social security, Medicare, unemployment insurance and worker's compensation insurance" (p. 26). Mondy, Noe, and Premeaux (2002) concur that 9 percent of worker's benefits are lawfully required. Employee's benefits as required by law are post-employment securities like a pension. Jackson and Mathis (2004) referenced that staff benefits, for example, medical cover, retirement benefits, and paid leave is significant non-monetary rewards. The rewards offered by firms are not just a motivational tool to improve the worker's job performance, yet it additionally assists with attracting and recruiting candidates in recruitment and selection processes.

The survey conducted on worker's benefits by Amah et al. (2013) reveals that firms offer piece rates, commissions, tips, rewards, investment opportunities staff's wellbeing, life

and dental protection, retirement plans, maternity leave, child care arrangement have a significant effect in enhancing worker's job performance and loyalty. They additionally include that giving fringe benefits enhances employee's performance.

In an examination led by Tomčíková (2016) on "employee benefits and trends in the workplace", the purpose of the study was to examine the trends of employee benefit in the workplace. The motivation behind the examination was to inspect the patterns of employee's benefits in the work environment. The investigation embraced a literature review approach and was based on both theoretical and analytical examination of past examinations on worker's benefits and its pattern in the workplace. The result of the reviewed empirical studies reveals that employees are generally happy with health-related benefits, and wellness benefits. Meanwhile, retirement saving and planning, leave, employee's programs and services, professional and career development, flexible working arrangement, work-life balancing, housing, and relocation business travel, as well as other benefits, are utilized by management in the workplace within 12 months.

An investigation was done by Stalmašeková, Genzorová, and Čorejová (2017) on "workforce benefits as one of the factors of work motivation". The motivation behind this investigation was to look at the staff benefit that is generally desirable by the undergraduate students at the University of Žilina. The investigation utilized a descriptive survey that consists of a sample of 100 drawn from the students at the University of Žilina. The examination discovered that the most preferred benefits are work flexibility, the use of the company's car for personal purposes and extra pay for a vacation. The outcome likewise indicated that the less preferred benefits are homes provided by the office, provision of company's PC and mobile set, provision of sick leave, language class, team

building and a free ticket to the theatre, discounted gym facilities, provision of food and beverages at the office, as well as pay for transportation. The study concluded that staff benefits are a crucial apparatus for firms to bring about the loyalty of the workforce.

Based on the literature, the first hypothesis was proposed that **1H₁**: Employee's benefit has an impact on worker's loyalty as a source of competitive advantage in the hospitality industry.

2.6 Reward System

Rewards of both monetary and non-monetary kinds send an incredible message to workers of an organization with regards to what sort of performance the management of a firm seeks to achieve and maintain, as well as the sort of conduct and mentality that is required from the workforce (Jassim, 2015, citing Beer, et al 1988). In this manner, compensation issues can't be disregarded, as it will make a circumstance where the desire or the genuine objective coordinated behavior of one individual or group of an individual are shut-off or are going to be shut-off (Steers and Black, 1994). As per a report by the American Compensation Associations (1996), the rewards framework is one of the best and persuasive devices accessible to an organization with regards to encouraging group behavior (IRS, 1996).

2.6.1 The literature on Reward Systems and Employee's Loyalty

A reward remunerates workers based on their contribution to the overall firm's goals and objectives (Armstrong and Brown, 2001). Reward systems underline that there are procedures and remuneration policies in place in an organization for rewarding better performance more than the average performance (Pearce, 2010). While reward could be

in form of intrinsic/non-financial (for example, promotion, recognition, and any non-cash incentives as motivators) and extrinsic/financial (bonuses, commission, tips, etc.) rewards to bring about loyalty in employees.

A Reward system is expected to inspire certain accomplishments and some conditions that reward-motivated workers. As indicated by Beer and Walton (1990) cited in Jassim (2015) rewards must be viewed as convenient and attached to viable accomplishment to be a helpful apparatus. Brew and Walton (1990) proposed a theory that outlines the conditions important for worker's inspiration. This includes: 1) Workers must accept that viable accomplishment will prompt certain compensations. For instance, accomplishing certain outcomes will prompt a reward; 2) Workers must feel that the compensation offered is impressive. A few workers may want advancements since they look for power, however, older persons need fringe benefits like an annuity and retirement securities considering they are getting older; 3) Workers must accept that a specific degree of individual exertion will lead to the overall performance of an organization (Brew et al., 1990).

As showed, inspiration to apply effort is activated by the perceived needed rewards: like cash or employee recognition, advancement, etc. (Wilson, 1995). In any case, the inquiries of who to compensate, how to compensate, and what to be compensated are the issues the HR managers must address in the quest of planning a reasonable compensation system that can fulfill the workforce needs.

A study was done by Olusoji, Olashile, and Godbless (2016) titled “Effect of reward and compensation on employee loyalty and performance in asset management corporation of Nigerian (AMCON)”, through a descriptive survey amid 179 employees in AMCON, the

result of the Chi-square test showed that the compensation programs of the firm have a significant influence of the performance of the firm, it also discovered that when the reward system is fair and equitable; it brings about loyalty in the members of staff in AMCON.

A recent study was done by Idowu, Soyobo, and Adeoye (2019) titled “Incentives as correlates of employees’ loyalty towards management in an organization”. Through a descriptive survey of four manufacturing companies in Ibadan, Nigeria vis-à-vis (Sumal Foods Limited, Yale Foods Limited, Coca Cola Bottling Company, and Zartech plc.). The result of the descriptive statistics reveals that lack of incentives resulted in a reduction in employee’s loyalty and overall performance of an organization.

Based on the literature, the second hypothesis was proposed that **2H₁**: Reward system has an impact on employee’s loyalty as a source of competitive advantage in the hospitality industry

2.7 Flexible-Work-Arrangement

The flexibility of work/flexible work arrangement doesn't just incorporate long periods of work or the work environment, yet it incorporates the division of work, period out of work, part-time job, and time worked (Shagvaliyeva and Yazdanifard, 2014). As per Atkinson and Hall (2011), work flexibility or adaptability is characterized as the capacity of the workforce to manage the term of their quality job task from any area dependent on the timetable that has been given. Deshwal (2015) opines that FWA has an alternate dimension on the business hours ordinarily. The thing that matters is the hours and working time as in, the workforce can accomplish their work on time at whatever point

and any place they need. Deshwal (2015) additionally contends that the flexibility of work is a type of arrangement of the company with its workforce without proposing to diminish the working hours of a worker. As indicated by Albion (2004) work flexibility has four classes that permit varieties in working hours without loss of pay includes flexi-time, adaptable shift-arrangement, and working from home (telecommuting), the settings as decreased hours and compensation, paid and leave benefits identified relating to family, and arrangements of ad-hoc for unexpected conditions. Each of these flexible working arrangements is discussed next.

2.7.1 Literature on Flexible-Work-Arrangement and Employee's Loyalty

Flexible Hours:

Flexi hours provides the management to the start and accomplishment of the work routine. It encourages representatives to satisfy their non-work responsibilities like that of childcare, family unit errands, or individual activities (Giovanis, 2018). Yang and Zheng (2011) clarified a family-arranged improvement program under adaptable hours where a worker could pick their beginning and closure working hours and make the most of its advantages. Meaning that it is induced that such workers work proficiently and viably. Also, it helps in relieving hierarchical issues like non-attendance, worker turnover, and occupation stress.

Lastly, flexible hours improve worker's consistency standard and bring about a healthy and constructive harmony among individual employees. It was likewise detailed with all proof that occasionally there is a positive connection between flexible hours and profitability; and sometimes suggest an insignificant relationship (I don't know what you

mean by this) (Yang and Zheng, 2011). It was also concluded that the effect of flexible scheduling on worker's profitability and performance must be given due consideration of the firm's flexible scheduling. However, within the hospitality industry, there is no empirical evidence as to whether flexi-hours exist within the industry considering the nature of the operation.

Contractual Working:

Unforeseen working is another name of legally binding operations (contractual workings) wherein workers are employed on an impermanent and time-bound agreement (Ashoush, Elsayed and Younis, 2015). As per Kipkoech (2017), impermanent agreements are difficult to measure since its assessment depends on work to be accomplished. There is no clear perspective on the advantages or costs incorporated into the contractual operation. This has brought about various perspectives dependent on; absence of loyalty, employment uncertainty, low regard, increased absenteeism, and low efficiency. However, it may be considered to assess the workforce for additional consideration and maintain a strategic distance from wrong choices taken by managers just as it is utilized in work fluctuating businesses to manage to adjust or fulfill a vocation undertaking. Dessler (2008) included that it might be beneficial and less expensive as far as recruiting and training, but noted that the general cost will be risen by 20 percent to 50 percent when contrasted with individuals who are permanent workers (Dessler, 2008).

A contractual worker is an individual who worked for a few periods as expected by both the employee and the employer to keep working for just a brief time frame. In other words, there is a clear period to accomplish a particular activity or event in contractual work. On the other hand, fixed-term contracts must include a notification of early contract

dissolution. In this manner, if conditions change the agreement can be abolished by either party (employer/employee) before the expiration date of the agreement (Flexible working and work-life balance, 2015).

Work Shifts:

As detailed in Hinterseer (2013), that the tendency of a flexible working arrangement is uncovered that below 47 percent of all workers in Austria have similar working hours consistently. Just over 51 percent have a fixed time to accomplish their task. The workforce who belongs to the rotating work models and work shifts contracts expanded from under 14 percent to 19 percent from 1998 to 2008. Kipkoech (2017) announced that working in shifts helps in absorbing more hours in a day by joining more than one shift; for example, workers in hotels working in shifts (morning, afternoon, and night), while a worker may work 2 shifts to cover up for coworkers. Working in shifts is of great benefit to service firms as it gives 24hours operation.

It empowers more human hours to be worked than the customary day work framework. It happens daily outside the official working hours (9 am-5 pm) day. It tends to be in a type of shift (night, evening, early morning, or rotation). This type of flexible work choice is designed, the goal that the services in the hospitality industries are provided 24/7. As indicated by the International Labor Organization, work shifts encourage the workers to improve each other in the work environment, with the goal that the activities can be performed beyond the periods of work by the workforce. Work shift plan is essential practiced as it helps in decreasing weakness and work-stress.

Telecommuting or Working from Home:

As observed by Caillier (2018) worker turnover has reduced since the utilization of telecommuting. He prescribed to support the usage of working from home as it won't just empower them to deal with work-family difficulties, yet additionally, lessen the level of worker's turnover. Be that as it may, this course of action of working from home won't stop workers from switching to other organizations, where they perceive such an organization to offers workers prosperity and the consideration that telecommuting is accessible in all organizations. Aguilera, Lethiais, Rallet, and Proulhac (2016) detailed that working from home is genuinely a limited truth, meaning that, it is a form of a casual working course of action whose benefits is coupled with some drawbacks. The principle motivation behind the flexibility of work offered to members of staff is to diminish work pressure, burnout, and exhaustion. As per Wojcak, Bajzikovab, Sajgalikova, and Polakova (2016), the introduction of ICT has empowered employees to work from any place from a different location as a teleworker. Teleworkers are individuals that don't work regularly and do not work from a fixed area outside the workplace.

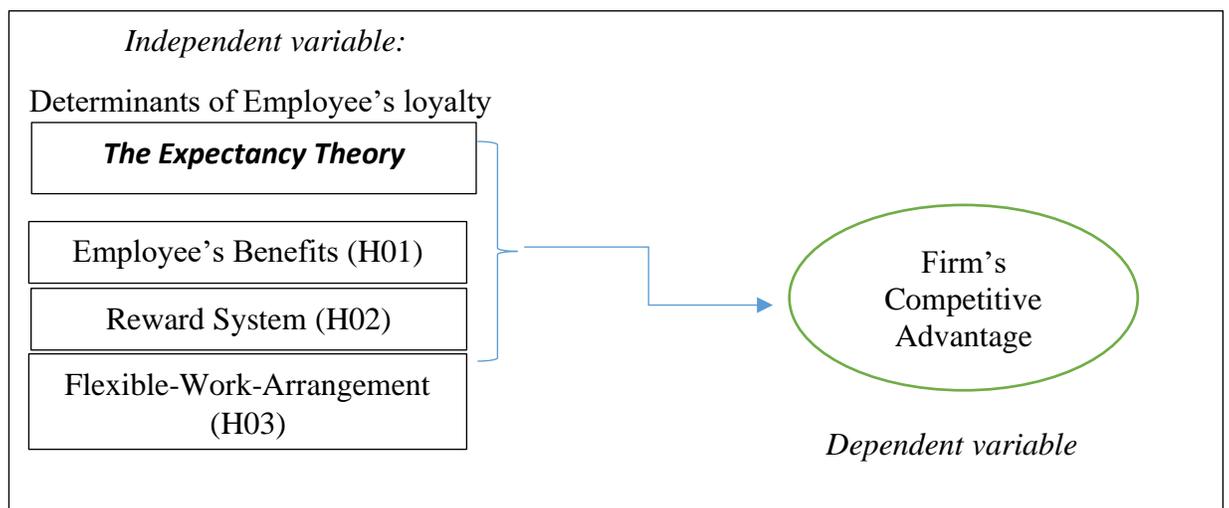
A Research was undertaken by Capnary, Rachmawati, and Agung (2018) on "the influence of flexibility of work to loyalty and employee satisfaction mediated by work-life balance to employees with millennial generation background in Indonesia startup companies" reveals that the motivation behind the examination was to analyze how work flexibility can achieve worker's loyalty, satisfaction, and work-life balance. The examination employed a descriptive survey strategy among a sample of 121. The result of the structural equation modeling reveals that work flexibility significantly influences and affects worker's loyalty and satisfaction. It also showed that there is a partial

mediating influence of work-life balance on work flexibility and worker's loyalty. Be that as it may, the mediating role of work-life balance on work flexibility and employee satisfaction is insignificantly correlated.

A study was done by Aziz-Ur-Rehman and Siddiqui (2020) on the “relationship between flexible working arrangements and job satisfaction mediated by work-life balance: Evidence from public sector universities’ employees of Pakistan”. The purpose of the study was to examine the type of relationship that exists between flexible-working-arrangements (FWA), employee’s job satisfaction (EJS), an employee’s work-life balance (EWLB). Through the descriptive research approach among 200 participants at Karachi University. The study found out that FWA has a positive relationship with EWLB. It further reveals that EWLB has a strong mediating effect on FWA and EJS.

Based on the literature, the third hypothesis was proposed that **3H₁**: Flexible-work-arrangement has an impact on employee’s loyalty as a source of competitive advantage in the hospitality industry.

2.8 Research Framework of the Study Variables.



Sources: Author's model (2020).

Figure 1: A research framework for the study

Figure one is a conceptual model showing the link between the study variables. The conceptual model in figure one, determinants of employee loyalty is the independent variable which was measured using employee's benefits, reward system, and flexible-work-arrangement, while a firm's competitive advantage is the dependent variable. The variables of this study to be examined and analyzed are based on the responses from the participants.

2.9 Conclusion and Gap in Literature

This chapter commenced with the discussion on employee loyalty, the firm's competitive advantage, and the discussion of the study variables. Following on from these relevant theories and empirical reviews of the literature of previous authors on the subject matter were undertaken. However, observation reveals a dearth of studies on employee loyalty and a firm's competitive advantage. Meanwhile, many studies on employee loyalty have focused on the firm's and employee performance, job satisfaction, employee retention. Based on this gap raised, the present study is unique because it will uncover how creating loyalty in employees can bring about a firm's competitiveness in the hospitality industry in Ireland.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH QUESTION AND HYPOTHESIS

3.0 Introduction

This chapter seeks to provide answers to the research questions derived for this survey based on the literature reviewed in the previous chapter, which is supported by hypotheses from the existing literature on creating loyalty in employees as a source of competitive advantage. The major research question is what strategies can be utilized in creating loyalty in employees as a source of competitive advantage within the hospitality sector in Dublin. To answer these questions, responses from the online questionnaire will be used to find out the impact and relationships between the study variables.

3.1 Research Question

3.1.1 Research Question 1:

What is the influence of employee's benefits in creating loyalty in employees as a source of competitive advantage in the hospitality industry? The purpose of this question is to investigate how a firm can employ staff benefits to create loyalty in workers in the hospitality industry as a source of competitive advantage.

3.1.2 Research Question 2:

What is the influence of the reward system in creating loyalty in employees as a source of competitive advantage in the hospitality industry? The motivation of this question is to ascertain how the management in the hospitality industry utilizes a reward system to create loyalty in their workforce as a source of competitive advantage.

3.1.3 Research Question 3:

What is the influence of flexible-work-arrangement in creating loyalty in employees as a source of competitive advantage in the hospitality industry? This question will help to find out whether a flexible-work-arrangement can create loyalty in their workforce as a source of competitive advantage in the hospitality industry in Ireland.

3.2 Research Hypotheses

Based on the previous studies and literature on worker's loyalty and firm's competitive advantage, these following hypotheses are formulated for this study and will enable the researcher to ascertain the influence of loyalty programs on employee loyalty and firms a competitive advantage. The outcome of these hypotheses would either be null (H_0) that opposes the previous literature, or alternative (H_1) which supports the previous studies on employee loyalty.

Hypothesis 1:

H_0 : Employee's benefit does not have an impact on worker's loyalty as a source of competitive advantage in the hospitality industry

H_1 : Employee's benefit has an impact on worker's loyalty as a source of competitive advantage in the hospitality industry

Hypothesis 2:

H_0 : The reward system does not have an impact on employee's loyalty as a source of competitive advantage in the hospitality industry.

H₂: Reward system has an impact on employee's loyalty as a source of competitive advantage in the hospitality industry.

Hypothesis 3:

H₀: Flexible-work-arrangement does not have an impact on employee's loyalty as a source of competitive advantage in the hospitality industry.

H₃: Flexible-work-arrangement has an impact on employee's loyalty as a source of competitive advantage in the hospitality industry.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.0 Introduction

The present chapter is based on the methodological approach to be used in the course of data gathering, analysis, and interpretation. This chapter will replicate the step by step methods suggested by the Research Onion model propounded by (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2009) which includes the research philosophy and design, study population, sample size, sampling techniques, data collection & analysis, reliability of research instruments and limitations.

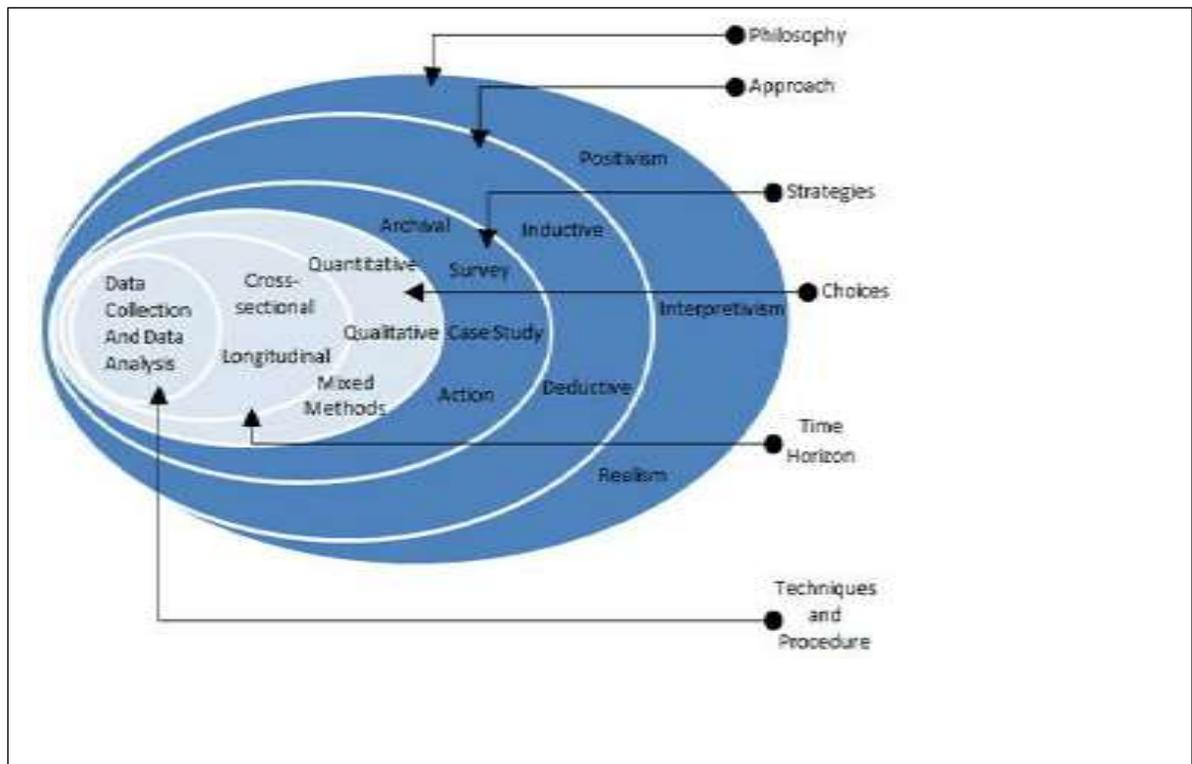


Figure 2: Research Onion model (Saunders et al., 2009)

4.1 Research Philosophy

The first layer of the research onion model underlines the experience and knowledge acquired in the course of the research work (Saunders et al., 2009). There is a great need

for the researchers to have adequate knowledge of this philosophy due to the impact it can have on their research (Johnson and Clark, 2006). Ontological and epistemological are the major approaches to conducting research studies; and while the ontological approach describes the researcher's opinion about fact and the true nature of something, the epistemological approach underlines what is expected as required knowledge in research studies (Saunders et al., 2009). The epistemological approach is used for the current dissertation since it underlines what ought to be in a research study. Besides, a positivist approach as a philosophy will be utilized since it is more suitable to verify logical proof (Remenyi et al., 1998), and also enable to the author of this dissertation to generalize the research outcome.

4.2 Research Approach

The second layer of the research onion model is a research approach which is "Deductive Approach (DA)" and "Inductive Approach (IA)" according to (Saunders et al., 2009). There is a need to comprehensively explain the research approach before an investor embarks on the main research. While the deductive approach (DA) deduces and research hypotheses from existing theories, the inductive approach (IA) collects the required data and formulate theories based on the outcome of the study.

The current dissertation can be viewed from the deductive approach since the author intends to understand the existing theories of employee' loyalty, the proposed list of hypotheses to be tested using data gathering and analysis. It also requires a well-defined sample size to arrive at a conclusion. According to Robson (2002), there are five step-by-step in conducting a deductive research vis-à-vis: deducing hypotheses, establishing the

association existing between the study constructs and their measurement scale, testing hypotheses, analyzing the outcome, and adjusting the existing literature if necessary. Thus, these outlines steps will be followed to accomplish this research.

4.4 Research Design

The third layer of the research onion model includes the research type, research strategy, choice of the research method, and time horizon (Saunders et al., 2009).

4.4.1 Research Type

The types of research in design can either be a descriptive, exploratory, as well as explanatory (Saunders et al., 2009). While exploratory research study is an attempt to investigate the natural happening, the descriptive research wants to know the true picture of events, meanwhile, the explanatory research investigates an issue to establish the causal relationship between the variables under investigation (Robson, 2002). Both the exploratory and explanatory research design is adopted because of the author keen to understand the cause and effect between variables under investigation.

4.4.2 Research Strategy

There are seven strategies in conducting research studies according to the research onion model and this includes Experiment, Survey, Case Study, Action Research, Grounded Theory, Ethnography, Archival Research (Saunders et al., 2009). The fact that every one of these strategies can be used for exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory research (Yin, 2003), not every of the strategy is appropriate for deductive and inductive approach (Saunders et al., 2009). In other words, while some are applicable for a deductive investigation, others can be used for inductive investigation.

A survey technique is adopted for the current study. A survey is frequently utilized in business research to address exploratory and descriptive inquiries (Saunders et al., 2009). This procedure is exceptionally practical to conducting a research study with a large sample within a short time-frame. Based on the fact that the researcher plans to achieve this study within a specified time in an affordable manner, the author utilized a self-administered questionnaire electronic questionnaire to solicit responses from the staff of five stars selected hotels.

The current study utilizes a descriptive survey research design that permitted a concise depiction and examination of the variables under investigation. Attributes of variables are portrayed, introduced and their connections are clarified without control as recommended by (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2009).

4.4.3 Method Choice

The choice of the method in conducting the research could be either be multiple methods or a mono method (Saunders et al., 2009). While mixed methods use more than a single approach in data gathering and analyzing, the mono approach uses only one approach in data gathering and analyzing. This dissertation adopts a mono method through a survey in the cause of data gathering and analyzing.

It is worthwhile reiterating that qualitative and quantitative techniques can make use of a mono method. While quantitative research is the deliberate empirical examination of the recognizable population through statistical strategies or an assessment that portrays a phenomenon through the gathering of quantifiable data that investigated correctly the methodology (Creswell, 2013), qualitative research investigates non-numerical data using

interviews and focus group discussion. Previous studies have utilized a quantitative approach in investigating how loyalty in employees can bring about a firm's competitive advantage (Olusoji et al., 2016; Idowu et al., 2019; Aboudaya et al., 2019). Apart from that, the quantitative approach ensures the collection of unbiased information (Wright, 2006). The author of this dissertation rejects the qualitative approach since it consumes more time and uses very few samples (McLeod, 2014). Thus, a quantitative approach is adopted having considered the benefits and shortcomings of both methods.

4.4.4 Time Horizon

Research studies are conducted within two types of time horizon, namely a cross-sectional and longitudinal. While cross-sectional studies are the investigation of specific issues within a specified time, the longitudinal is performed to investigate the same events over a long period (Saunders et al., 2009). Since the current study is aimed at investigating the impact of employee's loyalty on a firm's competitive advantage within a specific time horizon, a cross-section method is adopted.

4.5 Instrument Design

A self-administered electronic-based questionnaire was used as the research instrument. It was designed to comprise two sections. Section one was designed to seek responses about participant's demographic information, while section two was designed to answer the constructed of the study (Employee's loyalty, employee's benefits, reward system, and flexible-work-arrangement) as shown in figure 3.

Constructs	Measurement scale
Employee's Loyalty	Al-edenat and Alhawamdeh (2018); Dede et al., (2018)
Employee's Benefits	Němečková (2017)
Reward System	Olusoji et al., (2016)
Flexible-work-arrangement	Capnary et al., (2018); Aziz-Ur-Rehman et al., (2020)

Figure 3: Constructs and Measurement Scale

4.6 Pilot Test

The pilot testing intends to ensure the reliability of the research instrument for the collection of data. At the end of the day, it is to ascertain whether the instrument measure what it expects to measure. As per Sekaran and Bougie (2011) pilot study is a plot of pre-data on how a particular methodology works and limits shortage to improve the consistency of the study. This implies that it diminishes the probability of getting a non-reliable outcome and at the same time to decrease the partition that may happen as a result of uncertainty while raising the estimation of the information.

To this end, 10 online participants will be pre-tested using the self-constructed questionnaire. their responses will be coded and scaled with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 25). The test will be done using the Cronbach-Alpha test of reliability which should not be below of 0.70 values as recommended by (Osuagwu, 2002).

4.7 Population and Sample Size

The population of the study includes 5 hotels in Dublin. However, as a result of the global pandemic, it was difficult to visit the 5 hotels for ascertaining the total staff. The study population then projected as 200.

The sample size for this study was determined using Yamane (1967) formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where: n: Sample size

N: Elements of population of the study: 200

e: Sampling error= 0.05

1: Constant value

$$= \frac{200}{1 + 200(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 133.3$$

Therefore, the sample size for this study is 133.

4.8 Sampling

According to Saunders et al. (2009), the choice of sampling depends on the nature of research objectives, research questions, as well as how data would be gathered. The current study adopts a simple random sampling of available online participants in which an equal opportunity was given to them to be chosen for the study.

4.9 Primary Data Collection and Storage

The primary method of data collection was used through an online-based structured questionnaire. It was saved over password-protected online storage and online the author of this dissertation has access to the data.

4.10 Data Analysis

Data gathered from the online survey was coded with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (version 25). Statistical tools used include descriptive statistics (Range, Mean and Standard deviation) and inferential statistics (correlation and regression) to test the hypotheses formulated in this study.

4.11 Reliability and Validity

The validity test was performed using the face and content validity, while the reliability test was performed using the Cronbach's alpha test which should not be below the value of 0.70 as recommended by (Osuagwu, 2002). The result of Cronbach's alpha test for the four constructs (Employee's loyalty, Employee's benefits, Reward system, and Flexible-work-arrangement) is presented in the next chapter.

4.12 Limitations

The major limitation was in the area of questionnaire administration and retrieval which was difficult as a result of the COVID-19. This led to collecting random responses from online participants working within Irish organizations.

4.13 Ethical Consideration

Ethics means to the etiquette of one's conduct regarding the liberties of the individuals who are the participants of one's survey. To ensure the ethical consideration of this study, the principles of ethical consideration in dissertations as recommended by Bryman and Bell (2007) are adopted. The participants will not be exposed to any form of harm in the course of the field survey; The dignity of the participants will be respected and given due attention; A maximum consent would be obtained from the research participants before embarking on the field survey; The privacy of the participants will be protected; The researcher will ensure maximum confidentiality of the participant data; The researcher will guarantee the anonymity of participants during the research; There will not be any form of misleading or misrepresentation regarding the purpose of this study; The researcher will full declare any form of affiliations, funds sourcing, and conflict that may arise during the survey; There will be trustworthiness and straightforwardness of any sort of communication relating to this research; The research will do away with any kind of misdirecting data and biased presentation of the findings of the primary data.

4.14 Conclusion

The author of this dissertation examined all the available methodologies in a bid to accomplish the purpose of the study. Before arriving at the most suitable methodology, the pros and coin of each methodology were ascertained. The implications and limitations of the ethical standards were likewise discussed.

CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter entails the analysis of data retrieved from the field survey, as well as the interpretations of findings of the descriptive statistics and the test of hypotheses. This section first presents the test of the reliability of the instrument of the study, which was followed by the descriptive statistics of the items of the research instrument. Lastly, the result of the test of hypotheses using the inferential statistics vis-à-vis; correlation and linear regression were presented.

5.1 Test of Reliability

Cronbach Alpha will be utilized to test both the reliability and internal consistency of the information acquired for this examination. By computing the Cronbach Alpha value, the quality assurance of the Likert scale can be found, and subsequently, a test of reliability can be ascertained (Gliem and Gliem, 2003). As per Tavakol and Dennick (2011), when the estimation of Cronbach Alpha is greater than (>0.9), it demonstrates extremely high reliability. Furthermore, in a case where the value ranges between 0.7 to 0.9, it suggests high reliability. Although, when the value is 0.6 is as yet worthy, but in any case, if the worth falls inside 0.5 it reveals poor reliability and while values below 0.5 demonstrate non-reliability.

Table 1: Test of Reliability

Constructs	Cronbach Alpha Value	Number of Items	Number of Cases	Inter-Item Correlation Matrix
Employees' Loyalty	.939	5	114	+
Employees' Benefits	.933	5	114	+
Reward System	.913	5	114	+
Flexible-work-arrangement	.922	5	114	+
Overall	.867	20	114	+

Source SPSS (2020)

Table 1 reveals the test of the reliability of the study variable that was measured using 5 items with 114 number of cases. Additionally, the Inter-Item Correlation Matrix reveals that the items do measures the construct of the study since all the values are positive. As suggested by Al-edenat and Alhawamdeh (2018) and Dede et al. (2018), the employee's loyalty Scale has a good internal consistency based on the Cronbach alpha coefficient reported a .92, which was an excellent value. In this present study, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was 0.939 suggesting a very high internal consistency reliability. An employee's benefit has a value of 0.933, indicating the scale has good internal consistency reliability and beyond the benchmark of 0.7 suggested by (Cronbach, 1951). Reward System scale as suggested by Olusoji et al. (2016) has a good internal consistency based on the Cronbach alpha coefficient reported a .81, which was a preferable value. In this

present study, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was .913 suggesting an excellent value of internal consistency reliability. While Flexible-Work-Arrangement Scale has a good internal consistency based on the Cronbach alpha coefficient reported a .86 as suggested by Capnary et al., (2018); Rehman et al., (2020), which was a good value. In this present study, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was 0.922 suggesting an excellent value of internal consistency reliability. The overall reliability test value (Employee’s loyalty, Employee’s benefits, Reward system, and Flexible-work-arrangement) indicates the Cronbach’s Alpha value of 0.867 indicating high reliability and a very good internal consistency.

5.2 Descriptive Statistics of Questionnaire Items

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Demographic Data

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	61	53.5
Female	53	46.5
Age		
18-23years	28	24.6
24-29years	37	32.5
30-35years	32	28.1
More than 36years	17	14.9

Field Survey (2020)

Table 2 presents the socio-demographic information of the sampled participants. A close look at the gender distribution of the employees within the hospitality industry reveals that there are more male than the female who participated in the study. Additionally, the age distribution of the participants suggesting that the majority of the employees are within the age group of 18-35years.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Employee's Loyalty

Items	N	Range	Mean	Std. Deviation
I believe that my current employer has earned my loyalty	114	4.00	1.7807	1.01108
Over the past year, my loyalty to the organization has grown stronger	114	4.00	1.8158	.98273
My decision to working with my organization is appropriately rewarded and valued	114	4.00	1.7105	.98415
I see myself to working with my company for the next 2 years	114	4.00	1.7544	1.09352
Even if another company offers me a better job, I will remain with my current employer.	114	4.00	1.9298	1.10285

Field Survey (2020)

The descriptive statistics of employee's loyalty as shown in table 3 reveals that the majority of the participants strongly agreed that their employers have earned their loyalty with the mean value of 1.7809 and standard deviation of 1.01108, suggesting that the hospitality industry has been able to earn their worker's loyalty as a source of competitive advantage.

Participants who were asked as to whether their loyalty to their current organization has grown over the years indicates a higher value of those that agreed to the statement with the mean value of 1.8158 and standard deviation of .98273, suggesting that worker's loyalty towards their organizations has grown stronger over the years.

Besides, the participants who were asked about their decision to continue working for their current organisation; reveals that a higher value of the participants strongly agreed

that it's because they are adequately rewarded and valued with the mean value of 1.7105 and standard deviation of .98415, suggesting that employees are loyal when they are appropriately rewarded and valued.

Employees who were asked about their probability to remain in the organisation in the next couple of years reveals that a higher value strongly agreed they would stick with their current organisation, represented, with the mean value of 1.7544 and standard deviation of 1.09352 suggesting that employees see themselves to be part of the organisation for the next 2 years.

Lastly, the participants who were asked as to whether they would remain with their current organisation even when offered a new and better job elsewhere, shows that higher values of the participants strongly agreed to remain with the current organisation; represented with the mean value of 1.9298 and standard deviation of 1.10285 suggesting that the employees will remain with their current employer even if another company offers them a better job.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Employee's Benefits

Items	N	Range	Mean	Std. Deviation
My employer offers a defined benefit pension plan to its employees	114	4.00	1.7632	.96214
I have benefited from the healthcare plan (e.g. medical, dental, prescription, etc.) provided by my employer	114	4.00	1.7632	.98935
My company pays the cost of the benefit (premium) for employee's medical coverage	114	4.00	1.8421	1.05242
My organisation offers sick days to employees to care for an ill dependent	114	4.00	1.7544	1.01808

I am satisfied with the employee benefits offered by my organisation	114	4.00	1.6491	1.02173
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Field Survey (2020)

Table 4 that shows the descriptive statistics of employee’s benefits reveals that the majority of the participants strongly agreed their employer offers a defined benefits pension plan to their workers, represented with the mean value of 1.7632 and standard deviation of .96214 suggesting that the hospitality industry offer a defined benefit pension plan to their staffs.

Furthermore, the employees who were asked if they have ever benefited from healthcare plan reveals that higher values of the participants strongly agreed that they have benefited from medical, dental, and prescription from their employers represented with the mean value of 1.7632 and standard deviation of .98935 suggesting that staffs in the hospitality industry likewise benefits from healthcare plan.

Participants who were asked whether their organizations pay the cost of premium of employee’s medical coverage reveals that higher values of participants agreed that their employers cover the cost of employee’s medical coverage, indicated with the mean value of 1.8421 and standard deviation of 1.05242 suggesting that the hospitality industry pays the cost of employee’s medical coverage.

Participants who were asked whether their organisation offer sick day leaves to their staff indicates that a higher value of mean= 1.7544, and standard deviation=1.01808 strongly agreed their organisation grants employee’s sick leave. This suggests that the hospitality industry offers sick days leave to employees to cater for an ill dependent.

Nevertheless, participants who were asked about their level of satisfaction in respect of the benefits received from their organisation reveals that a higher value of mean= 1.6491, and standard deviation=1.02173 suggesting that employees in the hospitality industry are satisfied with the overall benefits received from their employers.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of a Reward System

Items	N	Range	Mean	Std. Deviation
Bonuses and other financial incentives are important to me	114	4.00	1.8333	1.10443
There is a possibility to achieve promotion in my organisation	114	4.00	1.7193	1.02628
In the past six months, I have received employee's monthly awards	114	4.00	1.7456	1.14298
Lunch with the boss and team members as a reward motivates me	114	4.00	1.7632	1.10752
I am satisfied with the overall company's reward programs	114	4.00	1.5351	1.04906

Field Survey (2020)

Table 5 which present the descriptive statistics of a reward system, shows that the majority of the employees strongly agreed they consider bonuses and other financial incentives as important apparatus, as represented with the mean value of 1.8333 and standard deviation of 1.10443 suggesting that bonuses and financial incentive are important to employees in bringing about loyalty as a source of competitive advantage. A higher mean value of 1.7193 and a standard deviation of 1.02628 of employees strongly agreed that they could achieve promotion in their organization. Additionally, employees who were asked how often they are rewarded shows a higher mean value of 1.7456, with a standard deviation of 1.14298, this suggests that employees in the hospitality industry strongly agreed they receive monthly rewards in the past six months.

Regarding non-financial rewards as a motivator, the majority of the employees strongly agreed that having lunch with the boss and team members as a reward motivates them, as represented by the mean= 1.7632, and standard deviation=1.10752 suggesting that having lunch with boss and team members as a non-financial reward motivates employees within the hospitality industry to remain loyal. Nevertheless, a higher mean value=1.5351, and standard deviation=1.04906 indicating that employees within the hospitality industry are satisfied with the overall reward programs available.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics of Flexible-Work-Arrangement

Items	N	Range	Mean	Std. Deviation
My organisation provides some of the following Flexible-Work-Arrangement (part-time jobs, job sharing, reduced hours and working from home, etc.) to its employees	114	4.00	1.9561	1.05083
Flexible-Work-Arrangement is important to me	114	4.00	1.7982	1.08228
My organisation sometimes encourages a job-sharing practice	114	4.00	1.7193	1.14063
I am satisfied with the overall Flexible-Work-Arrangement offered in my organisation	114	4.00	1.8246	1.05801
I see myself to working with my current employer because of its flexible-work-arrangement	114	4.00	1.8684	1.10920

Field Survey (2020)

Descriptive statistics of flexible-work-arrangement as shown in table 6 reveals that the majority of the respondents agreed that the hospitality industry provides part-time jobs, reduced hours as a way of providing flexible-work-arrangement, as represented with the mean

value of 1.9561 and standard deviation of 1.05083. Suggesting that the hospitality industry provides part-time jobs, reduced hours to ensuring flexible-work-arrangement.

Furthermore, the majority of the participants strongly agreed that flexible-work-arrangement is important to them in bringing about their loyalty, as represented with the mean value of 1.7982 and a standard deviation of 1.08228. Suggesting that flexible-work-arrangement is important to the employees working in the hospitality industry. A closer look at table 6 also indicates that the majority of the participants strongly agreed that their employer encourages a job-sharing practice, as represented with the mean value of 1.7193 and a standard deviation of 1.14063. Suggesting that the hospitality industry encourages a job-sharing practice as a way of ensuring flexible-work-arrangement.

Also, employees who were asked on their level of satisfaction on the overall flexible-working-arrangement offered by their employer indicates that the majority of the participants strongly agree they are satisfied as represented with the mean value of 1.8246 and standard deviation of 1.05801. Suggesting that employees in the hospitality industry are satisfied with the overall flexible-work-arrangement offered in the organisation.

Lastly, the majority of the participants strongly agree that their choice to continue workings for their current employer is linked to the flexible-working-arrangement, as represented with the mean value of 1.8684 and standard deviation of 1.10920. Suggesting that work-flexibility-arrangement can bring about employee's loyalty.

5.3 Test of Hypotheses

5.3.1 Restatement of Hypothesis

1H₁: Employee's benefit has an impact on worker's loyalty as a source of competitive advantage in the hospitality industry

2H₁: Reward system has an impact on employee's loyalty as a source of competitive advantage in the hospitality industry

3H₁: Flexible-work-arrangement has an impact on employee's loyalty as a source of competitive advantage in the hospitality industry

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Employee's Loyalty (ELTY)	8.9912	4.64586	114
Employee's Benefits (EBFT)	8.7719	4.47814	114
Reward System (RSYS)	10.9298	3.67175	114
Flexible-work-arrangement (FWA)	8.0702	1.84208	114

A closer look at table 7 which shows the descriptive statistics of the study variables indicate that the mean of reward system exhibits a significantly higher agreement (M=10.9, SD= 3.7) in their opinion that reward system is important to employees in determining their loyalty to their current employer than employee's benefits (M=8.7; SD=4.5) or flexible-working-arrangement (M=8.1; SD=1.8).

To test the three proposed hypotheses, the author of this dissertation conducted a multiple linear regression analysis to examine the impact of employee benefits, reward systems, and flexible-work-arrangement on employee loyalty as a source of competitive advantage.

The linear regression analysis is a suitable statistical technique for investigating the linear relationship that exists between the study variables (Shujaat, Manzoor and Syed, 2014). Tables 8, 9 and 10 are the test of the three proposed hypotheses, it is to be noted that there are four sub-sections (correlation, model summary, ANOVA and Coefficients table) which explains the outcome of the analysis.

Table 8: Correlation Analysis

Correlations		Total_ELTY	Total_EBFT	Total_RSYS	Total_FWA
Pearson Correlation	Total_ELTY	1.000	.890**	.592**	.243*
	Total_EBFT	.890**	1.000	.577	.268
	Total_RSYS	.592**	.577	1.000	.245
	Total_FWA	.243*	.268	.245	1.000
Sig. (1- tailed)	Total_ELTY	.	.000	.000	.005
	Total_EBFT	.000	.	.000	.002
	Total_RSYS	.000	.000	.	.004
	Total_FWA	.005	.002	.004	.
N		114	114	114	114

**** Correlation is significant at the 001 level (2-tailed)**

Correlation analysis is utilized in ascertaining the relationship that exists amid the study variables (Imna and Hassan, 2015). In other words, it is often employed to establish whether a positive or negative relationship does exist between two or more variables. The value of correlation varies between +1 to -1 which indicates either the study variables are positively or negatively related (Landau and Everitt, 2004). The result of the Pearson correlation in Table 8 shows that while employees' benefits have a high positive relationship ($r=0.890$; $p<0.000$) with employees' loyalty as a source of competitive advantage; the reward system has a moderate positive relationship ($r=0.592$; $p<0.000$) with employees' loyalty as a source of competitive advantage, but flexible-work-

arrangement has a weak negative relationship ($r=0.243$; $p>0.005$). Malik et al (2014) opine that a significant value lesser than 0.01 suggests a statistically significant association. Therefore, both employees' benefits and reward systems are statistically correlated with employee loyalty as a source of competitive advantage.

Table 9: Regression Analysis

Model Summary^b						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.895 ^a	.801	.796		2.10088	2.011

a. Predictors: (Constant), Total_FWA, Total_RSYS, Total_EBFT

b. Dependent Variable: Total_ELTY

Multiple regression is utilized to examine the association between the study variables (Faraway, 2002). The regression model is suggested to be a good fit when the adjusted R Square values are beyond 0.6 (Robert, 2007). Should the value of the Durbin-Watson test range between 1.5 to 2.5, it is considered acceptable and recommends no autocorrelation. Thus, it is a good indication (Bakon and Hassan, 2013). For the study, the value of R Square is 0.801 indicating that 80.1% of independent variables (employees' benefits, reward system, and flexible-work-arrangement) have an impact on the dependent variable (employees' loyalty). The value of adjusted R Square is 0.796 which is beyond the recommended value of 0.6, indicating the model is a good fit. The value of the Durbin-Watson test which is 2.011 that falls within the range 1.5 to 2.5 suggests there is no autocorrelation, therefore, the Durbin-Watson analysis is accepted (Durbin and Watson, 1950).

Table 10: ANOVA Analysis

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1953.483	3	651.161	147.531	.000 ^b
	Residual	485.508	110	4.414		
	Total	2438.991	113			

a. Dependent Variable: Total_ELTY

b. Predictors: (Constant), Total_FWA, Total_RSYS, Total_EBFT

The Analysis of Variance table is the test of the significance of the regression model. In other words, table 10 tests whether the value of ($R^2= 80.1\%$) is statistically significant. A closer look of the model indicates that the regression model is statistically significant as represented by the F (df=3, 110= 147.531, $p < .000$, $R^2=80.1\%$).

Table 11: Coefficient Analysis

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.004	.971		-.004	.997
	Total_EBFT	.854	.055	.823	15.600	.000
	Total_RSY	.150	.066	.119	2.260	.000
	Total_FWA	-.017	.112	-.007	-.149	.882

a. Dependent Variable: Total_ELTY

The coefficient table is the test of the independent variables or predictors (Employee's benefits, Reward system, and Flexible-work-arrangement) at 0.05 alpha level. The Standardized Coefficients Beta value for both Employee's benefits and Reward system are (0.823), (0.119) respectively with a significant level of (0.000) which is lower than 0.01. Meanwhile, the Standardized Coefficients Beta value for Flexible-work-arrangement is (-0.149), with a significant level of (0.882) which is beyond 0.001. Should

the significant level be lower than 0.01, this suggests a significant impact (Wang and Huynh, 2013). Thus, both the H1 and H2 are accepted; while H3 is rejected, the result of concludes that:

1. **1H₁**: Employee’s benefit has an impact on worker’s loyalty as a source of competitive advantage in the hospitality industry.
2. **2H₁**: Reward system has an impact on worker’s loyalty as a source of competitive advantage in the hospitality industry.
3. **3H₁**: Flexible-working-arrangement does not have an impact on worker’s loyalty as a source of competitive advantage in the hospitality industry

Table 12: Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Relationships	Results
H1 : There is a significant relationship between employee’s benefits and employee’s loyalty	Strong positive	Supported
H2 : There is a significant relationship between the reward system and employee’s loyalty	Moderate positive	Supported
H3 : There is no significant relationship between flexible-working-arrangement and employee’s loyalty	Low negative	Not Supported

CHAPTER SIX: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

6.0 Introduction

The present chapter presents the discussion of the findings of the test of the three hypotheses formulated for the study. Out of the three hypotheses tested, only two were statistically significant and were accepted, while the remaining one hypothesis was insignificant which was rejected. The discussion of each finding is presented below:

6.1 Discussion of the Findings in the Hypotheses Result

6.1.1 Hypothesis One

Hypothesis one reveals that employee's benefit has an impact on worker's loyalty as a source of competitive advantage in the hospitality industry. As indicated in table 4 of the previous chapter, the vast majority of the participants said their organizations have a defined pension plan and healthcare plan available to employees which range from a medical, dental, prescription and among others, it further reveals that the sampled employees are very satisfied with those employee's benefits offered by the organization and therefore is their major reason for being loyal to their current organization.

This led to the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis which states that an employee's benefit scheme has an impact on worker's loyalty as a source of competitive advantage in the hospitality industry. This study corroborates the previous study of Tomčíková (2016) titled "employee benefits and trends in the workplace". By utilizing a literature review approach, the study indicated that employees are generally happy with health-related benefits, and wellness benefits which make them stick with their employer. Another earlier study of Stalmašeková, Genzorová, and Čorejová (2017) titled "workforce benefits

as one of the factors of work motivation". Through a descriptive survey among 100 students at the University of Žilina discovered that employees preferred work flexibility, the use of the company's car for personal purposes and extra pay for a vacation to motivate them to continue working for the organization. Likewise, the study of Sekyi, Boakye, and Ankumah (2016) on the "factors influencing employee loyalty in the hotel industry in Takoradi, Ghana" found that the provision of insurance cover to members of staff, employee recognition and participation in decision making, equitable treatment, manpower planning policies, employee's benefits, and teamwork jointly motivate the workers to remain loyal to their organization, which in turn is a source of competitive advantage.

6.1.2 Hypothesis Two

Hypothesis two reveals that the reward system has an impact on worker's loyalty as a source of competitive advantage in the hospitality industry. A closer look at table 4 in chapter 5 reveals that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed that bonuses and other financial incentives are important to them in bringing about their loyalty to their organization, which is likewise a source of competitive advantage to the hospitality industry. Apart from that, promotions, monthly awards, and having lunch with the superior and team members motivate employees to remain loyal; and employees are satisfied with the overall organisation's reward programs.

This suggests that through the reward systems, employees can be loyal to their organisation that is also a source of competitive advantage in the hospitality industry. This is why the American Compensation Associations (1996), suggested that the rewards

framework is one of the best and persuasive devices accessible to an organization with regards to encouraging group behavior required to bring about achieving set goals and objectives, which can bring about the distinctive edge to firms.

6.1.3 Hypothesis Three

Hypothesis three reveals that flexible-work-arrangement does not have an impact on worker's loyalty as a source of competitive advantage in the hospitality industry. The outcome from table 6 shows that the hospitality industry provides part-time jobs, job sharing and reduced working hours in providing flexible-work-arrangement. In overall, the majority of employees said that the flexible working arrangement is important to them and are well satisfied with the available flexible-work-arrangement. Even though the sampled hospitality industry offers the availability of flexible work arrangements, it is not enough to bring about employee's loyalty. This, therefore, led to the third null hypothesis that states that flexible-work-arrangement does not have an impact on employee loyalty as a source of competitive advantage in the hospitality industry.

Meanwhile, the result of this study contradicts the recent study of Capnary, Rachmawati, and Agung (2018) titled "the influence of flexibility of work to loyalty and employee satisfaction mediated by work-life balance to employees with millennial generation background in Indonesia startup companies". Through the descriptive survey strategy among a sample of 121, the result of the structural equation modeling reveals that work flexibility significantly influences and affects worker's loyalty and satisfaction. A more recent study done by Aziz-Ur-Rehman and Siddiqui (2020) on the "relationship between flexible working arrangements and job satisfaction mediated by work-life balance:

Evidence from public sector universities' employees of Pakistan" found out that flexible-working-arrangements have a positive relationship with job satisfaction which encourages employees to remain loyal to their organization. The differences in outcome may be attributed to the differences in statistical method, country and the type of industry in which the study was conducted.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.0 Introduction

Since employees are the main driver of organizational success and are the only factor of production that ensures efficient utilization of other factors of production in the attainment of the expected outcome. There is a need to create a commitment of the skilled workforce to remain with the organization as a source of competitive advantage. The current dissertation is based on the impact of creating loyalty in employees to create a competitive advantage for organizations in the hospitality sector. The goal of this current study was to assess the impact of employee's benefit, reward system, and flexible-work-arrangement on employee loyalty as a source of competitive advantage. This chapter presents the conclusions from the result findings, provides useful recommendations, limitations, and suggestions for future research.

7.1 Conclusions and Contribution to Knowledge

This study concludes that both employee's benefits and reward systems have a role to play in influencing employee's loyalty as a source of competitive advantage. Meanwhile, flexibility-work-arrangement does not influence the loyalty of employees. The findings from this study expand previous research on employee loyalty by focusing on the hospitality sector within Dublin. The outcome of this dissertation is relevant because previous research on employee loyalty has focused on the firm's performance and sustainability. At such, the managers in the hospitality sector should consider these three variables (employee's benefits, reward system and flexible-work-arrangement) in creating loyalty in employees in a bid to remain competitive within the industry.

7.2 Recommendations

Given the findings of this study, and the conclusion drawn, the author of this dissertation thereby recommends that;

To ensure high retention of a skilled workforce, management needs to give proper attention to employee's welfare, formulate and implement employees' pension and medical plans. This will help motivate employees to remain with the organization since they believe to form the importance of the organization.

Managers likewise should strategically design a different reward system that meets different employee's needs, this is because what serves as a motivator for one employee may demotivate other employees. Thus, when employees are motivated they would be high retention, which will create a competitive advantage for the firm.

Since flexible-work-arrangement alone is not a powerful apparatus that encourages employee's loyalty as reported in this study, the human resource managers may need to focus more attention on other important loyalty programs.

7.3 Limitations and Suggestions for Further Studies

The main limitation of this dissertation is attributed to the sample size of a hundred and fourteen (114), which was due to the locked-down caused by the global pandemic which deprived most target participants from partaking in the study. Further study with a larger sample size is needed in order to see if the outcome of this study is applicable to other sectors.

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SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A: Personal Data: (Please Indicate Appropriately)

1. Gender: A) Male { }, B) Female { }
2. Age: A) 18-23 { }, B) 24-29 { } C) 30-35 { }, D) 36 and above { }

SECTION B: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Please read the following statements carefully and tick appropriately to show the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement. ‘SA=Strongly Agree’; ‘A=Agree’; ‘UD= Undecided’; ‘SD = Strongly Disagree’; and ‘D=Disagree’

S/N	A. EMPLOYEE’S LOYALTY	1 SA	2 A	3 UD	4 D	5 SD
1.	I believe that my current employer has earned my loyalty					
2.	Over the past year, my loyalty to the organisation has grown stronger					
3.	My decision to working with my organisation is appropriately rewarded and valued					
4.	I see myself to working with my company for the next 2 years					
5.	Even if I’m offered a better job by another company, I will remain with my current employer.					
S/N	B. EMPLOYEE’S BENEFITS	1 SA	2 A	3 UD	4 D	5 SD
6.	My employer offers a defined benefit pension plan to its employees					
7.	I have benefited from the healthcare plan (e.g. medical, dental, prescription, etc.) provided by my employer					
8.	My company pays the cost of the benefit (premium) for employee’s medical coverage					
9.	My organisation offers sick days to employees to care for an ill dependent					
10	I am satisfied with the employee benefits offered by my organisation					
S/N	C. REWARD SYSTEM	1 SA	2 A	3 UD	4 D	5 SD
11.	Bonuses and other financial incentives are important to me					

12.	There is a possibility to achieve promotion in my organisation					
13.	In the past six months, I have received employee's monthly awards					
14.	Lunch with the boss and team members as a reward motivates me					
15.	I am satisfied with the overall company's reward programmes					
S/N	D. FLEXIBLE-WORK-ARRANGEMENT (FWA)	1	2	3	4	5
		SA	A	UD	D	SD
16	My organisation provides some of the following Flexible-Work-Arrangement (part-time jobs, job sharing, reduced hours and working from home, etc.) to its employees					
17.	Flexible-Work-Arrangement is important to me					
18.	My organisation sometimes encourages a job-sharing practice					
19.	I am satisfied with the overall Flexible-Work-Arrangement offered in my organisation					
20.	I see myself to working with my current employer because of its flexible-work-arrangement					

Thank you for your co-operation.

Considering the current global pandemic crisis, what do you consider to determine your loyalty to the organisation you currently work? Please indicate
