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The Impact of EB-5 Ownership on Employee Job Satisfaction and Guest
Satisfaction in the Hospitality Industry: A Case Study

by

Valentina Naumenko

A dissertation
submitted to the Bisk College of Business
at Florida Institute of Technology
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

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that the attached document be accepted as fulfilling in
part the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Business Administration

The Impact of EB-5 Ownership on Employee Job Satisfaction and Guest
Satisfaction in the Hospitality Industry: A Case Study,
a dissertation by Valentina Naumenko

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Abstract

The Impact of EB-5 Ownership on Employee Job Satisfaction and Guest Satisfaction in the Hospitality Industry: A Case Study

by

Valentina Naumenko

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The hospitality industry of the United States continues to thrive and grow each year with millions of tourists and business visitors. The exceptional quality of guest services that hospitality organizations provide makes the U.S. by far the top world destination for international travelers. In 2015, the number one tourist destination in the United States was Orlando, Florida. Sixty-six million visitors were hosted in this area. Approximately thirty percent of the total Orlando inventory was accounted for in the Lake Buena Vista district, which is located within the Disney World submarket.

The firm's service-profit chain model suggests that satisfied employees increase the value of services that fulfill the needs of guests and exceed their expectations. Thus, satisfied customers would, in turn, lead to improved business performance, such as revenue and profitability growth. Previous research suggests that employing the concept of organizational alignment enables hospitality

organizations to improve employee job satisfaction, increase guest satisfaction and company performance.

This research examines the impact of EB-5 owners on employee job satisfaction and guest satisfaction in a hospitality organization. Due to a distinct ownership type, the EB-5 hotels are expected to perform differently than non-EB-5 hotels. Because more and more hospitality organizations are financed by EB-5 immigrant investors, the main area of interest is to learn how this type of ownership may influence hotel performance.

The purpose of this dissertation is to advance additional research in the field by exploring the phenomenon of EB-5 hotel ownership and to develop recommendations for practitioners to improve the performance of their organizations. More specifically, through the prism of organizational alignment, the researcher examined how EB-5 ownership affects employee job satisfaction and retention and, ultimately, shapes the hospitality firm's guest satisfaction and performance. A case study method, with 47 survey participants and five interview participants, was employed to answer the research questions, test a proposition, and provide valuable insight into one EB-5 hospitality firm in Orlando, Florida.

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Last but certainly not least, I would like to express endless appreciation to my friends, Kate Sigman and Robert Hayes, for their influence on this study and endless inspiration. Thank you for always being there for me when I needed your help the most.

Dedication

This dissertation and all my academic achievements are dedicated to my children. My dearest sons, Andrew and Lucas, you were my inspiration to continue, and thinking of you led me to the completion of my life's work. May you always know that achievement is what guides us in life. I know that success will always follow you in whatever you do because, when you grow up, you will be ambitious and hardworking. There will always be people with different behaviors, beliefs, and habits around, however. Their ways may seem to be easier than yours. Also, there will be times when you may feel like giving up. May you never let either people or obstacles override your dream path. Don't ever give up on your dreams! I will love you with all my heart always and forever!

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Overview

For any service enterprise—large or small—competing in a local, regional, or global marketplace, the required ingredient is the alignment of customer expectations and the way in which customers experience delivery. According to Crotts, Ford, Heung, and Ngai (2007), one of the key factors influencing employee performance is employee job satisfaction. In other words, the more satisfied employees are, the more committed they are (Silva, 2006). Both job satisfaction and employee commitment are antecedents of employee retention. Finally, retention of frontline employees is important to hospitality business success because it enables employees to display high quality performance (Karatepe, 2013); consequently, employee job satisfaction is a particularly relevant outcome variable in the hospitality industry to enhance guest satisfaction (Rothfelder, Ottenbacher, & Harrington, 2013; Yee, Yeung, & Cheng, 2011).

Previous research suggested that “firms that have set explicit goals to deliver service excellence, supported by explicit systems, policies and procedures which reinforce the achieving of such goals, will be more effective and profitable than operations with low alignment” (Crotts et al., 2007, p. 23), and they will experience lower annual turnover rates. However, only a few organizations spend a sufficient amount of time and effort ensuring their actions, policies, and procedures are aligned (Dickson, Ford, & Upchurch, 2006; Papke, 2014). When focusing only

on high profits, owners often neglect to align internal resources with employee satisfaction and company performance. As a result, hotel employees may suffer from poor management (Zhao, Ghiselli, Law, & Ma, 2016) and decreased job satisfaction, which can negatively impact guest satisfaction.

Moreover, there is interest whether hospitality organizations owned by foreign investors have the ability to function in such a way to maintain high employee job satisfaction and meet expectations of the hotel guests. This study focuses on one particular foreign direct investment (FDI) program, the Employment-Based 5th Preference Category, or EB-5 Immigrant Investor Visa Program, or simply EB-5 as it is referred throughout this study. EB-5 foreign immigrant investors (owners) can become residents of the United States (U.S.) through this FDI assistance program. Radipere and Dhliwayo (2014) found that factors, such as owners' cultural differences, entrepreneurial intentions, and international experience, may negatively impact the success of companies owned by immigrants. Because of this FDI program's inherent structure and incentives, EB-5 business owners may not share the necessary vision, passion, and commitment to a business idea including sufficient involvement in the day-to-day life of their organizations as non-EB-5 hotel owners. In addition, immigrant business owners rely on their experience, mainly shaped by their home country. This may affect their internationalization process due to the lack of shared values with the members of American hospitality organizations.

Considering that the hospitality industry is one of the largest employers in the U.S. (Lu, Shih, and Chen, 2013) and is among the largest U.S. industries receiving EB-5 investment, it is important to understand how organizational alignment within EB-5 hospitality settings influences employee job satisfaction and eventually shapes guest satisfaction and hotel performance. As of today, this area of research is understudied. However, EB-5 hospitality practitioners remain in need of learning about unique factors related to EB-5 ownership, so they can have a better understanding of how to cope with challenges and strengthen the capabilities of their organizations. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to examine an EB-5 hotel to understand how EB-5 ownership affects employee job satisfaction and guest satisfaction in the hospitality industry.

Background and Rationale of the Study

Background of the EB-5 Investment Visa Program

Historically, the U.S. has been the world's largest recipient of foreign direct investment (FDI) (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2007) deriving from immigrant entrepreneurship (Foad, 2011). "Americans have prospered from foreign entrepreneurs' investments in the U.S. economy" (Vila, 2010, p. 263). Among the benefits the government provides to attract FDI coming from other countries, such as lowering tax rates or other incentives, immigration benefits strongly influence foreign entrepreneurial decisions as to where to invest (Hart, Acs, & Tracy, 2011).

To continue stimulating the U.S. economy by creating new jobs, the United States Citizenship Immigration Services (USCIS) introduced the EB-5 immigrant investment program (McMartin, 2014; Vila, 2010) in the early 1990s. More specifically, according to USCIS (2015), “Congress established the EB-5 program as a tool to help stimulate the U.S. economy by encouraging foreign investors to make sizable capital investments in exchange for the privilege of immigrating to the United States as Lawful Permanent Residents” (p 46).

To place this in context, background information on the EB-5 program is necessary. At the time of this study, EB-5 was the primary immigration program that enabled foreign investors to migrate to the U.S. Under the EB-5 program, foreign entrepreneurs and their families can apply to become permanent residents of the United States. The EB-5 program was established by Congress in 1990 to grant foreign national investors legal permanent residency status for investing at least \$500,000 and creating at least ten qualified jobs in the U.S. (Ruark & Moinuddin, 2012). This lower level of investment was valid only for businesses located in an area experiencing an unemployment rate of at least 150 percent of the national average or in a rural area. If EB-5 investors chose a location that was not rural or where unemployment was not high, the minimum investment required was \$1 million. Appendix A provides a detailed overview of the EB-5 program.

Whether this immigrant entrepreneurship program improves or harms a country’s economy is questionable. About 53 percent of Americans noted that foreign EB-5 ownership of U.S. companies was not beneficial to the economy

(Vila, 2010). There were two popular supporting points. The first involved whether EB-5 visa programs were successful in contributing to job creation. While USCIS posited that 4,000 millionaire investors would bring \$4 billion in new investments and create 40,000 jobs per year, program evaluation revealed that the program failure rate was high (Ruark & Moinuddin, 2012). For example, Invest in the USA (IIUSA) predicted that EB-5 investors would create 117,430 jobs in 2011, but they had verification of only 30,167 jobs (IIUSA, 2013). Ruark and Moinuddin stated that, directly or indirectly, “there is no verifiable way to know if even one permanent job has been created or saved in the United States as a result of the EB-5 program” (p. 3). The second point involved fraud. For example, between February 2013 and December 2015, the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission investigated 19 cases of EB-5 offerings, and almost half of them involved fraud allegations. The Canadian Immigrant Investor Program (IIP), which was a close analog to the EB-5 program, was terminated in 2014 due to poor business outcomes and fraud.

Regardless of the debates surrounding the EB-5 visa program’s effectiveness, foreign entrepreneurs continue to participate and invest. The U.S. received over \$15 billion of FDI from 2005-2015 through EB-5 investment, which is 12 percent of total U.S. FDI (NES Financial, 2017). In 2016, according to IIUSA, total inward US EB-5 capital investment was over \$3.8 billion. Most of this capital (74%) was distributed among four states, which are New York, Florida,

California, and Texas (NES Financial, 2017). Figure 1 (below) provides a visual distribution of EB-5 investment.

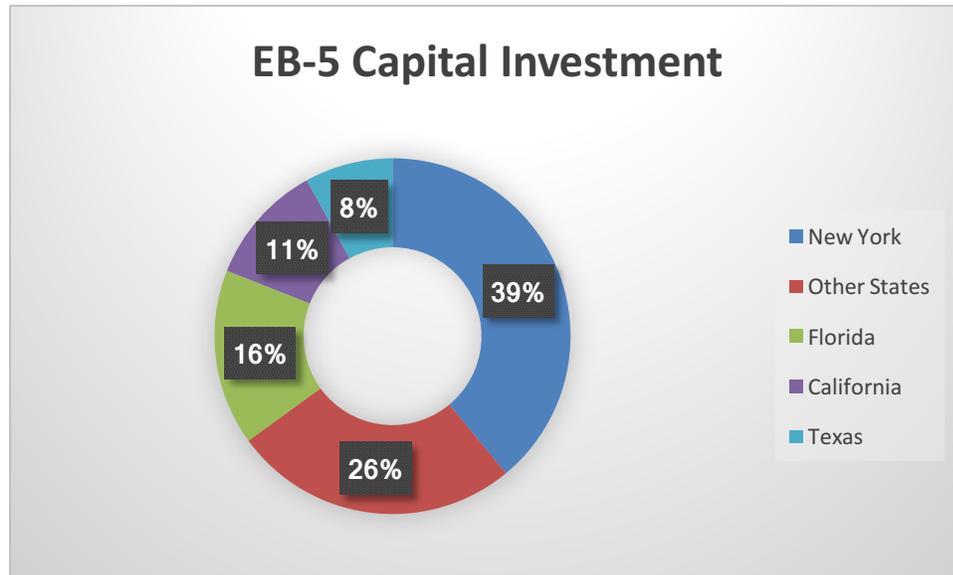


Figure 1. EB-5 capital investment. Adapted from IIUSA, 2015 & NES Financial, 2017.

The EB-5 visa program allows investors from China, India, Iran, Russia, Venezuela, Mexico, and other countries to put capital to work in diverse U.S. industry sectors. Among the industries are commercial real-estate, construction, education, energy, entertainment, infrastructure, health care, logistics, manufacturing, and hospitality. The hospitality industry takes one of the largest portions of EB-5 capital. It was reported that 31 percent of EB-5 capital was distributed to the hotel industry sector in 2016. This is second only to the multi-family housing industry sector at 36 percent. Figure 2 below provides a visualization of the distribution of EB-5 funds across industry sectors. NES

Financial (2017) reported that hospitality was one of the fastest growing sectors in EB-5 projects across the U.S., thus the growing share of total capital attraction.

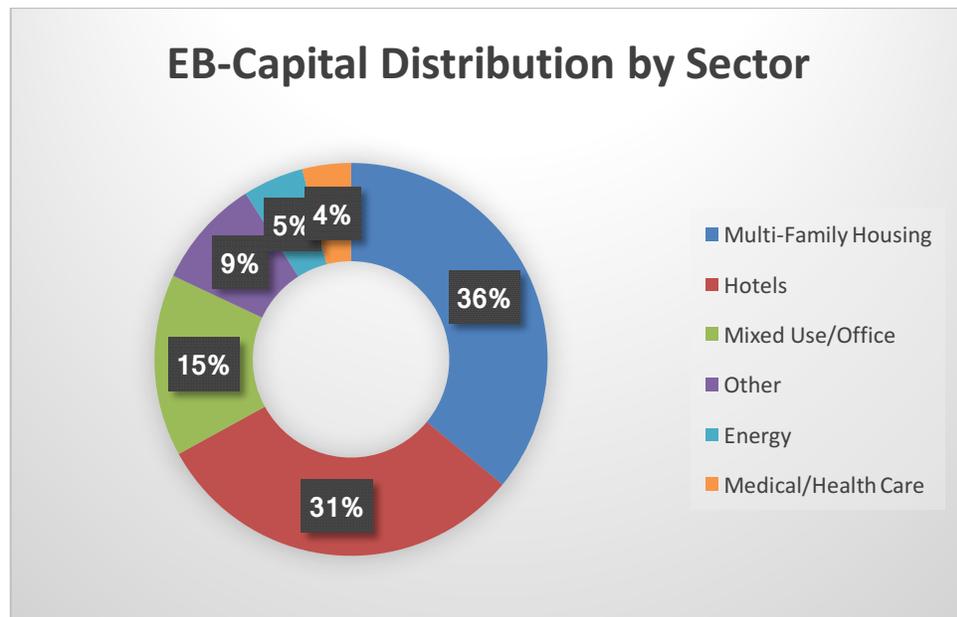


Figure 2. EB-5 capital distribution by sector. Adapted from IIUSA, 2015 & NES Financial, 2017.

EB-5 Ownership and Hospitality Industry

According to the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AHLA), the hospitality industry continues to thrive and grow each year with millions of tourists and business visitors. The exceptional quality of guest services that hospitality organizations provide makes the U.S. by far the leading destination for international travelers. According to analysis by professors at New York University, EB-5 investments are mainly financing large-scale, luxury or entertainment-oriented real estate developments (Hotel Management, 2016). For

example, in 2015, \$1 billion was invested to build a Chinese-style casino in Las Vegas and \$150 million to construct the new Waldorf Astoria in Beverly Hills, which together represents more than 10 percent of total EB-5 FDI received in 11 years (Hotel Management, 2016).

Forecasters estimate that 94.6 million people will visit the U.S. by 2020, which amounts to an increase of 29 percent over 2014 (AHLA, 2015). This trend is shown in Figure 3 below. Because the EB-5 immigrant investment project has been mainly in the hotel business, its contribution is significant for the growth of the hospitality industry and the economy of the United States.



Figure 3. Tourist arrivals in the U.S.: years 2014-2020. Adapted from AHLA, 2015.

Various studies on immigrant entrepreneurship have discussed the impact of immigrant entrepreneurs on firm performance as there has been a large growth in entrepreneurship from immigrants into the United States in recent decades (Sahin, Nijkamp, & Stough, 2011; Armengot, Parellada, & Carbonell, 2010). Often, research has defined immigrant entrepreneurs as being an immigrant, an entrepreneur, or a self-employed immigrant (Scheers & Radipere, 2007; Ley, 2006; Armengot et al., 2010) who have permanent residency or citizenship status. What the immigrant entrepreneurship term does not completely cover is the EB-5 investment visa program and EB-5 business owners. The main difference between an *immigrant entrepreneur* and *EB-5 entrepreneur* is the immigration status; participants of the EB-5 visa program are mainly wealthy foreign investors with a pending immigration status. Therefore, studying the way in which EB-5 owners, rather than traditional immigrant entrepreneurs, may influence the quality of services and hotel guest satisfaction is important.

Background of Organizational Alignment in an EB-5 Hospitality Firm

The recognition that service employees play a pivotal role in the delivery of quality, guest satisfaction, and retention of loyal customers in the hospitality industry is prevalent among researchers and practitioners (Chiang, Birtch, & Kwan, 2010; Crotts et al., 2007; Heskett, Jones, Loveman, Sasser, & Schesinger, 1994; Karatepe, 2013; Rothfelder et al., 2013). Research suggests that high performance by service employees is vital in providing exceptional guest service. The study of

Heskett et al. (1994) offered particularly significant value because it pioneered the service-profit chain model (Figure 4) that integrated operations management and human resource management for organizational improvement in the context of the service industry. The rationale of the service-profit chain model is that satisfied, loyal, and productive employees increased the value of services that fulfilled the needs of guests and exceeded their expectations. Thus, satisfied customers would, in turn, become loyal to the company, leading to improved business performance, such as revenue and profitability growth.

The Links in the Service-Profit Chain

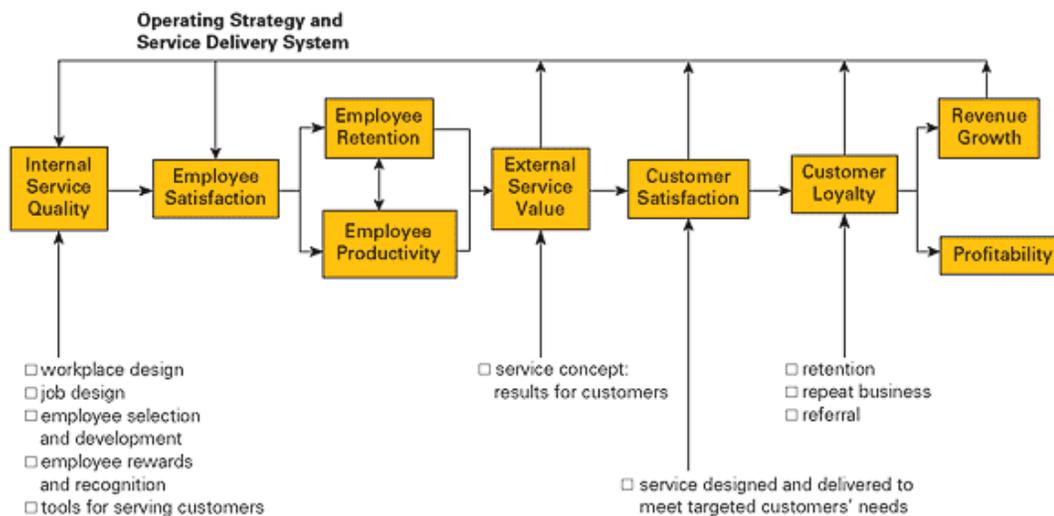


Figure 4. The links in the service-profit chain (Heskett et al., 1994). Reprinted with permission.

Many researchers adapted the service-profit chain model by Heskett et al. (1994) to apply its presumed causal linkages to different settings (Boselie, Dietz, & Boon, 2005; Crotts et al., 2007; Tang, & Tang, 2012). Some researchers were focused on testing the model within the settings of the hospitality industry. Both Crotts et al. (2007) and Yee, Yeung, and Cheng (2011) showed the logic of this model as functioning, and the correlation between model links as remaining strong.

While the service-profit chain model by Heskett et al. (1994) has enjoyed strong support, it did not account for all possible considerations. Even though the model emphasized the importance of frontline employees because of their interaction with customers, subsequent research has dealt with a dilemma. On one hand, the front office hospitality employee at the point of contact with the guest likely made the difference between excellent and poor guest service experiences (Crotts et al., 2007) and directly influenced the perceived service quality and customer satisfaction (Rothfelder et al., 2013). On the other hand, many hospitality employees were the least trained, least compensated, and least committed staff members (Crotts et al., 2007; Karatepe, Uludag, & Menevis, 2006,). Consequently, the frequent cause of guest dissatisfaction was the front office staff who dealt with them face-to-face and could not resolve their problems (Faulkner & Patiar, 1997). Therefore, a heightened question involves the way in which hospitality organizations can improve employee performance to increase guest satisfaction and company performance.

According to Heskett et al. (1994), Crofts et al. (2007), and Dickson et al. (2006), employee job satisfaction results primarily from high-quality support services and policies that enable employees to deliver results to the guests. However, it is impossible to produce satisfied employees unless policies, procedures, and systems align with the company mission (Crofts et al., 2007). In other words, if what management says, writes, and does is not in alignment with the mission of the firm, employee attitudes and behaviors are not likely in alignment either. As a result, organizational alignment theory lies at the heart of success of any business because it creates a connection with and adds meaning to every customer interaction. Dickson et al. (2006) suggested that the strategic management task is to keep the organization aligned because organizational alignment has a strong effect on employee job satisfaction, which leads to hotel guest satisfaction. Papke (2014) added that when the components are aligned, the customer experiences satisfaction and trust. In contrast, when there is misalignment, the customer may experience disappointment, anger, resentment, or mistrust.

Connecting both EB-5 ownership and success of hospitality organizations is a fascinating but understudied topic. It is important to understand how an EB hotel, with its unique organizational alignment, influences employee job satisfaction and guest satisfaction to assure elevated levels of performance of the hotel. The purpose of this dissertation is to examine one EB-5 hotel in Florida as part of a larger inquiry into how EB-5 ownership affects employee job satisfaction and guest satisfaction in the hospitality industry. To study the problem, a conceptual cause

increased the value of services that fulfilled the needs of guests and exceeded their expectations. When emphasizing the importance of organizational alignment for organizational success, Crotts et al. (2007) noted that “firms that have set explicit goals to deliver service excellence, supported by explicit systems, policies and procedures which reinforce the achieving of such goals, will be more effective and profitable than operations with low alignment” (p. 23). However, due to the owners’ cultural differences, entrepreneurial intentions, and international experience, it is questionable whether the hospitality organizations owned by EB-5 investors have the sustained ability to maintain high employee job satisfaction and meet expectations of hotel guests.

Since the hospitality industry is one of the largest employers in the U.S., it is important to understand how organizational alignment within EB-5 hospitality settings influences employee job satisfaction and eventually shapes guest satisfaction and hotel performance. Past research has not addressed this question and thus a gap exists in the literature. EB-5 hospitality practitioners remain in need of an in-depth understanding of EB-5 firms’ uniqueness in order to develop effective management strategies. Therefore, the purpose of this case study is to closely examine an EB-5 hotel to understand how EB-5 ownership affects employee job satisfaction and guest satisfaction in the hospitality industry.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the case study is to examine one EB-5 hotel in Central Florida as part of a larger inquiry into how EB-5 ownership affects employee job satisfaction and guest satisfaction in the hospitality industry.

Research Questions and Proposition

The study was conducted to answer three general research questions based on the previously mentioned rationale:

RQ1. What is organizational alignment within an EB-5 hotel?

RQ2. How does organizational alignment of EB-5 hospitality firms affect employee job satisfaction and performance?

RQ3. How does EB-5 ownership distinguish business performance of hospitality firms?

The current study developed a proposition and tested quantitative elements empirically within the setting of an EB-5 hotel. The proposition was:

There is a relationship between EB-5 owned hotel employee job satisfaction and organizational alignment attributes and their aggregated dimensions, which are strategy, staffing, and system design.

Significance of the Study

The hospitality industry receives one of the largest portions of EB-5 capital investment. Studying the way in which an EB-5 hospitality environment may influence quality of services and hotel guest satisfaction is important because its contribution is significant for the growth of the hospitality industry and the economy of the United States. However, very little is known about how the EB-5 immigrant visa program influences the key linkages of the service-profit chain model. Moreover, at the time of this study, how EB-5 ownership influenced employee job satisfaction, guest satisfaction, and other key elements of the service-profit chain model in the hospitality industry was unknown. Therefore, it is important to determine the organizational alignment in an EB-5 hospitality firm and how it may enhance the hotel's performance. Traditional approaches to managing employee performance in non-EB-5 hotels may need to be adapted in EB-5 companies. One expected outcome of this study is to aid practitioners in improving performance of their organizations.

The present study sought insight into how foreign entrepreneurs who invest in the hospitality industry through the EB-5 immigrant visa program may impact hotel performance. EB-5 hotels may need a unique set of tools to influence employee performance and guest satisfaction. The current study provides both an overview of practices and outcomes that the EB-5 organization and its employees' experienced and some resulting practical recommendations. The research is

beneficial to policy makers and researchers because of its practical and theoretical implications.

Summary

Keeping hospitality employees satisfied with their jobs and hotel guests satisfied with their experiences is not an easy task, even for experienced hospitality organizations. Due to their cultural differences, entrepreneurial intentions, and international experience, EB-5 owners may face more challenges to maintain organizational alignment than non-EB-5 owners. Therefore, EB-5 ownership may have a unique impact on organizational strategy factors, staffing policies, and system design factors, which enable employees to deliver desired results to hotel guests. Previous research suggests that employing the concept of organizational alignment enables hospitality organizations to improve employee job satisfaction, which will increase employee performance, guest satisfaction, and company performance. While there is some research on immigrant entrepreneurship, EB-5 entrepreneurship or EB-5 ownership is an understudied topic. Since immigration status and entrepreneurial intentions of EB-5 owners differ from the general population of immigrant entrepreneurs, the research scope was narrowed to study the unique conditions that influence employee job satisfaction and guest satisfaction within settings of an EB-5 hospitality organization.

Definition of Key Terms

EB-5 Program. The Employment-Based 5th Preference Category, or EB-5 Immigrant Investor Visa Program is a foreign direct investment (FDI) instrument that allows foreign immigrant investors (owners) to become residents of the United States. Established by Congress in 1990 to grant foreign national investors legal permanent residency, investors must invest at least \$500,000 and creating at least ten qualified jobs in the U.S. (Invest in the United States of America [IIUSA], 2016; Ruark & Moinuddin, 2012).

Job performance. “The level of productivity of an individual employee, relative to his or her peers on several job-related behaviors and outcomes” (Karatepe, 2013, p. 133).

Job satisfaction. “The pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job as achieving or facilitating the achievement of one’s job values” (Karatepe et al., 2006, p. 548). It “is an internal state that is expressed by affectively and/or cognitively evaluating an experienced job with some degree of favor or disfavor” (Zhao et al., 2016, p. 28).

Organizational alignment. A concept made up of the various prompts or cues that managers use to communicate to employees what is important and what is not, what has value to the organization and what does not, and what they should do for their guests and what they should not in order to achieve guest-focused culture

focused on service excellence. (Crotts et al., 2007, p. 6). Synonyms of organizational alignment include fit, congruence, and consistency.

Service-Profit Chain Model. The service-profit chain model demonstrates the linkages and relationships of satisfied, loyal, and productive employees that increase the value of services that fulfilled the needs of guests and exceeded their expectations. Satisfied customers would, in turn, become loyal to the company, leading to improved business performance, such as revenue and profitability growth. (Heskett et al., 1994).

Stress. Hwang, Lee, Park, Chang, and Kim (2011) pointed out that, in psychology, the definition of stress was a demand made on the adaptive capacities of the mind and the body. DeFrank and Ivancevich (1998) clarified stress as “an adaptive response, moderated by individual differences, that is a consequence of any action, situation, or event that places special demands on a person” (p. 55).

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

This chapter introduces the problem and purpose, the research questions, definitions of terms, and the significance of the study. Chapter 2 offers an overview of theoretical frameworks, detailing organizational alignment factors that allow the service-profit chain model to function and to maintain hotel employee satisfaction and guest satisfaction. Secondly, it explores why investors who participate in the EB-5 immigrant investor visa program may fail to apply the service-profit chain

model. Chapter 3 describes the data and research methods used to examine a particular case, an EB-5 owned hotel in Central Florida, as part of a larger inquiry into how EB-5 ownership affects employee job satisfaction and guest satisfaction in the hospitality industry. Chapter 4 reports the quantitative, qualitative, supplemental, and merged findings. Chapter 5 provides an overview, a summary of finding, discussion, implications, recommendations, and foundation for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The goal of any hospitality organization is to create a customer experience that keeps customers coming back. “Building customer loyalty starts with a commitment to deliver excellence at every moment of truth and must extend from upper management to every frontline employee” (Crotts et al., 2007, p. 3). The service-profit chain model emphasizes the importance of frontline representatives because they deliver direct service to guests in hotels, and their behavior represents the service quality of the entire establishment. According to Lu et al. (2013),

In the service process, customers develop feelings towards service behavior and form impressions based on these feelings, subsequently determining their willingness to return. Therefore, businesses expect their staff to present excellent behavior in the presence of customers to make favorable emotional impressions for the hotel. (p. 166)

However, service employees in hotels are the ones who typically are undertrained, underpaid, overworked, and least identified with the long-term goals and objectives of the organization (Crotts et al., 2007; Karatepe et al., 2006). Because hotels must have satisfied employees to assure success, the hospitality industry’s challenge is how to turn the least committed and least involved employees into motivated and enthusiastic experts in guest service.

The connection between employee performance and organizational effectiveness has been widely established. According to Crofts et al. (2007), the key factors that influence employee performance are job satisfaction, employee commitment and retention, and management support. Hazra, Sangupta, and Ghosh (2014) posited that employee performance is primarily associated with employee motivation, a very important determinant of customer satisfaction because it aids employees in choosing a position, staying with the company, and working hard. Motivation is what truly energizes employees. If they are enthusiastic about their jobs and fully engrossed in their work, hotel service employees can display a willingness to go beyond their job description to satisfy customers. By increasing their performance, employees reap the benefits, such as training, empowerment, and rewards offered by the organization. Each organization must build its own motivation system based on the compatibility between individual and organizational goals. Additionally, some scholars argued that employee performance depends on employee work engagement (Huang & Ning, 2013; Karatepe, 2013; Samnani & Singh, 2014) and company culture (Papke, 2014) and, surprisingly, a recent study refuted the belief that employee engagement is related to employee job performance (Ford, Myrden, & Jones, 2015).

Employee engagement is the act of harnessing the employee's full self to meet the physical, cognitive, and emotional demands of the job (Facer et al., 2014). Engaged frontline employees are the hotel's communicators; therefore, successfully dealing with customer requests and problems directly affects and improves the

quality of performance. To earn guest loyalty and increase their satisfaction, many hotels set rules and regulations that employees must display positive emotions and inhibit negative emotions at work. According to Papke (2014), these elements are important aspects of organizational culture.

Notwithstanding the differences in points of view, most studies agreed that employee job satisfaction is a particularly relevant outcome variable in the hospitality industry to enhance guest satisfaction (Rothfelder et al., 2013; Yee et al., 2011). In addition to its connection to employee performance, job satisfaction is a significant determinant of frontline employees' intent to either stay or leave an organization. When employees lose their sense of fulfillment, they may seek employment elsewhere (Crotts et al., 2007; Hester, 2013; Karatepe et al., 2006; Lu et al., 2013; Silva, 2006). Employee turnover as a result of dissatisfaction is a most critical problem for organizations in the hospitality industry (Jung & Yoon, 2013; O'Neill & Davis, 2011). The lodging industry as a whole can experience as much as 60 to 70 percent turnover annually (Hwang et al., 2011; Thompson, Peteraf, Gamble, & Strickland, 2015) with detrimental side effects. For example, theft, absenteeism, sabotage, and decreased commitment may accompany employee dissatisfaction. Moreover, "A conservative estimate of the cost of turnover is 30 percent of annual salary to replace a lower-skilled, entry-level employee, to as much as 250 percent of annual salary to replace a highly specialized or difficult-to-replace position" (Hester, 2013, p. 21).

Relevant Model: Organizational Alignment and Employee Job Satisfaction

Previous research offered a variety of views on ways in which a firm might succeed. The mutual point shared among them was that nothing could be achieved without people. A recent study by Papke (2014) introduced aligning culture as a key element that influenced organizational performance. He suggested that culture was more than the processes, procedures, and systems used to create or deliver a service; culture “describes the richness and depth of how the members of an organization or team interact” (Papke, 2014, p. 113). Other studies emphasized the best way for any organization to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage was to reinforce its chosen strategy with a host of activities, including functional policies and staffing decisions (Lu et al., 2013; Porter, 1996). In addition, Crofts et al. (2007) argued that firms wherein strategy, staffing policies, and systems aligned with their mission and objectives would outperform those firms with poor organizational alignment. According to Crofts et al., organizational alignment was:

... a concept made up of the various prompts or cues that managers use to communicate to employees what is important and what is not, what has value to the organization and what does not, and what they should do for their guests and what they should not do in order to achieve guest-focused culture focused on service excellence. (p. 6)

Even though a study by Joiner (2001) did not find a significant connection between organizational alignment and employee performance when surveying 800 employees of four full-service hotels located in Hong Kong, Crofts et al. (2007) supported the belief that aligning the company mission to employees and guests could influence employee satisfaction and decrease employee turnover.

Heskett et al. (1994) suggested that companies that understood the service-profit chain model could develop and maintain a corporate culture centered on service to customers and employees. According to Papke (2014), company owners “are responsible for acting in a manner that clearly conveys how the intention of the business is implemented and ultimately how the customer is treated” (p. 22). The empirical study of the Tata Strategic Management Group (2015) supported that effective culture could account for a 20 to 30 percent increase in corporate performance when compared with culturally unremarkable competitors. In addition, the study noted that the right organizational culture could boost employee job satisfaction by up to 30 percent and improve employee intent to stay by 38 percent, leading to overall improvement in performance. To achieve these improvements, companies should implement organizational alignment because organizations with a strong strategy-culture alignment had at least 2-3 times higher profitability than did companies with low strategy-culture alignment.

To succeed in the continuous fight for profitability and growth, hospitality organizations should focus on a mission of service excellence, an understanding of what factors lead to that focus, and ways in which they align (Dickson et al., 2006).

Incorporating past research and studies of benchmark organizations in the hospitality and service management, Crotts, Dickson, and Ford (2005) placed alignment factors into three groups: strategy/tactical, staffing policies and procedures, and system design factors. Karatepe (2013) pointed out that when employers managed these factors in a coordinated way, they reinforced and supported each other, which could lead to a more substantial effect than could the sum of their individual groups. Papke (2014) incorporated organizational alignment factors and named 12 culture keys that were important ingredients in company culture. “The twelve culture keys are all about what motivates people and aligns them to work together” (Papke, 2014, p. 145). Among them are power and influence, planning and goal setting, problem solving, decision making, conflict management, incentive and reward, hiring, role definition, customer interface, teamwork, structure, aligned values. Table 1 below summarizes organizational alignment factors, including the 12 keys of Papke, that lead to increasing job satisfaction among hospitality employees.

Table 1

Organizational Alignment Factors

	Alignment Aspects	Approaches	Author
Strategy Factors	Mission	Strategic goals; Objectives; Service Mission; Stories; Events	Dickson et al., 2006 Crofts et al., 2007 Papke, 2014
	Leadership	Fair & respectful treatment; Management support	Dickson et al., 2006 Hazra et al., 2014 Zhao et al., 2016 Rothfelder et al., 2013
	Work Environment	Work-Family balance; Role conflict; Stress reduction; Team spirit; Happy co-workers; Good physical work conditions; Health care system	Heskett et al., 1994 Hazra et al., 2014 Karatepe et al., 2006 Kim, Shin, and Umbreit, 2007 Hwang et al., 2011 Chiang et al., 2010 DeFrank & Ivancevich, 1998 O'Neill & Davis, 2011 Lu et al., 2013 Faulkner & Patiar, 1997 Papke, 2014
Staffing Factors	Employee selection	Hiring; Job analysis; Personality measurements	Heskett et al., 1994 Porter, 1996 Crofts et al, 2007 Akgunduz, 2014 Papke, 2014
	Employee development	Orientation programs; Training; Empowering; Tools for serving customers	Heskett et al., 1994 Karatepe, 2013 Hazra et al., 2014 Zhao et al., 2016
	Pay and rewards	Appropriate pay levels; Rewards system	Heskett et al., 1994 Dickson et al., 2006 Karatepe, 2013 Hazra et al., 2014 Papke, 2014
System Design Factors	Job design	Communication; Feedback Systems; Performance Management Systems (PMSs)	Heskett et al., 1994 Porter, 1996 Dickson et al., 2006 Hon, Chan, & Lu, 2013

Strategic Factors

Frequently, practitioners and researchers seek means to establish and monitor congruence of various factors for success, and many agree that human resources (HR) practices and policies must align with an organizational mission. Through awareness of strategy factors, hotel employees understand the way in which the company mission aligns with departmental goals, the environmental setting/physical design, annual managerial performance goals, celebrated service mission stories or events, and top management actions (Crotts et al., 2007). While many organizations know how to communicate and audit their strategic concerns and financial goals, they may have challenges in effectively communicating their commitment to service excellence identified in the mission statement (Dickson et al., 2006).

Scholars are in general agreement that the mission, leadership, and working environment are key factors that business owners should maintain to keep strategic factors aligned (Crotts et al., 2007; Dickson et al., 2006). A mission statement that strongly states the organization's commitment to service excellence is necessary, but not sufficient to achieve service excellence. "If the organization says one thing in its mission statement, but does not also ensure that its policies, practices and support reward achievement of that mission, the likelihood of fulfilling the mission is substantially diminished" (Dickson et al., 2006, p. 464). Therefore, Papke (2014) and Tsaur and Tang (2012) emphasized that leadership alone could be the primary problem causing misalignment between company goals and outcomes because

company owners directly influenced the 12 culture keys, the main organizational alignment factors and the success of the service-profit chain model. Moreover, organizational alignment begins with leadership commitment, pursuit of goals, responsibility, and accountability (Papke, 2014). The success of extraordinary companies is derived from aligned leadership and organizational culture with company brand intention, which, in turn, is aligned with customer purchases. According to Papke, “brand intention is the thoughtful and deliberate delivery, through a product or service, of a promise to the customer” (Papke, 2014, p. 20).

By actively participating in operations, leaders influence culture through role modeling, reinforcement, and reputation (Papke, 2014). When managers and owners actively participate in business operations and share their expertise and experience, employee job satisfaction will be higher. Acting as a role model, providing personal examples, talking about the most important values and beliefs, and displaying consistent personal values can create employee pride by association. When managers and owners display responsibility and accountability, employees have faith in them. Lau and Sardesai (2012) noted that trust and fairness could influence employee engagement and positively affect employee motivation and performance. Also, Dickson et al. (2006), Rothfelder et al. (2013), and Zhao et al. (2016) emphasized that an appropriate leadership style could enhance employee job satisfaction by inspiring followers to create shared values, beliefs, and visions for the organization. Among those values that positively relate to employee job satisfaction are idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individualized

consideration, intellectual stimulation, and contingent rewards. In contrast, misaligned leadership behavior quickly results in distrust and lack of commitment among organization and team members, eventually negatively affecting performance.

Papke (2014) suggested that the reputation of managers and owners influenced and dictated the reputation of the business. The reputation of a business directly affects company culture and guest perceptions (Papke, 2014), and as a result shapes the purchase decision. In hospitality, the hotel reputation is significantly influenced by online reviews, which have become important success factors for hospitality organizations. Neirotti, Raguseo, and Paolucci (2016) empirically supported that a hotel's online visibility has a positive effect on its revenue growth, and the relation between online visibility and sales profitability is stronger for hotels with a high star rating. The importance of social media technologies has increased as a way of shaping competition. "The usage of social media network features can shake up long-lasting reputations through reviews posted by unmonitored, influential opinion makers or can even damage the brand image of hotels" (Neirotti et al., 2016, p. 1134). Today, online retailers such as Google, Expedia, Booking.com, Facebook, TripAdvisor[®], Orbitz, and Yelp allow hotel guests to compare rates and customer reviews about the hotels to mitigate the uncertainty about hotel quality and to improve hospitality market transparency. According to Neirotti et al. (2016), "TripAdvisor is an online travel intermediary that has become the world's most popular community about travel, with more than

five million registered users who visit the platform 30 million times per month on average” (p. 1133).

A positive work environment significantly correlates to employee job satisfaction. Crotts et al. (2007) pointed out that aligned employees view their workplace as correlating to their commitment to serve their guests as well as to their overall job performance. However, maintaining a motivational work environment in the hospitality industry is a complex task because the nature of front office work produces intense demands (Faulkner & Patiar, 1997). Work overload, work-family time imbalance, and occupational stress are some examples of the problems that hospitality organizations face.

Faulkner and Patiar (1997) empirically supported that 67 percent of hotel service employees experienced unfair balance between workload and pay. For a little pay, they were expected to deal with inadequately high workload. In general, hotel service employees are underpaid and required to work longer, often non-social hours, to keep their jobs (DeFrank & Ivancevich, 1998; Hwang et al., 2011; Tiyce, Hing, Carncross, & Breen, 2013). Another area of concern is shift work, which can indicate uncertainty and create another key stressor (Tiyce et al., 2013). Normally, front office agents function on a three-shift schedule, which is 7 am to 3 pm, 3 pm to 11pm, and 11pm to 7 am. Faulkner and Patiar mentioned that 68 percent of front office agents suffered from staff shortages. As a result, employees are often called back to work on their days off or vacation days.

The abovementioned events can create a work-life imbalance (Akgunduz, 2014). According to Karatepe (2013), engaged employees might have scarce resources to devote to family and might experience work-family conflicts. To help employees maintain a balance between work and family time, hotels should minimize work overload by planning work schedules accordingly and cross-training staff in order to divide work tasks among them.

According to Zhao et al. (2016) and Akgunduz (2014), frontline hotel employees are often overworked when they must meet expectations in different roles; e.g., when two roles occur simultaneously. Moreover, Akgunduz (2014), Kim et al. (2007), and Faulkner and Patiar (1997) noted that work overload, role conflict, and role ambiguity were the three major components of role stress. Role stress is common among employees because they often have multiple roles at once, which can lead to role ambiguity (Hwang et al., 2011). Role ambiguity occurs when employees are not precisely aware of expectations or skill in performing their roles (Akgunduz, 2014). Hotel employees “are distressed when their tasks are unclear, when they lack accurate information or scope about their responsibilities” (Jung & Yoon, 2013, p. 497). To prevent role ambiguity, many hotels create policies and manuals to add clarity to their expectations of employees. Per Jung and Yoon (2013) and Ching et al. (2010), managers should consider establishing a work manual containing descriptions of scope of work, job details, and assigned authority to each role.

Finally, the hotel industry ranks high on the list of stressful work environments; many employed individuals experience unavoidable stress because the position requires immediate customer contact around the clock seven days a week (Chiang et al., 2010; DeFrank & Ivancevich, 1998; Faulkner & Patiar, 1997; Hwang et al., 2011; Joiner, 2001; Kim et al., 2007; Lu et al., 2013; O'Neill & Davis, 2011). "Considerable job stress of the hospitality industry causes staff turnover rates to remain high and unstable, indirectly affecting hotel service quality" (Lu et al., 2013, p. 166). In addition, DeFrank and Ivancevich confirmed that, on average, U.S. companies spent \$250 billion to compensate for harm caused to employees by work-related stress. Distressed employees lose job satisfaction, which can negatively affect employee job performance and result in decreased service quality and organizational performance (Faulkner & Patiar, 1997; O'Neill & Davis, 2011). Work-related stress can also increase employee turnover. Hwang et al. (2011) found that 16 percent of hotel employees left their jobs due to stress-related reasons.

Obviously, hospitality organizations cannot eliminate all stress factors at work (Jung & Yoon, 2013), but they can regularly monitor workplace stressors (Tiyce et al., 2013), maintain balance between organizational alignment and employee work environments (Jung & Yoon, 2013), and teach employees ways to respond to stress (DeFrank & Ivancevich, 1998). More specifically, to assess stress levels, hospitality managers can use frequent employee surveys, regular performance appraisal meetings, workplace stress audits, and exit interviews

(Barlett & Barlett, 2011; Tiyce et al., 2013). Team spirit in organizations, positive relationships with co-workers, good physical work conditions, and availability of health care can improve a working environment and increase job satisfaction, retention, and productivity among hotel employees (Bello, 2012; Hazra et al., 2014; Kozak, 2014).

Staffing Factors

In the hospitality industry, companies must emphasize their mission of customer service excellence in all communications, such as job advertisements, job descriptions, and performance evaluations. Staffing factors must align with the company mission in HR practices, such as job advertising, interviewing, new employee on-boarding, new hire orientation, performance appraisals, rewards, and training.

Because human capital starts with personnel selection, the hiring process must align with the mission of the organization. Crotts et al. (2007) discussed the importance of personnel selection for organizational alignment. As there is no universal approach for the way in which the selection process can align with other elements, each organization must create its own. Per Thompson et al. (2015), an ideal candidate for the hospital industry is a person, who, in addition to basic academic qualifications, has a positive attitude, empathy, a passion for service, and a natural ability to smile. Often, attitude comes first. Organizations can provide relevant training programs to polish the capabilities and capacity of individuals

further (Tahir, Naeem, Sarfraz, & Javed, 2011); however, it is difficult and sometimes impossible to change people's attitudes.

For example, the Ritz-Carlton chain, wherein employee turnover is only 20 percent, "took great care to recruit the right kind of employees and provide them with the necessary inputs to enable them to provide exceptional service" (Thompson et al., 2015, p. c-395). They posit that the quality of a hotel's service is only as good as the people providing it. Per Mamman, Kamoche, and Bakuwa (2012), employee selection should be not only on the basis of technical skills and competencies, but also on the basis of abilities to function effectively in a culturally diverse environment and to share their values and level of comfort when working with people.

Hatch and Dyer (2004) recommended using screening tests to increase the chance of selecting employees with the aptitude, attitudes, and skills that would contribute to the stock of firm-specific human capital that serves the specialized needs of the company. Kim et al. (2007) said that personality traits, such as optimism, hope, resilience, and self-efficacy, might predict job burnout and reduce stress perceptions of employees. The researchers also recommended that companies improve their selection processes to reduce unneeded stress in the work environment. For example, Akgunduz (2014) emphasized that recruiting employees according to the information acquired from job analyses and employee empowerment practices that are performed based on the personal traits and resources of the employees may contribute to decreased role stress. Moreover,

utilizing personality measurement concepts, employers may improve their selection process (Kim et al., 2007).

Employee development is significant for the growth and prosperity of companies—the more capable an employee, the more successful and profitable the hospitality organization. Creating a learning environment at work may help employees to gain insight into themselves and to understand the world around them and the organization, thus increasing employee performance (Tahir et al., 2011). By providing training, hotels enable employees to acquire technical and interpersonal skills, to have solid knowledge about the service delivery process, and to deal with guest requests and complaints. In contrast, “The lack of ongoing and effective training programs in the hospitality firms leads to a pool of employees who do not have the requisite skills or are not willing to respond to customer requests and problems” (Karatepe, 2013, p. 133). An empirical study by Karatepe examined the relationship between training, empowerment, rewards, and work engagement among four- and five-star hotel employees ($N=110$) in Romania and found those relationships were important indicators in frontline service jobs. The factors enhanced employee knowledge, skills, and abilities, and motivated them to reach higher levels of productivity. Moreover, when these factors aligned, they led to employee engagement and employee retention; thus, they were crucial to organizational success in the hospitality industry.

To return to the previous example, the Ritz-Carlton hotels cultivated their reputation by training their employees. They invested nearly ten percent of their

payroll expenses in developing employee potential. New employee training starts with an initial two-day orientation, wherein new employees become familiar with the company's history, culture, philosophy, values, standards, expectations, and benefits. After orientation training, the employee completes a 21-day certification program, which ends with providing feedback on the training program. New recruits receive diversity training as well as training in anticipating the unexpressed needs of the guests. In summary, Ritz-Carlton employees receive about 310 hours of training during their first year with the company with a subsequent 100 hours of training every year (Thompson et al., 2015). Hester (2013) recommended that organizations should work with each employee to create a clear development plan to identify employee strengths and weaknesses, to guide learning opportunities, and to present a well-defined path for his or her career.

Training employees without empowering them is useless because they will not be able to effectively manage guest requests and complaints (Karatepe, 2013, Zhao et al., 2016). Discouraged and disempowered employees never make enterprises winners in a globalized economic environment (Kotter, 2012). Empowerment enables front line employees to make their own decisions in order to respond to guest needs immediately, effectively, and efficiently. Kim et al. (2007) added that, when employees have authority to serve the guest without seeking permission, they feel better about their jobs, which could lead to an increase in professional efficacy. In contrast, when employees have little power, their attitude towards making extra effort, growing, and developing in the name of the company

would be low. Moreover, autonomy, a necessary component of empowerment, could be an alternative remedy to cope with work-related stress (Faulkner & Patiar, 1997). In addition, Heskett et al. (1994) emphasized the importance of having tools for serving customers in his service-profit chain model. Hazra et al. (2014) supported the concept that the availability of proper work tools improves employee performance; however, Akgunduz (2014) mentioned that employees often lack resources to perform the roles expected of them.

Rewards and recognition should accompany training and empowerment because they motivate employees to accomplish their work goals (Karatepe, 2013; Lin, Yu, & Yi, 2014). Salary and benefits packages communicate organizational commitment to motivating, recognizing, and rewarding an employee's accomplishments and dedication to the organization's goals (Hester, 2013). When efforts are unrecognized, employees may become less motivated to do their work. To maintain alignment, hospitality employers should provide employees with appropriate levels of pay and related rewards. For example, Ritz-Carlton hotels reward employees for any worthwhile suggestions with cash bonuses and other prizes through an employee recognition program (Thompson et al., 2015). Per Wang, Barney, and Reuer (2003), it is reasonable to expect that employees would be willing to invest in and adjust their behavior to match organizational standards and expectations after receiving benefits. To find and retain the right people for the right job, the hospitality industry needs to redesign rewards and recognition

packages according to the local culture and considering the motivating factors (Hazra et al., 2014).

System Design Factors

System design factors help organizations to align their mission with feedback systems that inform employees of service quality, the measurement system of service quality, service recovery systems, and service delivery systems. Feedback is a powerful tool because it increases employee job satisfaction (Hester, 2013). The Ritz-Carlton Hotel is an example of an organization with effective communication. Their managers shared that “the daily lineup was the most important tool for the company to keep its employees attuned to its corporate culture and it kept them focused on the company’s expectations of them” (Thompson et al., 2015, p. c-398). During the 10 to 15 minute meeting before each shift, employees discuss the previous day’s problems and assignments. In addition, the Ritz-Carlton shares a best story of the week at every hotel (Gollan, 2013). This approach reminds everyone about the company’s commitment.

Many companies influence guest satisfaction control by aligning their key activities and policies with the company mission. For example, Karatepe (2013) suggested that the presence of high performance work practices (HPWP) sent powerful signals to employees that the organization paid utmost attention to human capital to improve service capacity and productivity. If employees noted that the availability of HPWPs emerged from management’s commitment to service

excellence consistent with the organizational mission, they displayed more responsive, productive, and engaged work behavior (Karatepe, 2013).

Another example of system design factors includes performance management systems (PMSs), which measure the performance of management and employees. According to Samnani and Singh (2014), PMSs might influence employee attitudes and behaviors, and employee attitudes and behaviors could determine the degree of employee job performance. In contrast, ineffective utilization of PMSs may affect leadership and produce a detrimental effect on employee job satisfaction. For example, if there is an issue with procedural fairness (Lau & Sardesai, 2012), employee motivation can decrease.

The Impact of EB-5 Ownership on Organizational Alignment

In general, the role of the business owner is especially critical for organizational alignment in hospitality organizations. Organizational alignment is a concept that relates to the service-profit chain model and ensures that business owners' expectations align systematically with guest service activities and guest satisfaction (Crotts et al., 2007). While hotel employees are expected to maintain a pleasant attitude and polite demeanor while delivering essential service quality, empathy, and helpfulness (Tiyce et al., 2013), the lodging industry often has low wages (Krause, Sherzer, & Rugulies, 2005; Tiyce, Hing, Carncross, & Breen, 2013), low job control, limited opportunities for career advancement (Akgunduz,

2014; Chiang et al., 2010; Kim et al., 2007; Tsaour & Tang, 2011), frequent rotations, work overload, late or overnight hours, intensive contact with guests, and other highly emotional characteristics. By keeping organizational factors aligned, hospitality owners can prevent dissonance, increase employee job satisfaction, and make the service-profit chain model work. It has been argued that organizational alignment is the greatest challenge facing companies (Papke, 2014).

Owners of well-known hotels successfully implemented organizational alignment based on their vision, passion, leadership, and commitment to work. For example, Papke (2014) described the passionate owners of extraordinary companies. In one example, Steve and Marilyn Mesple, the founders of Wildwood Guitars, “had a lifelong love affair with music and guitars” (p. 71) and their business. Another example was Howard Schultz, the owner of Starbucks, who “spent time in Italy, where he was intrigued by its engaging coffee shop culture, especially its communitarian nature, and decided to bring that culture to his shop back home. He loved coffee” (Papke, 2014, p. 73). Additionally, Mark Aardsma, the owner of The Voice, “is passionate about listening and paying attention to the customer” (Papke, 2014, p. 51).

The Ritz-Carlton hotel chain is an example of a dedicated owner involved in everyday organizational life of the hotel. It is worth noting that the Ritz-Carlton has eighty properties and thirty-one Ritz-Carlton Residencies around the globe. The main focus of Ritz-Carlton hotels is guest service and perfectly aligned strategic activities, staffing policies, system design, and procedures (Thompson et al., 2015).

According to one of the original founders of the hotel chain, Herve Humler, what any company does reminds employees that their service has value. “They are not employees. They are ladies and gentlemen servicing ladies and gentlemen” (Gollan, 2013). Ritz-Carlton’s success was due to organizational alignment.

Another example of successful hospitality ownership is displayed by Rosen Hotels & Resorts located in Orlando, Florida. The guests of these hotels enjoy a tremendous hotel experience, and this firm has continued welcoming returning guests for 25 to 30 years (Thompson, Peteraf, Gamble, & Strickland, 2018). What enables this hotelier to stay successful is its professional and friendly staff, clean and comfortable rooms, a beautiful and pleasant hotel, and competitive room rates. Behind the success of this hospitality organization stays Mr. Rosen, the owner, who takes an active daily position in hotel operations to ensure that key linkages of the service-profit chain model are aligned within his company.

However, while the implementation of organizational alignment in a hotel is not an easy task even for experienced owners, integrating the concept with the service-profit chain model presents special challenges for owners of EB-5 hotels. Research suggests that Canadian immigrant investors have displayed weak business performance (Ley, 2006). Ley found that on a five-point scale of satisfaction, the mean rating of business satisfaction was only 2.94 out of 5.00. Revenue and profit have shown the lowest scores. More than 48 percent of the Canadian firms owned by immigrant investors were subsequently sold, invariably due to their weak performance.

Surprisingly, research pointed out that the scale of available financial capital was not a predictor of immigrant business success (Ley, 2006). Based on the theoretical framework, EB-5 hotel owners, foreigners in the process of becoming legal immigrants, face more barriers due to the cultural differences, entrepreneurial intentions, and prior experience (Li et al., 2014; Sahin et al., 2011; Armengot et al., 2010; Radipere & Dhliwayo, 2014; Li, Lam, & Qian, 2001; Hofstede, 1991; Hiebert, 2002; Sapienza, Autio, George, & Zahra, 2006; Scheers & Radipere, 2007). These barriers prevent immigrants and ethnic minorities from competing with local residents on an equal basis. Radipere and Dhliwayo suggested that, because of the barriers, organizations owned by immigrant entrepreneurs would perform more poorly than those owned by local entrepreneurs.

Incorporating past research, the present study suggests that EB-5 companies maintain organizational alignment in a unique way. As a result, unique strategy factors, staffing factors, and system design factors of EB-5 hospitality organizations will impact EB-5 employee job satisfaction and guest satisfaction differently than non-EB-5 organizations.

The EB-5 Hotel Ownership and Cultural Differences

One barrier for EB-5 business owners is cultural diversity. The issue related to cultural diversity has had more relevance in recent years because EB-5 entrepreneurs from different cultures established a great number of hospitality organizations within the EB-5 immigrant investor program. Previous research

empirically supports that the investor's home country and societal culture could affect a firm's behavior or performance because performance conditions vary across ethnic groups (Li et al., 2014; Sahin et al., 2011; Armengot et al., 2010; Ley, 2006). Sahin et al. and Ley emphasized that human capital resources, for example, language proficiency, enable immigrants to effectively deal with a range of challenges and run their businesses more successfully. In contrast, according to Ley, exclusive use of the native language and ethnic networks in securing business information and marketing causes disappointing consequences for business success. Moreover, because the strategy adopted is affected by the origin of the entrepreneurs (Armengot et al., 2010), human capital resources are positively related to business longevity and profits.

Papke (2014) mentioned that when foreigners establish businesses in the U.S., they create organizations with a mix of societal and organizational cultural values. What is common to all studies on this topic is that not all ethnic groups have either the same entrepreneurial capacity or show the same entrepreneurial behavior (Armengot et al., 2010). Thus, EB-5 hotel owners confront a unique challenge in identifying the central needs of their employees due to cultural differences (DeFrank & Ivancevich, 1998). In addition, workplace diversity may cause interpersonal stress and fail to build teams that communicate effectively (DeFrank & Ivancevich, 1998). Culturally diverse EB-5 owners may have a negative effect on organizational alignment, employee job satisfaction and productivity, and organizational performance.

In general, cultural differences have a basis in a culture's specific set of attitudes, values, and beliefs, which create individual needs (Berger & Brownell, 2009). Krause et al. (2005) confirmed that 85 percent of respondents in their study of hotel employees were immigrants with diverse racial ethnicities. Moreover, Mamman et al. (2012) suggested that diversity interacted with business strategies to enhance productivity and return on equity and performance. Notwithstanding, hospitality organizations are diverse, and employees tend to experience culture shock at work due to unique and specific qualities, which different categories of employees bring to the organization (Faulkner & Patiar, 1997). Hwang et al. (2011) explained that guests' diverse cultural backgrounds and often language barriers could create distress among front office agents because the likelihood of misunderstandings was common.

National culture can have the greatest impact on employees because it shapes the organizational culture of the firm through changes in leadership styles and human resource management practices (Li et al., 2001). Hofstede (1991) contributed to the literature by explaining the way in which cultural classifiers differed based on the country of origin. To illustrate, in the current study the researcher used Hofstede's online tool on the Hofstede Institute's website to compare the country level cultural differences between Russia and the United States. The findings showed significantly different cultural dimensions. Figure 6 describes the common elements within two nations.

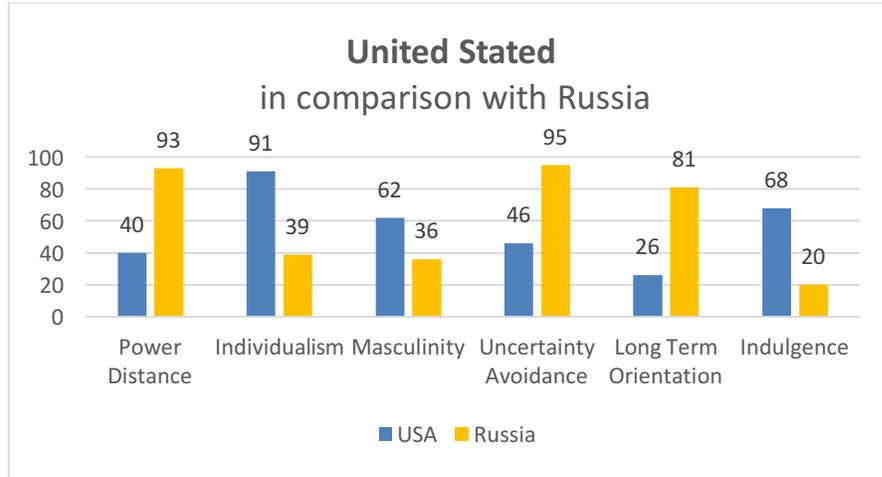


Figure 6. Cultural differences: United States compared to Russia. Adapted from Hofstede et al. 2010.

The national norms clearly illustrate that in contrast to Russia, the United States is a culture with low power distance, low uncertainty avoidance, is individualistic, masculine, and has short-term orientation and high indulgence (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). According to Hofstede (1991, p. 45), the dimension *power distance* “indicates the extent to which a society accepts the fact that power in institutions and organizations is distributed unequally,” and the dimension *uncertainty avoidance* indicates the extent to which a society feels threatened by uncertain ambiguous situations and tries to avoid these situations. Hofstede et al. (2010) explained that the fundamental issue addressed by the *individualism/collectivism* dimension is the degree of interdependence a society maintains among its members, and a high *masculine* score dimension indicates that the society is driven by competition, achievement, and success. Finally, while the

dimension of *short-/long-term orientation* describes how every society has to maintain some links with its own past while dealing with the challenges of the present and future, the sixth dimension, *indulgence*, explains the extent to which people try to control their desires and impulses (Hofstede et al., 2010). Thus, while American employees do not require a great number of rules and are less emotionally aggressive, Russian owners may have a strong need for rules and regulations and greater structuring of organizational activities, while being intolerant of new ideas, not recognizing employee personalities, and providing less authority in the workplace.

Another point of view about the significance of cultural diversity is derived from Berger and Brownell (2009). They stated that, while some cultures were results-oriented, other cultures emphasized process. For example, in Asian cultures, managers focus on sincerity, group harmony, and the ability to cultivate a strong work team. Americans, in contrast, focus on final results, profits, and efficiency. In terms of a company strategy, East Europeans are those who choose to lower prices more, while Moroccans tend to opt more for quality and customer care (Armengot et al. 2010). In addition, cultures may differ in perceptions and behavior with respect to time, space, context, relationships, and work attitudes (Berger & Brownell, 2009). More specifically, while Americans note that time should be used efficiently, wisely, and never be wasted, many cultures value two-hour siestas during the middle of the workday and showed tolerance if employees were late to work. Another point of difference involved touching or entering into an

individual's personal space, which could cause feelings of discomfort or disrespect. For example, personal space for persons from Arabic countries is standing about 12 to 18 inches apart, while Americans prefer 24 inches. Status, age, and gender contribute to differences in the level of comfort individuals feel with touching and being touched. For native Asians, touching in an organizational context is taboo, and the popular American custom of patting on a back is considered disrespectful.

In general, the area of origins of the entrepreneur is the only demographic factor that mainly influences the elements that characterize business activity, the motivation for starting up a business and the process followed in doing so (Armengot et al., 2010). Notwithstanding, Porter (1991) asserted that societal culture is the leading detriment to competitive advantage; *fitting in* as a key part of human experience could produce many obstacles that placed organizational alignment under substantial risk. A complete transformation of human resources strategies is required to align cultural differences within the organizational environment (Alcazar, Fernandez, & Gardey, 2013; DeFrank & Ivancevich, 1998). According to Papke (2014), "All people want to feel safe; to be free from the fear of being ignored, humiliated, ostracized, unloved, rejected, embarrassed, feeling like a loser" (p. 112). Until EB-5 business owners learn the culture within their hospitality company, they will be at risk of saying or doing something that can negatively affect employee job satisfaction.

The EB-5 Hotel Ownership and Entrepreneurial Intentions

The cultural backgrounds of entrepreneurs play a significant role in defining the motivation of the entrepreneurs (Radipere & Dhliwayo, 2014). According to Papke (2014), owner motivations connect them as customers, as members of their teams, and as individuals within organizations. Most importantly, the motivation of entrepreneurs influences the direction and nature of business ventures.

Radipere and Dhliwayo (2014) discussed two motives for individuals choosing to engage in entrepreneurship. One is necessity, which means individuals start a business because they have no other way of earning a living. Another motive is opportunity, which relates to individuals who start a business in response to an opportunity in the marketplace. However, these points of view cannot be generalized to EB-5 entrepreneurs. First, the EB-5 visa program requires a large investment from participants; thus it appeals to wealthy foreigners. Second, Botello and Davila (2015) suggested that normally, “FDI is directed toward countries with low wages . . . that provide inherent differences of opportunity and initial favorable conditions for businesses” (p. 97). Indeed, the U.S. does not provide the competitive advantage of low wages for employees. Thus, the entrepreneurial intentions of EB-5 business owners remain unclear.

Based on Papke’s (2014) model, business owners’ intentions connect their vision to their customers. The entrepreneurial intentions derive from perceptions of desirability, feasibility, and a propensity to act on opportunities. Radipere and Dhliwayo (2014) emphasized that “perceived desirability refers to the degree of

attractiveness one finds in starting one's own business and perceived feasibility is the degree of personal competence one perceives in starting a business" (p. 192). The general hope in entrepreneurial intention is to create wealth. Papke emphasized that the ultimate goal of all businesses is to win customers, which enables companies to win the market. More specifically, the opportunity to make profits, reinvest and win more customers to make more money is what keeps entrepreneurs motivated. Per Smith (2015), the EB-5 investment visa program differs from traditional forms of FDI because EB-5 owners' main goal is not profit maximization, but the receipt of green cards. According to Vila (2010) and the empirical study of Smith (2015), what drives EB-5 business owners is a desire to immigrate to the U.S. In addition, Hiebert (2002), Ley (2006) and Maynard (2009) argued that successful entrepreneurs most likely use the immigrant investment program as a ticket out of their home country, to escape heavy pollution, or to gain access to improved education options. Moreover, Raether (2015) noted that the desire to migrate was so strong that many Russian investors held the misperception that EB-5 was a legal means to *purchase* a green card without any real opportunity to recoup their investment.

In a study of the experience of Canadian immigrant investors, 38 percent of respondents stated that the reason for the sale of their immigrant business was that they could secure better business opportunities in their home country (Ley, 2006). Ley established that "those with short-term settlement plans of fewer than six years (30 percent of respondents) were likely intending to gain citizenship...before

returning to their homeland, where they would meanwhile maintain business and other linkages” (p. 759). Moreover, Ley provided evidence that for many Canadian immigrant investors “the key objective was not to run a productive business but to overcome the hurdle of government monitoring, notably the terms and conditions review after two years, en route to the real goal of citizenship acquisition” (p. 761).

In general, a non-business intention to have a hospitality business suggests low entrepreneurial motivation. Since EB-5 owners may have additional alternative motivations, they may not have a strong vision, passion, or commitment to a business idea. As creators, organizers, and managers, hotel owners should develop a company mission statement that provides a set of cues to tell other organization members how to achieve their business vision. Ley (2006) found that Canadian immigrant investors were dissatisfied with the long hours of work that business required from them. It points to the idea that EB-5 owners may not be willing to participate in the day-to-day life of their organizations and may have less interest in leadership. Eventually, this attitude may break the connection between the customers and the owner’s vision in the Papke’s (2014) alignment model. According to Papke, participation, engagement in collaborative and inclusive approaches and group processes, the level of social interaction, and inclusion of individuals in the various processes and actions undertaken are crucial for organizational alignment and organizational performance. When owners are part of the process and spend time with employees, they become actively engaged and can actively reinforce positive performance.

The EB-5 Hotel Ownership and Prior Experience

Finally, past experience with foreign market entry is the key contingency of the internationalization-performance relationship that influences a firm's outcomes (Sapienza, Autio, George, & Zahra, 2006; Sahin et al., 2011; Scheers & Radipere, 2007). When firms first enter international markets, shared routines and the stock of solutions to produce a collective response are absent. Therefore, employers need to learn how to share prior experiences within the firm to reduce the time and expense of adaptive learning and to gain the firm positional advantages they may leverage to sustain and grow operations (Sapienza et al., 2007).

While previous studies suggested that borders and context are relatively insignificant for entrepreneurial success, Hiebert (2002) noted that the logic of globalization seems to be a concern. More specifically, while policy makers expect entrepreneurs to be cosmopolitan and able to succeed wherever they choose to live, success in one location cannot be replicated in another due to different economic and regulatory environments. Hiebert suggested that immigrant investors and entrepreneurs from other countries have experienced much more difficulty establishing businesses in Canada than is anticipated by the policy system. Data revealed that business immigrants have lower income and rates of entrepreneurship than would be expected. In addition, other research empirically supports that it is not rare that firms that transfer their experience abroad tend to become less efficient than they were before internationalizing (Li, 2008; Banalieva, Santoro, & Jiang, 2012).

According to Reiljan, Laaser, and Schrader (2014), insufficient international experience is almost always a decisive determinant of divestment (investment withdrawal). According to Hofstede (1980), foreign entrepreneurs establishing businesses in the U.S. first must recognize the most appropriate organizational form. Since FDI generally requires a long-term focus and interactions with a diverse group of economic agents from suppliers, workers, and consumers to government officials, the investors need to have detailed knowledge of the retail, labor, and input markets as well as legal and regulatory regimes in the host country (Javorcik, Özden, Spatareanu, & Neagu, 2011). Moreover, Javorcik et al. believed that knowing about the market structure, consumer preferences, business ethics, and commercial codes in the host country can be invaluable in identifying new business opportunities.

Papke (2014) emphasized that owner/founder expertise was the key to organizational success. However, EB-5 hotel owners are new and inexperienced in the U.S. market. In addition, according to Joiner (2001), inexperienced business owners could restructure their strategies without reference to the surrounding societal values, which could lead to jeopardized outcomes.

Managerial skills are another concern related to EB-5 hotel owners. An entrepreneur needs to be multi-skilled to perform the many managerial functions – the specific abilities that result from knowledge, experience, information, practice, and aptitude – for business success (Scheers and Radipere, 2007). The EB-5 program does not require participants to maintain any level of managerial or

leadership skills. Simply owning a company, running a business, or being an investor does not make a person a manager or leader. As soon as EB-5 entrepreneurs apply for an EB-5 visa, they are obligated to open a qualified business. Approaches described in Table 1 are the examples of managerial skills that EB-5 hotel owners are expected to master. If EB-5 owners are new to management, EB-5 organizations may face another challenges. Scheers and Radipere (2007) established that the lack of managerial skills has a negative impact on the success and viability of the business.

Summary

Since EB-5 ownership has become more popular among hospitality organizations, the current study examines its impact on hotel performance. Crotts et al. (2007) suggested that companies with set goals to deliver service excellence, supported by explicit systems, policies, and procedures that reinforced the achievement of such goals, will be more effective and profitable than organizations with low alignment.

Hotel owners are responsible for maintaining organizational factors, such as strategy, staffing, and system design factors, aligned to keep service employees satisfied with their job. However, applying organizational alignment in a hospitality organization is not an easy task. The owners of EB-5 hospitality organizations, who

are foreigners with pending immigrant investor visas, experience even more challenges to maintain the alignment of the links of service-profit chain.

Based on past research, EB-5 owners will impact organization alignment of the hotel in a unique way due to their cultural differences, unique entrepreneurial intentions, and international experiences. Thus, employees of EB-5 hospitality organizations will likely display job satisfaction and performance dissimilar from employees of non-EB-5 hotels. Since EB-5 ownership will impact service employees in a unique way, hospitality organizations will display different guest satisfaction and performance than will non-EB-5 hotels.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this research is to advance the understanding of the phenomenon of EB-5 hotel ownership and its impact on the strategic outcomes of hospitality organizations in Central Florida. More specifically, through the prism of organizational alignment, this paper examines how EB-5 ownership affects employee job satisfaction and retention and, ultimately, shapes the hospitality firm's guest satisfaction and performance. It is important to explore this phenomenon because Crotts et al. (2007) supported that firms with staffing policies and systems that aligned with their strategic goals and objectives outperformed those firms with poorer organizational alignment. The following questions guided the current research:

RQ1. What is organizational alignment within an EB-5 hotel?

RQ2. How does organizational alignment of EB-5 hospitality firms affect employee job satisfaction and performance?

RQ3. How does EB-5 ownership distinguish business performance of hospitality firms?

To better understand the foundation of this dissertation, it was proposed that *there is a relationship between EB-5 owned hotel employee job satisfaction and organizational alignment attributes and their aggregated dimensions, which are*

strategy, staffing, and system design. The elements of proposition were tested empirically.

Philosophical Worldview

The aim of the study is to explore, understand, and present the research participants' perspective alignment with the researcher's worldview. According to Harrison, Birks, Franklin, and Mills (2017, p.10), "the goal of this alignment is to engender coherence between the researcher's philosophical position, their research question, design, and methods to be used in the study." The participants' views of the situation are critical for the research. Therefore, the researcher is positioned with the study participants as a partner to discover and generate knowledge addressing the research questions outlined by this dissertation. The philosophical orientation of the researcher, who demonstrates a strong motivation for discovering meanings and understandings of experiences through the interaction with others and participating in study, is called constructivism combined with interpretivism. (Harrison et al., 2017).

According to this epistemology, reality is viewed as multiple and subjective, based on meanings and understandings. Moreover, "Stake argues that situation shapes activity, experience, and one's interpretation of the case" (Harrison et al., 2017, p. 13). Therefore, the constructivist researcher, through studying the case situationally, captures her or his interpreted reality of the case, and it enables

an examination of the integrated system in which the case unfolds (Harrison et al., 2017). Braun and Clarke (2006) emphasized that the research epistemology guides what a researcher can say about data and informs how the meanings are theorized. More specifically, data “analysis conducted within a constructionist framework cannot and does not seek to focus on motivation or individual psychologies, but instead seeks to theorize the sociocultural contexts, and structural conditions, that enable the individual accounts that are provided” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 85).

Methodology

No specific studies related to EB-5 ownership and its impact on employee job satisfaction or guest satisfaction have been found to date in the literature. As the EB-5 visa program and its impact on hospitality organization is an understudied topic, knowledge about unique features of EB-5 ownership, organizational alignment, and employee job satisfaction is limited. Based on a literature review, unique strategy, staffing, and system design factors of EB-5 organizations may impact employee job satisfaction and productivity differently than factors of non-EB-5 organizations. Given that this dissertation opens a new line of research related to the EB-5 investment program and its impact on hotel employee job satisfaction and guest satisfaction, there has been no established method to explore this topic.

Bloomberg and Volpe (2016) noted that “a solid rationale for the choice of methods used is crucial, as this indicates methodological congruence and illustrates

that the choice of methods is grounded in the study's conceptual framework and overall research design" (p. 153). The choice of the research method began with certain assumptions and the use of a theoretical framework that pointed to the research problem. The main objective of this study is to examine an EB-5 hotel in Florida as part of a larger inquiry into how EB-5 ownership affects employee job satisfaction and guest satisfaction in the hospitality industry. According to Baxter and Jack (2008) and Harrison et al. (2017), the EB-5 hotel in Florida is a phenomenon occurring in a bounded context, and in effect, is a unit of analysis. According to Stake (1995), the EB-5 hotel is a specific, complex, and functioning thing, which is a case. To answer *how*, *why*, and even *what* research questions, the case study method was selected (Harrison et al., 2017, p. 6). Since this study closely examines the functioning and activities of one site, a single-case study was used, and the guidelines provided by Robert Stake were followed.

Case study research was employed to explore a phenomenon within its context and understand complex issues in real world settings. According to Harrison et al. (2017), case study research is "the study of particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances" (p. 6). Cases are classified into three categories (1) intrinsic, (2) instrumental, and (3) collective (Baxter & Jack, 2008). To understand how EB-5 ownership affects employee job satisfaction and guest satisfaction in a hotel, an instrumental case study design was employed. According to Mills, Durepos, and Wiebe (2010) and Baxter and Jack (2008), in an instrumental case study design, the

case itself is secondary to understanding a particular phenomenon. Even though this design offers a thick description of one site, the participating hotel was used as a tool to understand employee job satisfaction and guest satisfaction.

Unique in comparison to other qualitative approaches, within the case study method, researchers can collect and integrate both quantitative and qualitative data (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Harrison et al., 2017; Stake, 1995; Goodrick, 2014. Zainal (2007) suggested that “by including both quantitative and qualitative data, case study helps to explain both the process and outcome of the phenomenon through complete observation, reconstruction and analysis of the cases under investigations” (p. 1). While quantitative data can be used to help generate the qualitative sample or explain findings from qualitative data, “the qualitative data can be used to assess the validity of quantitative findings” (Fetters, Curry, & Creswell; 2013, p. 2135). Both quantitative and qualitative data were employed to research the dissertation questions, to test a proposition, and to develop conclusions and recommendations. Also, some additional data were collected to supplement findings. The supplemental data included hotel documentation, researcher notes, guest satisfaction analysis, and market benchmarking.

Per Fetters et al. (2013), there are specific approaches to integrate qualitative and quantitative research procedures and data. To enhance the value of the case study research and better understand the case, data integration was accomplished through the case study framework. Per Baxter and Jack (2008), data were converged in the analysis process rather than handled individually. “Each data

source is one piece of the ‘puzzle,’ with each piece contributing to the researcher’s understanding of the whole phenomenon” (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 554). Through multiple data sources and significant interaction with research participants, a case study method provided an in-depth picture of the unit of analysis because the researcher went beyond quantitative statistical reports and investigated a natural phenomenon within its real-life context. The research findings are reported as a case description and case-based themes (Harrison et al., 2017) and can be found in Chapter Four.

Research Design and Instrumentation

Harrison et al. (2017) suggested that a researcher who utilizes the case study method is required to maintain focus on what is studied rather how it is studied. What is vital is that the researcher is positioned with participants as a partner in the discovery and generation of knowledge. Therefore, the primary data source for this study was EB-5 hotel employees. Data were collected through an organizational alignment audit, where quantitative and qualitative research instruments were utilized. Based on the nature of the case, feasibility issues, and the research questions (Fetters et al., 2013), primary data collection methods were employee surveys and manager interviews. Since the central questions of any case study are “how,” “why,” and sometimes “what,” at the practical level, the survey methodology addressed “how” while interviewing the hotel managers helped to

One important objective of the research was to provide the participating EB-5 hotel with recommendations that they could use to improve their performance. To examine the way in which multiple aspects of an organization's workplace environment affected firm outcomes, Crofts et al. (2007) suggested conducting an organizational alignment audit. The service-profit chain model adapted from studies of Heskett et al. (1994), Crofts et al. (2007), and Jung and Yoon (2013) illustrated a conceptual cause and effect model of organizational alignment (see Figure 4, Chapter 1). However, testing the linkages in the service-profit chain model is not an easy task because the model is conceptual in nature with no accepted scales that measure all model stages (Crofts et al., 2007). Therefore, this research focused primarily on the links between EB-5 hotel ownership, organizational alignment, employee satisfaction, and guest satisfaction. Regardless of the data source, the main concentration was on the relationship between strategy, staffing, and system design decisions influenced by EB-5 hotel owners.

The research was conducted between July 1 and December 31, 2017. With regard to the process, it was directed in the following order. First, after a participation agreement with the site was reached, the researcher described the site. Second, the researcher collected survey data from the hotel employees, analyzed the quantitative data, and reported the survey findings. To analyze the survey data, descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha test, correlation analysis, regression analysis, and Analysis of Variances (ANOVA) were used. Third, managers were

interviewed, qualitative data were analyzed, and interview findings were reported. When analyzing the interview data, the researcher used thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke (2006). Fourth, the survey and interview findings were merged. Fifth, to supplement already existing findings, secondary data, such as hotel documentation including website, researcher's notes from hotel meetings, guest satisfaction analysis, and market benchmarking were collected, reviewed, and merged with the rest of the findings. At the completion of the research, the managers of the participating EB-5 site were provided with recommendations on how to improve organizational alignment factors in order to maintain the level of employee job satisfaction and guest satisfaction.

Site Recruitment

The single case study design included the selection of one qualified site. According to Harrison et al., (2017), bounding the case is essential to focusing, framing, and managing data collection and analysis. To conduct the case study, the specific parameters for the case were location and ownership type. The objective was to recruit an EB-5 hotel located in Florida, within the Greater Orlando area.

The original plan was to use help from EB-5 regional centers to select and recruit one EB-5 hotel within the specific boundaries outlined by the case study design. The researcher obtained a list of active regional centers as well as the industries they work in and their websites (see Appendix B). Using websites,

contact details were obtained, and inquiries were emailed. A sample of an inquiry can be found in Appendix C.

The researcher sent 78 inquiries to the prospective EB-5 regional centers. Each inquiry asked the regional center to help locate an EB-5 hotel to conduct the data collection. Only one regional center responded positively, but after several attempts to reach this representative, no agreement to participate was reached. The researcher sent follow up emails and phone calls, but there was no positive response. The researcher also contacted USCIS by email to ask for help in locating a willing-to-participate EB-5 hotel, but there was no assistance.

Some hotels advertised their EB-5 projects on the Internet, and a short list of hotels was developed. There were seven Florida hotels located in Tampa, Orlando, Cocoa Beach, and Melbourne. Site selection involves initial contact with the sites and determining which individuals to contact (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, each hotel was contacted with the purpose of obtaining either the general or assistant general manager's contact details. Seven letters of introduction were sent to create initial contact (see Appendix D). The researcher asked for an appointment to introduce the research purpose and to obtain permission for data collection during face-to-face meetings with hotel leaders. Stake (1995) mentioned that a researcher's willingness to present findings after the study is well appreciated. To motivate the hotel managers to participate, it was disclosed that the final write-up would be sent via email upon completion, and findings would be made available for the hotel. Three hotels replied. Their responses are displayed below.

Hotel A (replied on June 2, 2017). “Dear Valentina, I truly appreciate your interest in administrating your survey here at the (Hotel Name). Although, I regret to inform you that we will be unable to participate. I wish you the best of luck in search. Thank you”

Hotel B (replied on June 8, 2017) “Would you like to schedule a time to come to the hotel to meet with me next week?”

Hotel C (replied on June 13, 2017) “Unfortunately, this would not be a good time for us to ask the property to have a separate survey”

The researcher replied to the HR manager of Hotel B that the first available time would be accepted. On June 15, 2017, the researcher met the HR director at the hotel located in Cocoa Beach, FL. The meeting took less than 10 minutes. The researcher introduced the HR manager to the survey questionnaire. The HR manager verbally confirmed that the hotel would participate. The condition was that the researcher must also survey the staff of another non-EB-5 hotel managed by the same company. The researcher agreed and informed that an email confirmation was required for research to begin. The HR manager asked to send it as soon as possible. That same day the researcher sent the HR manager an email and mailed a thank you gift to the hotel. Suddenly, on June 2017, the HR manager of this hotel replied: “I have bad news. One of our owners has denied my request to participate. He is afraid that the information retained will not remain secure and could become public. I am VERY SORRY!”

After receiving rejections from other prospects, the researcher utilized the Google search engine to locate a Central Florida EB-5 hotel, and located a website advertising an active EB-5 project at an Orlando resort to attract EB-5 investors. The advertising slogan was “Fast Track to USA Green Card at the Doorstep of Walt Disney World® in Orlando, Florida.” The website did not provide a hotel name nor contact details. From the website, it was clear that the hotel is a fully operational resort development that offers premier facilities, services, and amenities. The resort is conveniently located near Orlando theme parks, Orlando International Airport, world-class golf courses, restaurants, and shopping centers. Through the hotel exterior photos displayed on this website, the researcher was able to identify and visit the hotel.

There was an EB-5 program administrative office on site. By speaking with a representative on duty, the researcher made sure that this hotel is qualified for the dissertation data collection needs. The representative from the EB-5 office explained that the hotel does not administer EB-5 projects through the regional center. Instead of utilizing a regional center, this hotel created a trust company that offers foreign national investors a chance to invest. Investment is an equity-based program with a five-year investment term. The investment provides funding for the hotel units and daily hotel operations. In turn, investors receive equity interest, shares in the trust company, ownership, and the opportunity to participate in the EB-5 visa program to obtain U.S. residency for themselves, their spouse, and their unmarried minor children under 21 years of age. The number of investors in the

trust company is based on direct job creation within the State-certified Targeted Employment Area, which is 10 direct jobs per investor. According to Stake's (2006) criteria for selecting a case, this site provides an opportunity to learn about complexity and context.

The researcher attempted to meet with the HR Vice President of the hotel. On that day, the hotel held a job fair event, and the researcher met both the HR Department Executive and the Assistant General Manager (AGM). Both managers were Americans. During a face-to-face meeting and presentation, the research project was presented, and the site executives agreed to participate. An email to obtain hotel authorization was sent (see Appendix D) to the AGM, who quickly granted access permission to complete on-site field work. The confirmation email is displayed below.

*“Good afternoon Valentina,
Please use this email as an approval that you can conduct your research at our hotel (name of the hotel is intentionally removed and will not be displayed in this dissertation). As previously discussed, the survey would need to be pre-approved by HR. We are looking forward to assisting in any way possible.”*

As the researcher had already completed mandatory CITI training, with the email from the hotel, IRB approval was received. Certificate of clearance for human participants research can be found in Appendix E.

Site

Goodrick (2014) and Stake (2006) recommended describing in depth the specific features of the case, so the reader can have a sense of “being there.” Following Stake (1995), site documentation was examined to describe the site. Among the documentation were: site’s employee handbooks, human resources policies, brochures, website, other hospitality websites, and field notes. Per the agreement with the site, the name of the organization is anonymous. To simplify the reading, the researcher assigned a site pseudonym, which is “The Hotel.”

According to the Orange County Property Appraiser, The Hotel was built in 2008. The Hotel positions itself as a luxury resort, which features two restaurants and a cafe, two heated pools with hot tubs, a convenience store, fitness center, meeting space, a game room, a business center, a concierge, free parking, and a spa and salon. A full-service spa offers a variety of services including but not limited to massages, hair and makeup, and nails and children’s makeovers. Also, a complimentary shuttle service to the Theme Parks is available.

The Hotel offers 499 one-, two-, three- and four-bedroom condo style rooms in the heart of Central Florida’s best attractions. The rooms offer 1,080 to 2,170 square feet of space; therefore, it can provide not only the comforts of home but accommodate two to ten persons and offer spacious floor plans to suit any family or group. Every unit features a fully equipped kitchen, a living area with sleeper sofa, one, two, three, or four private bedrooms, a flat-screen TVs in all

rooms, a Jacuzzi tub in the master bathroom, a washer and dryer, and free high-speed Internet.

The Hotel is managed by a management company. Approximately ten percent of the hotel rooms are also owned by the management company. The rest of the property is distributed among EB-5 owners. According to the developer's office that administers the EB-5 visa program, there are 30 owners with pending EB-5 visas. No information describing the EB-5 owners or their ownership was provided to the researcher.

Property Management

The Hotel is managed by the corporation that manages eight other properties in Orlando, including five hotels/resorts. Its services address a full range of hotel and resort operational and marketing needs, and include: centralized reservations, human resources, staff development, accounting, purchasing, information technology, and global sales and advertising.

The property management organization, in addition to the hotels and resorts, manages condominiums, associations, and development projects. The primary mission of the management company is to create lasting value for guests, investors and associates and exceed their expectations. The property management company utilizes its more than 100 years' combined experience in hospitality property management to ensure the property is financially successful and that guests will want to return to it again and again. The company goal is to maximize

both occupancy levels and the average daily rate for all of its properties. Therefore, it has partnered with some of the premier players in advertising, public relations, marketing, e-commerce, and website design to ensure that no stone is left unturned. According to company documents, providing effective maintenance programs and capital budgeting is important to control expenses. Moreover, the management company continually finds ways to enhance service by using innovative ideas, cutting-edge technology, and creativity, enabling it to position itself as an industry leader.

Participant Recruitment

Recruitment of participants in the research was vital for data collection. EB-5 hotel service employees and managers comprised the sample of the study. An initial sample objective was to have among the service workers front desk agents, wait staff, bell attendants, guest relations representatives, and door attendants. Out of the named positions, the site had only front desk agents. However, other service employees who have frequent face-to-face or voice-to-voice interactions with hotel guests participated in the study. Among them were maintenance staff, pool staff, spa employees, runners, and the concierge. Housekeeping personnel who had limited daily contact with the guests were excluded from the sample.

Face-to-face recruitment was the method used for the study. The Hotel appointed the AGM to introduce the study to employees. The researcher prepared a

set of paperwork for each participant. Each set had a letter of introduction (see Appendix F), a consent form (see Appendix G), and questionnaire (see Appendix H). The consent forms were returned before participants started working on the questionnaire. Participants were asked to return completed questionnaires the same day as received and, to maintain confidentiality, place them randomly in a large yellow envelope. The site committed to completing surveys within seven consecutive days.

Interview participants were recruited face-to-face by the researcher. Only The Hotel's managers interacting daily with the hotel guests were asked to participate. Some managers had already participated in the surveys and had the consent forms signed; therefore, no additional forms were required after the participants' verbal approvals. The researcher planned to thank every interviewee with a restaurant gift card, but did not disclose it at the recruitment stage to make sure that those only truly interested in making their voices heard would agree to participate.

The Hotel was managed by the property management company, and EB-5 owners were absentees. The researcher had no opportunity to reach the owners. As a result, EB-5 hotel owners did not participate in the study. Absentee business ownership was a new variable in the study since past research had not mentioned that EB-5 owners may not be involved in hotel daily operations.

Population and Sample

Creswell (2013) recommended using a maximum variation sampling approach, which consists of determining in advance some criteria that differentiate the participants. Selecting participants who are different according to the criteria increases the likelihood that the findings will reflect different perspectives. Therefore, the target population for this study consisted of service employees and their managers. To conduct both survey and interviews, the total sample was 68 participants. The aim was to survey 68 participants and interview six. According to Creswell (2013), sample inequality is not a concern because each research method provides an adequate count. While qualitative research is meant to gain an in-depth perspective, quantitative research enables generalizing to a population. Moreover, qualitative research data is usually collected from a smaller sample than quantitative research data because it is more time consuming, but it helps to gather extensive information in the sample (Creswell, 2014).

Statisticians recommend a minimum sample size of 30 when three independent variables are involved. To ensure proper statistical conclusions, a minimum sample for the surveys was calculated based on size effect using three factors (e.g., $\alpha = 0.05$, power = .80, and effect size = 0.5) (Creswell, 2014). The required minimum sample for the survey was 34 participants. Practically, a population size for the survey data collection was 68 (89 total minus 21 in housekeeping) service employees. Service staff was defined as employees who

have face-to-face contact with guests. The rooms are being cleaned in between the checking out and checking in times, when rooms are empty. Since 21 of the site's employees are housekeepers, who have limited or no contact with hotel guests due to the nature of their job, only housekeeping managers were included in the total sample.

For the interviews, homogeneous sampling was selected. The researcher aimed to interview the managers who have daily face-to-face or voice-to-voice interactions with guests. The main contact with guests is carried out by front desk supervisors, front desk manager, guest service manager, and AGM. The main contact with EB-5 hotel owners is conducted by the General Manager and AGM. Consequently, the researcher aimed to interview six managers. However, Creswell (2013) suggested not including more than four or five individual interviews in a single case.

Data Collection

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no academic research has been done, and there has been no established approach to shed light on EB-5 hospitality organizations and their performance. Therefore, this dissertation opens a new line of research related to the EB-5 Immigrant Investor Program. The limitation to existing research is that "to date, most researchers of the EB-5 Immigrant Investor Program have primarily relied on qualitative methods to analyze the program"

(Smith, 2015, p. 76). However, scholars noticed that the case study method helps researchers to explore a phenomenon within its context when multiple data sources are used (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Harrison et al., 2017). To make sure that the case is explored through a variety of lenses, which allows for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood, data were collected through surveys, interviews, and supplementary sources. Among the supplementary data were documents from The Hotel, notes from meetings, guest satisfaction analysis, and market benchmarking. Practically, collecting data from different sources helped to investigate and determine the unique strategy factors, staffing factors, and system factors of the EB-5 organization and how they impact EB-5 employee job satisfaction and guest satisfaction.

While survey methods seek a relationship between variables, interviews explore patterns and unanticipated as well as expected relationships (Stake, 1995). Conducting interviews enabled the researcher to get close to the participants in their natural settings and explore their perspectives. Therefore, it was the researcher's view that both the surveys and interviews were well suited to obtain the descriptions and interpretations of others and explore research questions and proposition of the study.

According to Stake (1995), there is no specific moment when data gathering begins. Regardless, the researcher developed a data gathering plan and closely followed it. Having a plan was essential since data-gathering helped the researcher personally learn about the case activities and experiences.

Storing both survey data and interview data was important. Therefore, daily consent forms, questionnaires, notes, and interview protocols were scanned and saved in a password-protected disk storage. Daily backup copies of computer files were created. The hard copies of these documents are stored in a locked, fireproof safe and will remain there for five years following the dissertation's final approval. After that period of time, they will be destroyed. Only the researcher will maintain access to any research data.

Surveys

According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2016), “an advantage of survey methodology is that it is relatively unobtrusive and relatively easily administrated and managed” (p. 157). The researcher utilized the structured and self-administered questionnaire, adapted from Crotts et al. (2007) to survey The hotel employees (see Appendix H). The researcher obtained permission from Dr. Crotts, College of Charleston in South Carolina, to share the questionnaire that his group used for their study in 2007. However, the end of the questionnaire stated *this questionnaire is the property of Robert C. Ford and may not be reproduced in any way without prior written permission*. Dr. Ford of the University of Central Florida was contacted and authorized the researcher to use the questionnaire.

The survey questionnaire consisted of two main parts and 59 questions. The scale used for the alignment statement was a 5-point Likert scale with responses ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). To assure employee

confidentiality, the questionnaires were anonymous. The first part, four employment-related questions, was composed of questions designed to collect background information of hotel respondents, such as their position, length of stay, and duty time. The second part, 55 questions, included 18 employee Job Satisfaction (JS) questions as well as 37 questions detecting The Hotel's Organizational Alignment (OA). According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2016), in keeping with qualitative research traditions, surveys should include some open-ended questions. The fact that the questionnaire used for data collection does not offer this option justifies once again the necessity to conduct one-on-one interviews with hotel managers to tap into personal experiences and to shed light on participant perceptions.

Per agreement with The Hotel, the questionnaire required the HR department's approval before it could be used. The HR Vice President (VP) and AGM met with the researcher to further discuss and confirm before the questionnaire was implemented with the staff. The original proposal, collecting data through an online survey, was declined. The HR VP stated that she is more comfortable with hard copy questionnaires. It was agreed that the AGM, not the researcher, would invite employees to participate. The VP of HR did not support the idea of rewarding survey participants monetarily. Instead, she suggested thanking employees for participation with a cake at the employees' lunch.

The following departments participated in the survey: front office, housekeeping, maintenance, management, pool, and spa. The researcher supplied

The Hotel with hard copies of consent forms, questionnaires, and a participants' log. The participants' log was a separate sheet with the names of the employees who signed a consent form. According to Martinez-Vogt (2014), the participants' log provides a visual data sheet to which the researcher could refer and keep track of participants and prospective participants.

After seven days of data collection, only 14 participant questionnaires were completed. Due to the seven-day-a-week hotel schedule, additional staff members were involved in data collection. The Front Desk Manager confirmed that he expected the rest of the questionnaires would be collected within the next few days. He explained that he involved department heads to help, and since there were large mandatory hotel meetings planned, getting the vast majority of the questionnaires seemed possible.

Over the next three days, only four new names were added to the participants' log. With 18 questionnaires collected within nine days, the researcher took the initiative and exerted leadership with the remaining data collection. Permission was granted by the AGM to continue collecting data by the researcher. Through face-to-face meetings, more employees were recruited. Two large yellow envelopes (one for consent forms and one for questionnaires) were left for the participants to return their forms, and participants were advised to insert the forms in random order. During every hotel visit, the researcher reminded employees of the participating departments to turn in the questionnaires. To collect data from front office night auditors, the researcher stayed at the hotel between 11 pm – 12

am for two days. Runners, their supervisors, and some maintenance personnel completed the forms during their evening shifts within three days. It took three days to collect data from the housekeeping managers, spa technicians, and pool attendants during their morning shifts. Survey data collection was complete within the first two weeks of August 2017.

Individual Interviews

By the time the interviews were conducted, survey data analysis had been completed and the researcher spent more than six weeks on site assisting with the research. Actively participating on site helped the researcher to gain a deeper understanding about keeping the employees satisfied, or why they were dissatisfied, and what makes The Hotel guests happy or unhappy. What was unclear is how EB-5 owners and this specific type of ownership influence employees and customer behavior and performance of The Hotel. There was a need to gain clarification on the survey data and probe for additional information. Following Stake (2006), who suggested that “the details of life that the researcher is unable to see for him- or her-self are found by interviewing people who did see it” (p. 29), hotel managers were interviewed.

Per Stake (1995, p. 64), an interview is the main road to multiple realities. To gain valuable insight and understanding of manager’s perspectives, the researcher utilized the individual interview method. Martinez-Vogt (2014, p. 99) suggested that the purpose of an individual interview is to clearly hear the voice of

the participant without the possibility of one dominant or stronger voice infringing on another.

The AGM, Guest Service Manager, Front Desk Manager, and two supervisors were interviewed. The researcher was unable to complete the sixth interview with the General Manager due to his unavailability. However, it did not affect the study design because Creswell (2013) suggested not including more than four or five individual interviews in a single case.

The success of an interview depends on the willingness of both parties to engage in deep discussion about the topic. To maintain a comfortable environment, which contributes to success in the interview process, Creswell (2013) and Martinez-Vogt (2014) recommended a quiet location free from distractions for a dialogue. The initial plan was to conduct interviews in hotel meeting rooms. However, the only meeting room on the site was rented out during the entire time of data collection, so all parties agreed to conduct on-site interviews during participants' working hours. Since Martinez-Vogt (2014, p. 98) mentioned that "if questions are to be answered fully, then they must be asked in person," telephone or video interviews were not considered as an alternative to face-to-face interviews.

On-site individual interviews were conducted August 15 to 19, 2017. The researcher arrived early before each interview. Due to the unpredictable nature of hotel operations, hotel employees do not control their time. Regardless of how well planned the schedule is, depending on hotel guests, the schedule may take a different route at any moment. Three out of five interviewees asked the researcher

to wait because they were either assisting guests at the front desk or over the phone or had to complete another assignment before moving to the next task. While waiting to be called in, the researcher prepared for the interview. For audio recording, the iPhone VoiceRecorder application was utilized.

The interview locations were private, which allowed maintaining the utmost confidentiality. However, the rooms were not without distractions. Since two selected rooms were the business offices, the desk phones rang frequently. Participants were respectful to the research and did not answer the phones. They also kept their cell phones off during the time of the interviews. The AGM was interviewed in his office; the Guest Service Manager was interviewed in her office; and three interviews, an interview with the Front Desk Manager and two supervisors, were conducted in the AGM's office while he had three days off during the interview week.

Every interviewee was familiar with the researcher, and it helped to maintain a friendly environment. At the beginning of the interview, each participant received a copy of an interview protocol with predetermined questions (see Appendix I). Managers were informed that an audio recorder was used. The researcher explained that the audio recorder would be utilized only for the purpose of transcription, and all managers agreed to be audio recorded.

Each discussion started with a brief summary of the completed surveys. Managers were informed that the survey analysis displayed that employee retention, recognition, and feedback concerned the employees. The interviewees

were prompted to discuss their ideas about these problems in detail. Then interviewees were directed in such a way to shed light on three major sections including: 1) Identifying The Hotel's issues relating to hotel guest satisfaction, 2) Addressing The Hotel's uniqueness from the EB-5 owners' standpoint and understanding the relationship between guest satisfaction and EB-5 ownership, and 3) Identifying what approaches The Hotel utilizes to improve guest satisfaction.

The interview protocol was followed for the purpose of guidance and notation; however, each interview did not follow the exact order of the questions. Some questions were skipped if the response had already been received within the flow of another question. Also, some additional questions were added to help the participants clarify meanings and relationships among ideas. According to Martinez-Vogt (2014), while the interview protocol helps to maintain a level of focus, all information and all voices are valuable. Therefore, during the actual exchange, the researcher was an active listener and tried not to focus on the note taking, but paid full attention to every discussion and every word. Moreover, the researcher's hospitality experience seemed to help make the discussion more relevant and interesting for the participants.

Managers were asked to first identify the strengths of their team and then to think about possible improvements. The questions about strength, improvements, and barriers helped the researcher to gain a general idea about The Hotel and focus on the aspects outlined by the service-profit chain model: organizational alignment, strategy, staffing, and system design factors, employee job satisfaction, and guest

satisfaction. Since the majority of interviewees were not familiar with the organizational alignment terminology, it was excluded from the main interview questions and discussions were focused on specific examples of strategy, staffing, and system design factors.

To learn more about how EB-5 owners affect employee job satisfaction, guest satisfaction, and hotel performance, transitions between hotel issues described by the interviewee and EB-5 ownership were made. For example, managers were asked questions such as: 1) The Hotel is different from others due to its ownership structure. It does not have a single owner, but has a variety of EB-5 owners. Do you think this type of ownership affects the performance of maintenance or housekeeping departments? or 2) Could you please share your opinion about EB-5 ownership. Does it have any effect on The Hotel business?

It was noticeable that every manager had a different level of understanding about EB-5 ownership. While the AGM and Guest Service Manager seemed to be more aware, the other three participants were thankful for the researcher's information about the EB-5 program. For example, the researcher said the foreign owners are in the process of receiving their "green cards" through hotel investment and ownership. When participants heard "green cards," it made more sense to them. All other topics voiced by the interviewee were welcomed.

Not a single interview went over the initially planned time of 45 minutes. In the end of each interview, the researcher thanked the participant with a restaurant gift card. Per Stake, it is not unusual for the researcher to pay in some way for the

information that a special informant can provide, and the agreement with hotel leadership did not prohibit rewarding interview participants.

Shortly after the interview, interview data were transcribed through Trint.com services. Every audio recorded interview was uploaded to Trint.com as an mp3 file. Due to the diverse voices, tones, and accents, an automated transcription was far from ideal. So, on Trint.com, the automated transcripts were edited to match the actual recordings.

Supplementary Data Collection

During the act of the qualitative fieldwork, the researcher collected supplementary data from diverse sources. Data were collected from hotel documents and meetings, guest satisfaction reviews, and hotel benchmarking. The objective of collecting additional data was to supplement the survey and interview data and findings.

Firstly, to review the company culture and collect notes, the researcher attended a Front Office meeting. Then, the guest satisfaction data was collected through six main channels. Among them are Google™, Expedia, Booking.com, Facebook, TripAdvisor®, Orbitz, and Yelp. The reviews left by hotel guests between January 1, 2017, and September 15, 2017, were used for further analysis. Finally, benchmarking data was collected to learn more about The Hotel performance within the market where it operates. As a part of benchmarking, The

Hotel was compared to the average hospitality organization operating in the Orlando area based on the number of units/rooms, average occupancy rate, average daily rate, and revenue per available room (RevPAR). After that, the researcher collected data from three resorts that provide resort accommodation within the resort near the World Disney World. The data displayed the hotels' position on TripAdvisor[®], number of rooms (villas), and number of active employees. It was also outlined how many employees per room are employed by these organization, how their employees are satisfied with the organization, and how satisfied the hotel guest are. The benchmarking data was collected through online resources where hotels maintained their visibility and through contacting hotels directly to inquire about data. The Hotel was benchmarked against its main competitors based on the figures reported for July 2017.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is an ongoing and inherent part of the whole process of qualitative research (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016) and is one of the most difficult aspects of doing case studies (Yin, 2004). Data analysis allowed the researcher to find out: 1) How the findings answered the research questions and proposition, 2) How the findings from interviews supported survey data, and 3) How findings relate to the researcher's initial assumptions about the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). Stake (1995) emphasized that the nature of the study, the focus of the

research questions, and the curiosities of the researcher determine what analytic strategies should be employed.

The initial plan was to utilize the computer software, MAXqda (www.maxqda.com) for survey data analysis. This choice was made to simplify the process of data integration from SurveyMonkey[®] software, where the data would be collected. However, since The Hotel preferred hard copy questionnaires, SurveyMonkey[®] was not used. Instead, statistical analysis of the quantitative survey data was conducted using SPSS version 21 (IBM SPSS Inc., Chicago, Illinois, USA). For cross tables, SPSS Desktop Reporter version 5.5 (IBM SPSS Inc., Chicago, Illinois, USA) was used.

Stake's (1995) guidelines provide the case study researcher with the flexibility to select an approach for analyzing qualitative data. Since the research epistemology guides what the researcher will say about data and how meanings will be theorized, the choice of this study was to use thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) argued that thematic analysis is a good fit with constructionist paradigms, which is the worldview of the researcher. According to Braun and Clarke, "thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (p.79). Importantly, by organizing and describing data set in rich details, this approach interprets various aspects of the research topic.

Interview data extracted from the transcripts was organized using Microsoft[®] Word and Excel, following the process suggested by Bree and Gallagher (2016). This manual coding approach using the applications of

Microsoft[®] Office allowed the researcher to be more organized, efficient, more flexible, to increase validity of the research, and simultaneously use his/her, “own discretion and instinct to make modifications through the process” (Martinez-Vogt, 2015, p. 104). Internal logic and reliability of the data were established by providing quotations from the transcripts (Mills et al., 2016).

Survey Data Analysis

The current case study developed a proposition that employee job satisfaction in an EB-5 hotel depends on some very specific organizational alignment measures. To test this proposition, a hypothesis was developed:

There is a relationship between hotel employee job satisfaction and independent variables, such as EB-5 organizational alignment attributes and their aggregated dimensions, which are strategy, staffing, and system design.

Testing the prediction made by the hypothesis is important because it is closely related to the topic of this dissertation and contributes to the investigation of the research questions. Use of econometric analysis was well suited to explore employee job satisfaction in an EB-5 hotel and to study the research questions. To conduct the research and test the hypothesis, several statistical methods were employed. Among them are Cronbach’s test of scale reliability test, descriptive statistics, as well as correlation and regression analyses. The objectives of statistical analysis were to measure job satisfaction among service employees and to predict a

relationship between dependent and independent variables. In this study, the dependent variable was employee job satisfaction and independent variables were the factors of organizational alignment: strategy, staffing, and system design.

Variables. All data from the questionnaires were entered manually into Excel. Because the data file had numbers as question identifiers, to avoid making mistakes during manual data entry, short descriptions for each question were created. A complete Excel file with short descriptions for all 59 questions was loaded into the statistical software for analysis.

Crotts et al. (2007) mentioned that the second part of the questionnaire that was adopted for data collection in this dissertation contained 42 questions measuring employee overall job satisfaction and likelihood of retention. The researcher contacted Dr. Crotts to ask which 42 questions were used. Dr. Crotts referred the researcher to organizational research literature of Fields (2002), which was used by Crotts et al. (2007) to develop all scale questions for the questionnaire.

Following Fields (2002), questions 5 to 41 of the questionnaire were assigned to the Organizational Alignment scale (independent variables) and questions 42 to 59 to Job Satisfaction (dependent variable). To generalize the analysis, two aggregated scores were created, Organizational Alignment Index (OAI) and Job Satisfaction Index (JSI). Both metrics were calculated by summing all corresponding item values. Maximum values for OAI and JSI were 185 and 90, respectively.

Descriptive statistics were used to describe features of the data in the study. They provide simple summaries of the sample and the measures. Cross tabulations help to explore survey data to discover relationships between items and differences between subgroups. Descriptive statistics for aggregated metrics are displayed below in Table 2.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Aggregated Metrics

Aggregated Metrics	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strategy	47	1	5	4.22	0.830
System Design	47	1	5	3.86	1.068
Staffing	47	1	5	4.04	0.938
JSI	47	18	90	71.94	17.503
Valid N (listwise)	47				

Descriptive statistics for dependent variables are displayed in Table 3. There are 37 independent variables, which were placed into three factor groups. According to Crotts et al. (2005), the organizational alignment factor groups are strategy factors, staffing factors, and system design factors (see Table 1, p.27). Appendix J offers descriptive statistics on the individual independent variables used in this study.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Dependent Variables

Descriptive Statistics			
Survey Question	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q42_I_put_extra_efforts_to_help_hotel_succeed_JS	46	4.50	.837
Q43_I_tell_my_friends_how_good_my_work_place_is_JS	45	4.24	0.933
Q44_I_will_accept_any_job_JS	44	3.84	1.238
Q45_My_values_and_hotels_are_the_same_JS	45	3.96	1.242
Q46_I_am_proud_to_tell_others_that_I_work_here_JS	44	4.20	1.091
Q47_The_hotel_inspires_me_to_maintain_high_performance_JS	47	4.00	1.251
Q48_I_am_glad_I_chose_this_place_to_work_JS	44	4.09	1.197
Q49_I_care_about_the_hotel_fate_JS	46	4.20	1.003
Q50_This_hotel_is_the_best_place_to_work_JS	44	3.86	1.407
Q51_I_know_what_is_expected_from_my_job_JS	46	4.43	0.834
Q52_I_am_able_to_do_what_I_do_best_daily_JS	47	4.47	.905
Q53_I_am_regularly_recognized_JS	46	3.70	1.459
Q54_My_manager_cares_about_me_as_a_person_JS	46	4.07	1.218
Q55_Someone_at_work_encourages_my_development_JS	46	3.83	1.305
Q56_I_have_needed_tools_to_do_my_job_correctly_JS	47	4.02	1.073
Q57_Hotel_respects_my_training_and_experience_JS	47	4.09	1.176
Q58_OS_with_Job_JS	47	4.15	1.161
Q59_OS_with_the_Hotel_JS	47	4.19	1.262

Methods and Models. After quantitative data was collected and organized, Cronbach's alpha test was used to assess internal consistency of the survey. This reliability test is most commonly used when multiple Likert scale questions are involved. Cronbach's alpha scores higher than 0.7 are considered acceptable to proceed with further data analysis. The results of the test conducted through SPSS software for organizational alignment questions are shown in Table 4. High reliability of .982 means that survey items were consistent with each other. When reliability of Strategy, System Design, and Staffing dimensions was measured, the Cronbach's alpha test also proved reliability (.940) of the given factors of the survey (Table 5).

Table 4

Reliability Statistics for All Organizational Alignment Questions

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.982	37

Table 5

Reliability Statistics for Strategy, System Design and Staffing Dimensions

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.94	3

The objective of statistical analysis is to measure job satisfaction among EB-5 hotel service employees and predict a relationship between dependent and independent variables. Every statistical analysis has its own hypothesis. In correlation analysis, the null hypothesis states that the correlation coefficient is not significantly different from zero; so, there is no actual relationship between the variables. The alternative hypothesis is that the coefficient is significantly different from zero, so there is a certain relationship between the variables. The researcher calculated such correlation coefficients for all combinations of OAI and JSI to determine correlation of all elements.

Render, Stair, Hanna, Hale, and Badri (2016) recommend using regression analysis to understand the relationship between variables and to predict the value of

one dependent variable based on the value of another. Since there are multiple independent variables, a multiple linear regression model was employed. More specifically, this method was used to determine the relationships between employee job satisfaction as a dependent variable and organizational alignment factors as independent variables. To explore how organizational alignment attributes may affect employees' job satisfaction in the EB-5 hotel, the following regression analysis model was built:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \dots + \beta_nX_n$$

where:

Y – employee job satisfaction index

β_0 – intercept (value of Y when all X= 0)

β_s – regression coefficient of independent variables.

The null hypothesis, set for every single independent variable, is that the regression coefficient does not significantly differ from zero. The alternative hypothesis confirms that there is such a difference and the independent variable affects job satisfaction. If the researcher accepts alternative hypotheses for certain independent variables, there is support that those variables significantly influence job satisfaction.

In addition, the regression analysis was utilized to determine what specific factors of job satisfaction negatively affect The Hotel's employee job satisfaction as a dependent variable. The 18 factors were sorted by their scores, and 10 factors with the lowest scores were selected to run a regression analysis (see Appendix K).

It was done to exclude functional dependency, which is present when all questions are used. By utilizing this method, the researcher aimed to learn what areas of employee job satisfaction require major improvement in order to increase the general score of employee job satisfaction. Also, a regression equation was built separately for Strategy, System Design, and Staffing dimensions as independent variables.

Finally, multiple stepwise linear regression was used to test a proposition and explore how organizational alignment of the EB-5 hotel may relate to hotel employee job satisfaction and other components of the service-profit chain model. This method was selected because there were 37 questions determining organizational alignment, and stepwise regression had automatically chosen predictive variables that contribute the most to the dependent variable. Using this procedure helped to find the major OA factors influencing job satisfaction.

Interview Data Analysis

According to Creswell (2013), “data analysis in qualitative research consists of preparing and organizing the data . . . for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and considering the codes, and finally representing the data in figures, tables, or a discussion” (p. 180). Stake (1995) suggested that research employing a case study methodology needs to start data analysis by reviewing raw data. The process of data analysis for this study started during the data collection. According to Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 86), data

analysis “starts when the analyst begins to notice, and look for patterns of meanings and issues of potential interest in the data.”

Before starting to analyze the interview data, the researcher had to explicitly consider a number of questions that thematic analysis involves. The main question was what to count as a theme. The definition of a theme was adopted from Braun and Clarke (2006). According to them, “a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set” (p.82). Then the researcher had to determine the type of analysis and claims to be made in relation to the data set. Facing the choice between a rich description of the data set or a detailed account of one particular aspect, a rich thematic description of the entire data set was selected. Per Braun and Clarke, this method is useful when an under-researched area is being investigated and views of the research participants about the topic are not known. In this method, the themes that the researcher identifies, codes, and analyses “would need to be an accurate reflection of the content of the entire data set” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 83). Importantly, the themes were driven by the data and not by the researcher’s theoretical interest. This strategy is called inductive thematic analysis. More specifically, inductive analysis is “a process of coding the data without trying to fit it into a preexisting coding frame, or the researcher’s analytic preconceptions” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.83).

To conduct interview data analysis, the researcher followed step-by-step guidelines provided by Braun and Clarke (2006). They outlined six phases of

thematic analysis (see Table 6). Throughout all the phases, data analysis involved a constant moving backward and forward between the entire data set, the coded extracts, and the produced data analysis.

Table 6

Phases of Thematic Analysis

No.	Phase
1.	Familiarizing with the data
2.	Coding
3.	Searching for themes
4.	Reviewing themes
5.	Defining themes
6.	Producing the report

Phase 1: Familiarizing with the data. After the interview data was collected, it was transcribed through the Trint.com website. This software offered the automated transcriptions pulled from the audio recording and maintained the analytic notes. The automated transcripts were edited to match the actual recordings. To protect interviewees' identity, transcripts display neither participant's names nor their positions. As there were five interviews, random alpha-numeric numbers assigned to the participants were I1, I2, I3, I4, and I5. Audio recordings were played and transcripts were read many times to make sure that the data was accurate. Moreover, to get a sense of the whole database, the transcripts were printed out and explored by rereading them several times. The

researcher wrote notes in the margins of transcripts, which were added to the electronic transcripts. Among the notes are quotes, ideas, key concepts, codes, and themes. The described process helped the researcher become completely familiar with the data and fully immersed in the process.

Phase 2: Coding. This phase involved the production of the codes from the data. Per Braun and Clarke (2006), “codes identify a feature of the data that appears interesting to the analyst, and refer to the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon” (p. 88). Creswell (2013) explained that “the process of coding involves aggregating the text or visual data into small categories of information, seeking evidence for the code from different databases being used in a study, and then assigning a label to the code” (p. 184).

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), coding can be performed either manually or through a software program. What is vital is that including details on the development of codes, how they applied to the data, and offering code definitions and methods used to address coding reliability, are practices to enhance transparency (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). The researcher used Microsoft® Excel and Microsoft® Word for data coding and closely followed the process outlined by Bree and Gallagher (2016).

The electronic transcripts were organized per questions, and all the data from Trint.com were migrated to a Microsoft® Excel worksheet. Each interview transcript was placed in a separate Excel worksheet. Following Bree and Gallagher

(2016), all the data were initially reviewed to remove any duplicate entries. Then data were sorted by responses and each individual cell was reviewed and assigned a code. As mentioned before, this process was inductive; there were no pre-determined codes or thematic areas. Some data extracts were assigned more than one code. When some points fell under more than one code, the worksheet cell was duplicated. Table 7 presents an example of the codes applied to a short segment of data extracted from the interview transcript. Data extracts for each interview were carefully examined. As recommended by Creswell (2014), the results and notes from each data set were compared to determine whether there is a convergence or a divergence between the information provided by the interviewees. A new Excel worksheet was created to consolidate data extracts with assigned codes to them from all five Excel worksheets. This data-driven approach led to the identification of 94 codes between 86 data extracts.

Table 7

Data Extract with Codes Applied

Step 1		Step 2	Step 3
Participant	Data Extract	Coded For	Themes
I2	I have seen good employees joining the company, who I thought are the best ever, and I have seen how the company treated them. It was really bad. And, it turned me off. I was a positive person, but you see good employees, who put their heart into the job, come to work every day to work hard, and the company just doesn't recognize it. That makes you feel a certain way towards organization. And that's not good for the organization. If employees are happy, everything moves smoothly.	Negative work environment	EB-5 Ownership
		Low employee motivation	
		Lack of recognition	Employee job satisfaction

Note. Adapted from “Using thematic analysis in psychology” by V. Braun and V.

Clarke, 2006, *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 7-101.

Phase 3: Searching for themes. After all data had been coded, the researcher had a long list of the different codes identified across the data set to review. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), at this stage, “relationship between codes, between themes, and different levels of themes” (p. 89) started to be developed. To sort the codes into potential themes, full and equal attention was paid to each data item. Here, the colored coding, which enabled to visualize patterns more effectively and to ensure everything was recorded, was used. As a result, the researcher identified interesting items in the data to form the basis of repeated patterns or themes across the data set.

Following Bree and Gallagher (2016), a coding column was constantly sorted in ascending order, descending order, and based on the color of the cell. The

names for initial themes were generated in the column next to the codes. Numerous time data was sorted to “combine or group similar points or comments” (Bree & Gallagher, 2016, p. 2816). Using this approach led to generating 16 initial themes (see Table 8). Each theme was labeled with a different color. To organize the codes and align them with the themes, another Excel worksheet was created.

Phase 4: Reviewing themes. This phase has two levels of work. First, a collection of candidate themes was developed. Following Braun and Clarke (2006), some codes were modified or united with other codes because they seemed no longer to belong anywhere. It was important not to abandon any data, so codes and candidate themes kept being sorted and reviewed. The most important initial themes seemed to better fit as sub-themes, and the researcher noted them as such to reflect in the next phase.

Once the candidate themes appeared to form a coherent pattern, the analysis was advanced to the next level. The researcher had to consider the validity of individual themes in relation to the data set. The entire data set was reread to ascertain whether the themes reflected the meanings in the data set as a whole. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggested looking if any additional data within themes that had been missed in earlier coding stages required coding. The researcher identified that the thematic map was functional and no additional data needed to be coded. Just as Braun and Clarke (2006) expected, at the end of this phase, the researcher gained an in-depth understanding about the different themes, “how they fit together, and the overall story they tell about the data” (p. 92).

Phase 5: Defining themes. At this stage, candidate themes were further defined and refined. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), “define and refine” means “identifying the essence of what each theme is about, and determining what aspect of the data each theme captures” (p. 92). To complete the task, the researcher went back to collated data extracts for each theme and conducted a detailed analysis. More specifically, a short story that each theme tells was written. Themes were considered themselves and each theme in relation to other themes was considered.

Following the thematic analysis design, the sub-themes were identified. “Sub-themes are essentially themes-within-a-theme. They can be useful for giving structure to a particularly large and complex theme, and for demonstrating the hierarchy within the data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 92). As a result of phase 5, three candidate themes, now called main themes, remained the same: EB-5 Ownership, Job Satisfaction, and Guest Satisfaction. Within each theme, sub-theme(s) were identified. For EB-5 Ownership, sub-themes were organizational alignment and hotel performance; for Job Satisfaction, sub-themes were pay and rewards and professional development; and one sub-theme was identified for Guest Satisfaction, which was workplace environment. Finally, Braun and Clarke (2006) suggested thinking whether themes need to be renamed. Since theme and sub-theme names were concise, punchy, and immediately giving the reader a sense of what the theme is about, there was no need to rename them. Table 8 provides a schematic overview of the complete process of analyzing interview data.

Table 8

Schematic Overview of the Interview Data Consolidation Process

Ph. 1	Ph. 2	Phases 3 and 4		Phase 5	Phase 6
Data Extract	Codes	Initial Themes	Candidate Themes	Main Themes (3) <i>Subthemes (5)</i>	Report by Research Questions
86	94	16	10	8	3
		EB-5 Ownership/ (15)/32 <i>Hotel Performance (8)</i> <i>Employee Selection (5)</i> <i>Organizational Alignment (3)</i> <i>Mission (1)</i>	EB-5 Ownership/43 <i>(HP+ES+OA+BE)</i>	EB-5 Ownership <i>- Organizational Alignment;</i> <i>- Hotel Performance</i>	RQ 1
		Job Satisfaction/ (7)/27 <i>Job Design (3)</i> <i>Pay and Rewards (11)</i> <i>Employee Development (5)</i> <i>Employee Turnover (1)</i>	Job Satisfaction/25 <i>(PR+ED)</i>	Job Satisfaction <i>- Pay and Rewards;</i> <i>- Professional Development</i>	RQ 2
		Guest Satisfaction/ (8)/19 <i>Team strengths (5)</i> <i>Work environment (6)</i>	Guest Satisfaction/18 <i>(WE)</i>	Guest Satisfaction <i>Workplace Environment</i>	RQ 3
		Barriers and Enablers /16 <i>Improvements (11)</i> <i>Barriers (5)</i>			

Note. Adapted with permission from “Using thematic analysis in psychology” by V. Braun and V. Clarke, 2006, *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 7-101 and “Using Microsoft Excel to code and thematically analyse qualitative data: A simple, cost-effective approach” by R. Bree and G. Gallagher, 2016, *All Ireland Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (AISHE-J)*, 8(2), 2811-28114.

Phase 6: Producing the report. This phase included a final analysis and write-up of the report. Stake (2006) defined a case study report as “a summary of what has been done to try to get answers, what assertions can be made with some confidence, and what more needs to be studied” (p. 42). The report was written in relation to research questions in a Microsoft® Word document. A template for a case study report can be found in Appendix L. To provide sufficient evidence of the themes within the data, data extracts were used as examples of the issue. Microsoft® Excel data was imported into a Microsoft® Word file and organized within it. However, Braun and Clarke (2006) suggested that a write-up needs to provide more than just data. Therefore, data extracts that help to understand the theme were embedded within an analytic narrative that compellingly illustrated the story being told. Braun and Clarke (p. 93) emphasized that “it is important that the analysis provides a concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive and interesting account of the story the data tell within and across themes.” The report with the findings is reviewed in Chapter Four.

Throughout the research procedures, the researcher maintained meticulous records. Personal thoughts, notes, comments, and reflections relating to the site and data were also recorded. Maintaining a systematic chain of evidence over the duration of the study was critical because “being able to access, present and explain procedures supports the ethical integrity and rigor of the research and findings” (Harrison et al., 2017, p. 16). Moreover, this process assisted with the integration and triangulation of data (Bree & Gallagher, 2016). Analyzing data by using these

Microsoft[®] Office products helped the researcher to stay organized and focused on the themes, gain an in-depth understanding, analyze findings, and prepare the final report.

Researcher Positionality

According to Sanghera and Thapar-Bjokert (2008), each researcher's positionality could affect the research process, outcomes, and interpretation because the researcher's positionality is inseparable from the research findings. Thus, it is critical to pay attention to positionality because it offers advantages and disadvantages. The general advantage of an insider position is that it provides easier access to the culture under study because the researcher is part of the environment (Sanghera & Thapar-Bjokert, 2008). This advantage produces several aspects positively influencing the research flow, such as the ability to ask more meaningful questions based on the researcher's prior knowledge, a higher trust level between the researcher and study participants, and the ability to understand the participants' colloquial language and non-verbal cues. The main disadvantage of researcher positionality is the possible biases developed by the researcher's experiences.

The primary research question explored how EB-5 business owners affect employee job satisfaction and guest satisfaction in a hospitality organization. Examining the phenomena of EB-5 immigrant investors in hospitality organizations

and how they influence organizational performance is a topic that overlapped the researcher's personal and intellectual goals. The researcher's idea that organizational alignment in EB-5 hospitality organizations needed to be studied is derived from both the researcher's own experience and the theoretical framework. Within the practical settings of EB-5 hospitality organizations, the researcher has previously observed weakened job satisfaction of service employees and, as a result, lower organizational alignment. Maxwell (2013) remarked that the touchstone of a researcher's own experience might be a valuable indication for a potentially successful research endeavor.

The objective of identifying the researcher's positionality is to better understand the researcher's personal position and avoid mixing the voices of the research participants with the researcher's personal assumptions. So, through formal inquiry, the researcher intended to develop knowledge about how EB-5 ownership influences the key elements of the service-profit chain of a hospitality organization. According to the service-profit chain model reviewed in Chapter 2, if the research validates that EB-5 hotel owners neglect to align their goals with organizational performance, low organizational performance will translate into low hotel guest satisfaction. To improve hotel guest satisfaction, EB-5 hotels must improve organizational alignment, which leads to employee job satisfaction and improved hotel performance.

Researcher's Relevance to the Study

Researcher Valentina Naumenko emigrated to the U.S. from Estonia in 2009 to unite with the rest of her family. This life change pushed her to seek a new career opportunity. Although she earned an MBA degree from Tartu University in Estonia and practiced human resource management for several years, finding similar job opportunities in the U.S. proved impossible due to her language and experience barriers. Learning English in Estonia is nonessential since Estonia's first language is Estonian and the second language is Russian. A new cultural fit added extensive stress and was a priority over career opportunities.

The researcher thought there was no better place to improve her English and to learn American culture than in a hotel, and she found a job in a hotel in Orlando, FL. There was no opportunity to work directly for the hotel, but Valentina became the night auditor through an agency contracted by this hotel. The shift hours were 11 pm to 7 am, and hotel management scheduled her only 16 hours a week at the rate of \$8 per hour. Due to the working hours, the researcher had little opportunity to meet a manager. There was no supervisor assigned to night audit employees. There was no communication with the employment agency other than reporting the number of working hours for her paycheck. After one year, Valentina started working daytime front desk hours. Mostly, the shifts were weekends, holidays, or covering someone's shift. The researcher recalls the main organizational factors,

such as employee compensation, workload, working conditions, and communication that could have been improved.

Two years later in 2011, the researcher accepted a job offer from a new vacation rental company in Kissimmee, FL. They needed a manager to help with startup. Similar organizational factors as those of her previous employer were observed.

The researcher can relate her own experience within these two hospitality companies. One was a hotel with 150 hotel rooms. The other a vacation rental company that manages 40 vacation homes. Both organizations were managed by EB-5 owners. Based on what the researcher learned from developing the theoretical framework of this paper, strategy, staffing, and system design factors were experienced in both organizations.

Employee job satisfaction was always central to the researcher's attention due to her background in a human resource management setting and her work on this topic for her Master's thesis. Prior to the Doctorate of Business Administration (DBA) program, the researcher had many questions about foreign leadership within hospitality firms. The researcher intended to immerse herself in the subject throughout the program. Conducting her dissertation research within the settings of an EB-5 hospitality firm was an ideal opportunity to address these questions, develop the knowledge, and assist others in improving conditions for success in EB-5 firms.

For this study, the objective of data collection was to establish the connection between organizational alignment, employee job satisfaction, and guest satisfaction. Research success depended in large part on how willing the participants were to share their experiences. However, when data collection started, some participants were skeptical to share their opinions because they did not believe that anything would be improved. Communication, understanding, and trust earned and learned from the researcher's personal experience helped to build up motivation among the participants to encourage their participation. Specifically, the researcher's hospitality experience helped to build trustful relationships between the researcher and participants. No opportunity to engage with the participants was missed, and there was constant exchange of work and life experience and feelings. It allowed the researcher not only to observe, but also to experience physical settings, participants, activities, interactions, and conversations.

Validity and Trustworthiness

According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2016), if employed research methods are reliable, the value of the interpretations of the findings will be higher. To establish quality and trustworthiness of the study in general, the researcher followed Baxter and Jack (2008). The research questions were clearly written, the selected methodology was appropriate to pursue the research questions, purposeful sampling strategies appropriate for case study were applied, data was collected and

managed systematically, and data was analyzed correctly. To establish the validity of this research further, several accepted practices in the field of study were utilized.

First, Maxwell (2013) emphasized that methods themselves must provide data validity and trustworthiness. Both quantitative and qualitative data were utilized. One of the advantages of integrating different forms of data was that the qualitative data can be used to assess the validity of quantitative findings (Fetters et al., 2013). Creswell (2013) suggested that when researchers locate evidence to document a code or theme in different sources of data or methods, they are triangulating data. According to Stake (2006) and Baxter and Jack (2008), triangulation of data sources is a primary strategy that can be viewed and explored from multiple perspectives. The researcher used surveys, conducted interviews, reviewed organization-related documents, and examined supplemental data. The case study findings were triangulated to ensure thick description and increase the trustworthiness of the findings (Mills et al., 2010). Practically, the triangulation process was based on the principles of idea convergence and the confirmation of findings to make sure that they were consistent.

Second, after the dissertation proposal was approved and IRB permission was obtained, a pilot study to constitute preliminary findings in advance of the actual study was conducted. Per Maxwell (2013), pilot studies serve some of the same functions as prior research because they allow understanding of the concept and theories held by the participants of the study. Therefore, both the survey

questionnaire and interview protocol were pilot-tested on a third party organization to determine if the methods detailed in the study were applicable and would work in real-life settings.

Using pilot tests helped to improve the interview process in many ways. One benefit from conducting a pilot study was that the researcher became comfortable recruiting the participants, presenting them an outline of the study, and calling them for action (i.e., signing consent forms, returning questionnaires, scheduling interview appointments, etc.). Also, the researcher had an opportunity to practice the interview flow and learn how to use the interview time effectively. During the pilot study, there was a participant who was reluctant to have an audio recorder used, and this experience helped the researcher to overcome this same barrier in real interviews. Importantly, some interview questions were modified because pilot study participants found them either not clear enough or difficult to understand. The final version of the interview protocol is presented in Appendix I. During the actual interviews, the question “Based on the survey questionnaire, what are the areas and characteristics of alignment you need to improve?” was not asked. Also, pilot test participants noted that the question itself, “How can you increase your use of these strengths?” was sufficient to outline the areas of improvements. Finally, the last two questions of the original protocol, “What are your priorities in addressing the areas of improvement and becoming more aligned?” and “What strategies and actions will you undertake to increase your alignment and performance?” were produced redundant answers. Therefore, they were replaced

with a single question, which was “What strategies and actions should be undertaken for improvements and increasing performance?”

Third, to ensure the validity of statistical conclusions, reliability of the assessment model for survey data analysis was established. Following Creswell (2014), Cronbach’s alpha reliability assessment model was employed to verify reliability checks for the internal consistency of the scales.

Fourth, to enhance data accuracy, ensure validity, and establish credibility, a peer debriefing technique was used. Creswell (2014) called peer debriefing an analytic triangulation. Two students from the Florida Institute of Technology DBA program were asked to examine the interview transcripts. There were two objectives for doing so. One was to ensure accurately transcribed interview audio recordings. Another objective was to assess the researcher’s assumptions. The researcher’s peers were given credentials for a Trint.com online account where both audio recordings and transcripts were stored. Once peer debriefing was complete, both peers presented signed evaluation reports. The reports confirmed that the researcher noted no significant differences between the five audio recordings and their transcripts and thus presented the data accurately. The copy of the reports can be found in Appendix M.

Since interview audio recordings and data validity were ensured through peer debriefing, no member checking technique was utilized. Although Creswell (2013) and Martinez-Vogt (2014) recommended sending interviewees a transcribed narrative to provide participants with the opportunity to maintain documentation of

their own story, “the experience of sending transcripts to interviewees raises several important ethical and research issues” (Mero-Jaffe, 2011, p. 243). One of them is that often participants are surprised by the poor vocabulary of their statements as depicted in the transcripts and lack of coherence in the discourse. Therefore, according to Mero-Jaffe (2011), “quoting things as they appear in the transcript may be hurtful to the interviewees, presenting them in a negative light and resulting in loss of trust between interviewer and interviewees” (p. 243).

Finally, Bloomberg and Volpe (2016) emphasized that the researcher’s previous experience may increase research validity because of the researcher’s required data collection skills. The researcher of this study demonstrated research skills and capabilities in the past. Between 2007 and 2009, the researcher completed a qualitative research study with mixed methods for her Master’s thesis. For this project, data was collected through surveys and interviews. Importantly, the previous experience and a strong desire to engage fully with the research and its participants increased the researcher’s confidence that the research was planned correctly.

Limitations

This study contained some limitations that existed with the research methodology, site selection, and sample size. The main limitation to this research was related to studying one site. Originally, the researcher aimed to study and

compare both EB-5 and non-EB-5 hotels, but due to limited access and availability, this study was based only on one EB-5 hotel. By limiting the study sample to one hotel, the researcher was allowed to get to know the EB-5 hotel well enough to obtain in-depth insights and to address the research questions, but not to directly compare it with others. Another limitation is that the participating site of this case study may not fit the prototype of an EB-5 organization. The Hotel was managed by a management company and all EB-5 owners were absentees. Because the study was conducted with the best data available, the findings of this dissertation are relevant and unique to the settings that were studied.

Some researchers were concerned with the lack of generalizability of the findings when a small group of subjects was selected in order to examine a certain pattern of behavior. To mitigate the possible limitation of sample size, case study methodology was utilized. The case study approach examines data on a micro level. Therefore, per Stake (2006), it is not uncommon for case study researchers to make assertions on a relatively small database, invoking the privilege and responsibility of interpretation, which is the major part of all research. Later, Zainal (2007) confirmed that selecting a small group of subjects in order to examine a certain pattern of behavior did not affect the generalizability of the findings, and its findings can be applied to larger populations in similar contexts and settings. However, findings, conclusions, and recommendations of this dissertation relate to examining the phenomena of the participating site and cannot suggest generalization to all EB-5 hotels. Stake (1995) emphasized that the real business of

a case study is particularization, not generalization. Bloomberg and Volpe (2016) added that “a caveat of case study research is that generalizability is not the goal, but rather transferability” (p. 47).

Another possible limitation of this study lies in both the theory and data used to investigate the relationship between organizational alignment, employee job satisfaction, and guest satisfaction in an EB-5 hotel. The researcher reviewed EB-5 investment as a subset of foreign direct investment and incorporated it with the service-profit chain model. Due to the EB-5 program being an understudied topic, it was not assumed that EB-5 investors may play different roles within the EB-5 projects. Since EB-5 investors own the hotel rooms and do not directly participate in the daily operations, there may be another theory to better explain the topic.

Moreover, there is a possibility that both assessment of employee job satisfaction and organizational alignment were affected by the high employee turnover rate. With this hotel having a nearly a 50 percent turnover rate, the majority of service employees participating in the survey were recently hired. As new employees, who knew little about The Hotel, they possibly could not adequately assess the hotel practices and values, and were simply happy to be employed. This feeling could create an overlapping with the metrics being measured and even modify their meanings.

Finally, the issue with the study involves the researcher’s own experience of EB-5 settings with risk of bias. Since the role of the researcher in conducting a case

study is critical and essential in the process (Harrison et al., 2017), researchers are expected to disclose personal biases regarding the topic (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). To reduce the risks, there was a goal to not criticize or judge the practices employed in EB-5 hospitality firms based on the researcher's prior experience. The objective was to gain insight into what and why, answer the questions that previous research did not adequately address, and to make EB-5 hotel owners aware of needed changes through recommendations for improvements. Also, as mentioned, a peer debriefing technique was used to minimize the risk of bias.

Ethical Considerations

According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2016), ethical issues can arise in all phases of the research process: data collection, data analysis and interpretation, and dissemination of the research findings. Before submitting the proposal to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for assessing the ethical issues, a certification in Human Subject Protection through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) was obtained.

To minimize the risks of ethical issues, supportive and respectful relationships without stereotyping the participants or situations or using labels were maintained. Following Creswell (2013), a consent form, which is central to research ethics, was developed (see Appendix G). This form indicates the purpose of the study and procedures used in data collection, the expected benefits to accrue

to the participant, and information about confidentiality. Producing an ethical research design to protect study participants from harm and to ensure their confidentiality is important. To protect the anonymity of participants, the researcher masked their names in the data. Importantly, the consent form informs the research participants about the right to withdraw from the study at any time. All participants signed the consent and received a copy of the form with the signature of both participant and the researcher.

Summary

Chapter 3 provided an overview of the research methodology that the present study employed to answer the research questions. More specifically, research design, data collection, and data analysis were discussed. Since EB-5 ownership and its impact on employee job satisfaction and retention is an understudied topic, using a single method is not sufficient to fully study the research questions. The researcher employed a case study methodology while collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. Based on collected data and its analysis, the researcher composed the next chapter of the dissertation, which is dedicated to the research findings.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The purpose of this case study was to examine an EB-5 hotel in Florida, as part of a larger inquiry into how EB-5 ownership affects employee job satisfaction and guest satisfaction in the hospitality industry. Previous research studies had not addressed these questions, thus leaving a gap in the literature. Finding new truth through research is important for practitioners, EB-5 hotels, policy makers, and the entire U.S. hospitality industry. Therefore, the rationale for conducting this study is to help practitioners improve the performance of EB-5 hospitality organizations by generating recommendations from research findings.

Chapter Four reports the study findings that contributed to the understanding of the EB-5 hospitality organization, its organizational alignment, and impact on both hotel employees and guest satisfaction. According to Baxter and Jack (2008), there is no one correct way to report a case study. Since data sources included surveys, interviews, and supplementary data, findings were first described separately. Second, merged results of this study were described using themes, which emerged when data sources were triangulated. This information was used to structure the research questions and to guide the study. A summary of case study findings from merged data concludes the chapter.

Survey Results

There were 49 survey questionnaires collected from participants. The response rate of this study was 72 percent, which compared favorably to Crotts et al. (2007) with a response rate of 66 percent. Due to some incomplete and unusable questionnaires, the study was based on 47 staff members. 85 percent (40 employees) of the participants worked morning and evening shift. While seven people identified themselves as management, three participants were supervisors/department heads. Thus, a total of 21 percent of respondents were considered as management. Front Office (front desk/concierge) was represented by 28 percent of the respondents. The Hotel employees were relatively new. While 71 percent of the participants had joined The Hotel within the last 18 months, 42 percent of employees were hired within six months prior to data collection. Only 13 percent of the employees had been employed by The Hotel for longer than three years. The majority of new employees represented the Engineering/Maintenance department (37 percent) and Front Desk (32 percent). Considering the fact that no new jobs were created during this time, this finding points to the notably higher employee turnover rate at The Hotel than hotels experience nationwide. According to the Deloitte Hospitality report, the average employee turnover rate among U.S. hotels is 31 percent (Lean, 2015). For the past 18 months, the employee turnover rate in The Hotel was 72 percent and at least 48 percent in the past 12 months.

Among the participants, the highest scores for Organizational Alignment Index (OAI) and Job Satisfaction Index (JSI) were reported by hotel managers. Hourly part-time employees displayed the lowest job satisfaction. Their assessment of The Hotel's organizational alignment was also the lowest. Table 9 displays indexes by the position. Maximum values for OAI and JSI are 185 and 90, respectively (see page 87).

Table 9

Indexes by Position

		Organizational Alignment Index (OAI)	Job Satisfaction Index (JSI)
	Base	Mean	Mean
Q1 Current position			
Base	47	144.4	71.9
Hourly Part Time	17%	138.9	68.9
Hourly Full Time	62%	140.6	69.6
Supervisor/Department Head	6%	151.3	72.3
Management	15%	164.0	84.1
Maximum Value	100%	185.0	90.0

Among The Hotel's departments, the Spa personnel were the most satisfied with their jobs. In contrast, the least satisfied employees were representatives of the Housekeeping and Front Office departments. Table 10 displays indexes by department.

Table 10

Indexed by Department

		OAI	JSI
	Base	Mean	Mean
Q2 Primary work department			
Base	47	144.4	71.9
<i>Front Office (Reservations/Front Desk)</i>	<i>28%</i>	<i>139.5</i>	<i>66.9</i>
<i>Housekeeping</i>	<i>17%</i>	<i>128.6</i>	<i>65.4</i>
<i>Engineering/Maintenance</i>	<i>23%</i>	<i>152.5</i>	<i>75.4</i>
<i>Management</i>	<i>11%</i>	<i>145.8</i>	<i>79.6</i>
<i>Pool</i>	<i>9%</i>	<i>151.5</i>	<i>70.8</i>
<i>SPA</i>	<i>13%</i>	<i>155.8</i>	<i>79.7</i>
Maximum Value	100%	185.0	90.0

Table 11 shows that daytime employees were the happiest with their job. In contrast, two percent of employees working a mixed shift were the least satisfied.

Table 11

Indexes by Shift

		OAI	JSI
	Base	Mean	Mean
Q3 Primary shift			
Base	47	144.4	71.9
<i>Day shift</i>	<i>89%</i>	<i>146.8</i>	<i>72.8</i>
<i>Night shift</i>	<i>9%</i>	<i>136.5</i>	<i>70.5</i>
<i>Mixed shift</i>	<i>2%</i>	<i>76</i>	<i>40</i>
Maximum Value	100%	185.0	90.0

A mixed shift is overlapping between morning and evening shifts. For example, employees work from 11 am to 7 pm or 12 pm to 8 pm.

Correlation Findings

The organizational alignment index was 144.4 (78 percent of the maximum value) and job satisfaction index among the employees was 71.9 (80 percent of the maximum value) (Table 9, Table 10, and Table 11). Since the value of the correlation coefficients between 0.8 and 1.0 indicates a strong positive relation between the variables, the results of the correlation analysis supported a strong relationship (0.865) between employee job satisfaction and organizational alignment in The Hotel (Table 12). It is worth noting that non-EB-5 hotels' employees in the research of Crofts et al. (2007) perceived their firm's organizational alignment much lower than employees of The Hotel. According to Crofts et al. (2007), "the employees of hotel A perceived their firm's alignment at 63.8 percent of its potential, while hotel D employees assessed its alignment at 50.8 percent." (p. 28). They also suggested that a low organizational alignment leads to higher employee turnover rate. However, the findings demonstrated that although employee turnover rate is high, The Hotel has a high organizational alignment score.

Table 12

Correlation Matrix

		OAI	JSI
OAI	Pearson Correlation	1	.865**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0
	N	47	47
JSI	Pearson Correlation	.865**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	
	N	47	47

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

To identify multicollinearity among the variables in the model, a correlation matrix was created (Appendix N). With a value between 0.8 and 1.0 or -0.8 and -1.0 indicating a strong correlation between the variables, 27 strong correlations between the independent variables were found. Multicollinearity occurs when the model includes multiple factors that are correlated, not just to the dependent variable but also to each other. It is natural to conclude that people consider the questions to be interrelated due to their nature and the order which they follow. For example, there is a strong correlation between question 5 (mission statement mentions guest service commitment) and question 6 (corporate values mention guest service commitment).

Stepwise Regression Findings

In order to evaluate the impact of the organizational alignment on job satisfaction, the researcher conducted a stepwise regression analysis with job satisfaction as the dependent variable and organizational alignment component

questions as predictors. The analysis automatically selected four components that have the highest influence on job satisfaction. Among them are:

1. conveying the importance of service commitment to the job applicants.
2. employee feedback about the management.
3. employees being rewarded for excellent service.
4. managers leading by example.

The R The R square, a measure of accuracy of the stepwise multiple regression model built on all organizational alignment components was very high (93.3%) (see Table 13). An Analysis of Variances (ANOVA) confirmed that the model was valid (p-value is near 0) (see Table 14). This finding suggests that the selected predictors were the main keys to employee job satisfaction, and according to the service-profit chain model, they influenced the value of services most provided to hotel guests.

Table 13

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Stepwise with maximum R	.966	.933	.923	5.194

Note. Predictors: (Constant)

Q24_Management_reminds_about_service_excellence_OA

Q38_Managers_are_rewarded_for_service_measures_OA

Q26_Hotel_asks_applicants_about_service_commitment_OA

Q37_Managers_lead_by_example_OA

Table 14

ANOVA for Stepwise Regression

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	10175.456	4	2543.864	94.292	0.000
Residual	728.419	27	26.978		
Total	10903.875	31			

Note. Dependent Variable: JSI. Predictors: (Constant)

Q24_Management_reminds_about_service_excellence_OA

Q38_Managers_are_rewarded_for_service_measures_OA

Q26_Hotel_asks_applicants_about_service_commitment_OA

Q37_Managers_lead_by_example_OA

Based on the aforementioned, the researcher built the following regression equation to display how four main attributes contribute to job satisfaction:

$$JSI = 5.176 + 5.822*Q24 + 3.326*Q38 + 4.541*Q26 + 3.259*Q37$$

Table 15 provides the equation coefficients. All coefficients are positive. As a result, there is a strong dependency between organizational alignment attributes and job satisfaction. This finding supports the main proposition of this study:

There is a relationship between hotel employee job satisfaction and independent variables, such as EB-5 organizational alignment attributes and their aggregated dimensions, which are strategy, staffing, and system design.

Table 15

Stepwise Regression Model

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	5.176	3.781		1.369	.182
Q24_Management_reminds_about_service_excellence_OA	5.822	1.046	.413	5.564	.000
Q38_Managers_are_rewarded_for_service_measures_OA	3.326	.953	.240	3.492	.002
Q26_Hotel_asks_applicants_about_service_commitment_OA	4.541	1.284	.276	3.536	.001
Q37_Managers_lead_by_example_OA	3.259	1.231	.200	2.647	.013

The results of the analysis determined that the model could be used to correctly predict the relationship between the groups of organizational alignment and The Hotel's employee job satisfaction. Organizational alignment questions were grouped as follows: a) strategy factors, questions 5 through 15, b) staffing factors, questions 25 through 41, and c) system design factors, questions 16 through 24. According to the model, the strategy factors, system design factors, and staffing factors are positively correlated with employee job satisfaction. Importantly, the staffing factor was the significant determinant (.889) of employee job satisfaction in the EB-5 hotel (See Table 16).

Table 16

Correlation Matrix. Group Factors of OAI and JSI

	Strategy	System_design	Staffing	JSI
Strategy	1			
System_design	.820**	1		
Staffing	.818**	.912**	1	
JSI	.769**	.853**	.889**	1

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

The regression coefficients are presented in Table 17. Importantly, the t-value of 3.631 confirmed that staffing factor has the strongest statistical significance on employee job satisfaction.

Table 17
Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	3.875	6.474		0.598	.553
Strategy	1.657	2.610	.079	0.635	.529
System_design	3.556	2.847	.217	1.249	.218
Staffing	11.706	3.224	.627	3.631	.001

The ANOVA test supported the validity of the model (Table 18), and confirmed that staffing is the main factor contributing to employee job satisfaction. It is natural to observe that the larger betas are associated with the larger t-values and lower p-values (Sig.).

Table 18
ANOVA for Regression using Dimensions

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	11318.523	3	3772.841	58.477	0.000
Residual	2774.285	43	64.518		
Total	14092.809	46			

Note. Dependent Variable: JSI. Predictors: (Constant): Staffing, Strategy, and System Design

To determine weak and strong areas of The Hotel's employee job satisfaction a priority grid model was built. This model is displayed in Table 19. The findings determined that factors, such as employee recognition, encouragement

of professional development, and employee-company value fit, influence The Hotel's employee job satisfaction the most. According to Figure 8, these factors were negatively assessed by employees. For example, employee recognition was 3.70, encouragement of professional development was 3.83, and employee-company value fit was 3.96. Also Figure 8 provides statistics for the questions presented below.

Table 19

Priority Grid Model

Question	Influence	Rating	Standard Deviation	CV
Q48	3.06	4.09	1.197	0.292660728
Q53	1.81	3.70	1.459	0.394682066
Q57	1.75	4.09	1.176	0.287971547
Q54	1.64	4.07	1.218	0.29971766
Q55	1.63	3.83	1.305	0.341018501
Q45	1.52	3.96	1.242	0.314077331
Q56	1.45	4.02	1.073	0.266874994
	1.837	3.963		

The influence chart (Figure 8) was created according to the priority grid model. The influence chart displays the areas that The Hotel should consider for making improvements. Employee recognition, encouragement of professional development, and employee-company value fit have negatively affected employee job satisfaction. The general job satisfaction of employees could be increased the most if The Hotel improved these areas.

Priority grid for Job Satisfaction

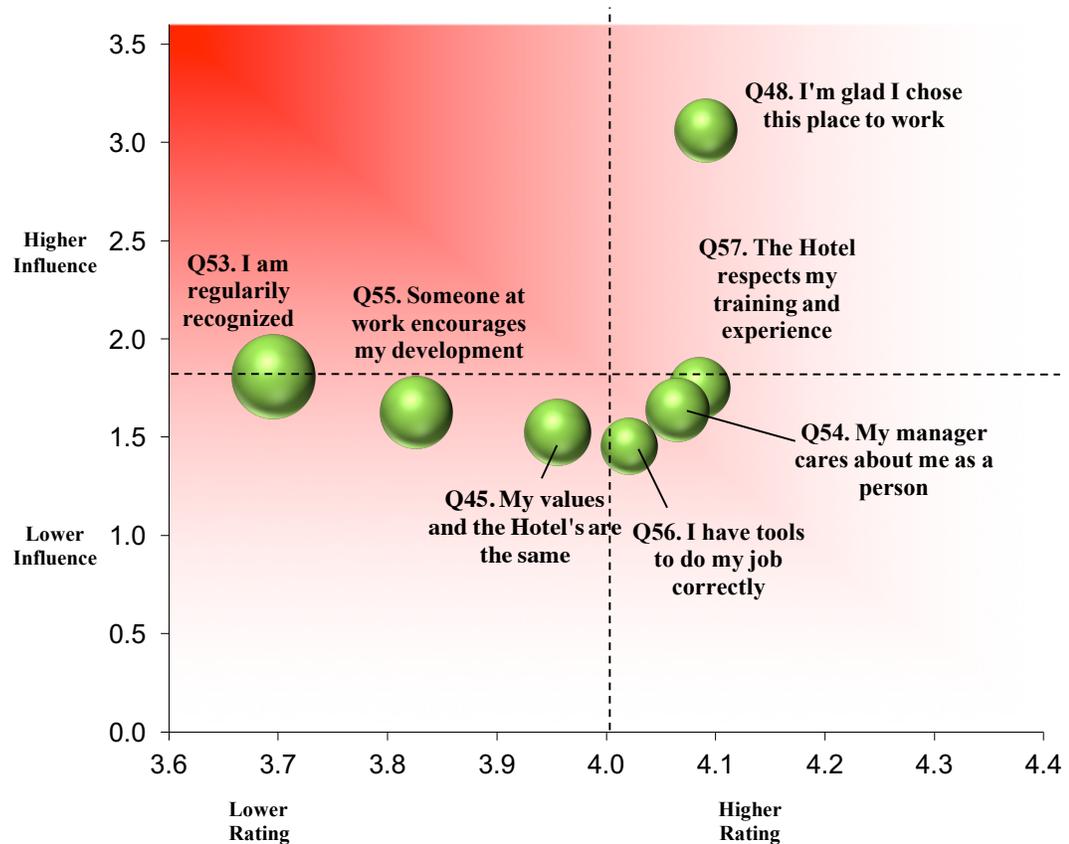


Figure 8. Influence chart.

Importantly, question 48 pointed out that the majority of employees were happy with their decision to join The Hotel, while many survey respondents still stated that the employee-organization values fit was disproportionately low. According to Figure 8, question 48 had the strongest positive influence on The Hotel's employee job satisfaction in general. To explore this phenomenon, another set of descriptive statistical analyses was conducted. Data supported that employee

job satisfaction was highly assessed by newly hired employees. Table 20 indicated that employees who joined The Hotel in 2017 experienced higher satisfaction with their selection of the employer than people who joined in 2008. Nearly 50 percent of The Hotel staff was changed in 2017. Sample size of this analysis was 47 employees.

Table 20

The Impact of Employment Longevity on Job Satisfaction

	Q45. Similar Values	Q48. Happy with choice
	Mean	Mean
Start Year		
Base	3.91	4.05
2008	4.00	3.50
2009	-	-
2010	5.00	4.50
2011	-	-
2012	-	-
2013	5.00	4.00
2014	1.50	3.00
2015	3.80	4.00
2016	4.15	4.17
2017	3.89	4.11

Cell Contents:

- Count
- Column Percentage

Interview Findings

The following section provides a detailed overview of the interview

findings. One-on-one interviews were administered to five homogeneous participants. The five interview participants were all hotel employees and shared specific characteristics relevant to the scope of this study. These interviewees were all managers who managed Front Office agents and maintained routine contact with guests. The participants were purposefully selected to explore the research questions. Open-ended questions were crafted to help respondents share their perceptions and discuss experiences about organizational alignment in The Hotel and how EB-5 owners may affect employee job satisfaction, guest satisfaction, and hotel performance.

Through thematically analyzing the interview data, the themes and sub-themes were created by pairing the codes. Data was studied multiple times to certify the accuracy and comprehension of the phenomenon. The data analysis process led to generating three main themes and five sub-themes, which were critical to dissecting the interview data to ascertain commonalities of the experiences.

Among the main themes were (1) EB-5 Ownership, (2) Job Satisfaction, and (3) Guest Satisfaction. Within each theme, sub-theme(s) were identified. For (1) EB-5 Ownership, sub-themes were (a) organizational alignment and (b) hotel performance. For (2) Job Satisfaction, sub-themes were (a) pay and rewards and (b) professional development. For (3) Guest Satisfaction, the sub-theme was (a) workplace environment. A description of themes and sub-themes is presented below.

Theme 1: EB-5 Ownership. One interviewee indicated that out of 496 hotel rooms, fewer than 10% are owned by the management company, and the rest are owned by EB-5 investors. The interviewee further said that EB-5 investors are people participating in the program to obtain “green cards.” Three of the interviewed managers confirmed that EB-5 owners affect the hotel, its employees, and the guests. One shared that EB-5 ownership lowers guest satisfaction and increases guest complaints. The main reason provided was that there are EB-5 owners who seem not to care about their investment. For example, if couches fall apart, they cannot be replaced “because the EB-5 owners reject any improvement requests...we have the owners who do not care. They do not want to invest, and their units are falling apart. These owners’ position is that they will not spend any money and they want the unit to be rented as is.” Another concluded: “people who don't want to upgrade is the worst thing that we have right at this moment, honestly.” Managers stated that while The Hotel can maintain the rooms, they can't replace things without the owners’ approval. An interviewee specified that because the owner’ authorization is required, some processes, like upgrades, repairs, and replacements, processes are often delayed or even remain incomplete.

In terms of an employee factor, EB-5 ownership brings confusion to the employees who do not understand why the rooms remain not renovated. A manager said that it is “hard to train every employee to understand those expectations...” Another added that “...when a lack of motivation, appreciation, and money come together, it all builds up and we lose good people. But there's not much that we can

do. Unfortunately, we have someone above us, and we need to ask permission, so it goes on and on.” This case displays that management has limited authority and decision-making power.

According to another manager, The Hotel cannot legally force owners to renovate. However, owners are told “if they can't stay up to standards that the company is setting up to rent their rooms, then we can't rent their rooms. What we do is we don't rent out the non-renovated rooms, so they're not making money.” The estimated one-time cost for a room renovation is \$10,000. While a manager mentioned that most of the owners understand the process of wear and tear and the necessity to renovate, another said that “there are many rooms that are still not renovated.” Yet another added: “when they renovate, we put the owners back into the program. It helps to get less guest complaints filed due to the old furniture and other furnishings.” Interviewees emphasized that rooms owned by The Hotel and not EB-5 owners are renovated, upgraded, and well-kept, and in the rare case guests complain about their experience with these rooms. All these rooms exclusively occupy several floors of the main resort building.

Sub-theme 1.1: Organizational Alignment. Under *strategy factors*, participants mainly discussed leadership. Participants noticed recent positive changes in the leadership style of their managers. According to one, The Hotel had previously suffered from poor management due to a lack of communication and motivation. The participant explained: “there was too much...lies. It was an uncomfortable environment. It was really tense. There was too much gossip

everywhere. But six months later, with this new management, I see changes.”

Another agreed and offered, “Our [new] Assistant General Manager has done so much for us, as well for me...He has an open-door policy. Employees can come in at any time. If you are sad, he will find 10 minutes to sit with you, he will come out to say good morning or good afternoon. That makes a difference. Same thing for the Front Desk Manager or the Supervisors. And I know he is still trying to make a difference for the new people when it comes to budget, skills or tools that will help employees. Since we have our Front Office Manager, I believe, we have more structure and management communication.”

Even though there was agreement that the new AGM provides more support than managers have received in the past, it was noted that management has to be more involved. For example, “managers need to say to our employees words like ‘thank you so much for your hard work,’ or ‘you have improved, please keep it up; you have made a difference here.’ Those words will make an impact on employees,” said an interviewee.

Among *staffing factors*, participants discussed issues related to The Hotel’s employees. According to the managers’ responses, the people are the main barrier that prevent The Hotel from improving. For example, “They are the only ones who choose whether to provide great customer service, communicate, or to be consistent or not. If employees are not motivated, they will not be consistent, they will not communicate, nor will they provide good customer service because all of it will not be important for the unmotivated employee.”

In addition to employee motivation, the lack of hospitality experience among the staff members was mentioned by the managers. One said: “A lot of the staff are first-time employees in hospitality, and first time in The Hotel. We need to explain to the employees that details are important and teach them how to work with the reservation folios, notes, and second effort logs.” However, some managers believe that hospitality experience does not predict how successful an employee can be. For example, “There is no point of hiring someone with 20 years’ experience if this person is not willing to learn new things or is not willing to work as a team member.” Another specified that “...not all of the agents come from hospitality. They have customer service experience, but not within the hospitality industry. The majority of them learn here.” What is important is to measure the applicant’s motivation when selecting agents rather than hire experienced prospects with hospitality background. In contrast, according to one manager, such employee selection strategy causes a communication problem among The Hotel members and prevents staff from proper functioning. Broken communication develops stress and leads to guest dissatisfaction.

Finally, The Hotel experiences staff shortages. Managers are busy and easily get distracted. This explains the time issue that staff and managers experience while on duty. One explained, “Unfortunately, I can come in and plan on doing X, Y, and Z, but then Operations will come in and, God forbids, a storm comes through and the power goes out, or there's an accident that I have to go to follow up on, or a guest from two weeks ago now needs immediate attention,

there's a call-out in certain departments, or a flood, or something like that. So, you can plan as much as you want to, but, unfortunately, the unexpected is a daily occurrence.”

System design factors are represented by the communication and feedback systems that inform employees of the service quality and the measurement system of service quality. To share the guests’ feedback and experience, The Hotel maintains the information board in the back office. One interviewee explained, “every time employees do an outstanding job, we put the comments up. We post a ‘fish’ on the recognition board every time a guest mentions the employee's name on TripAdvisor[®] comments, or even without a TripAdvisor[®] comment. If the employee goes above and beyond, and a guest shares it with us, we still give the ‘fish.’ It's a credit. We'll type it up, and I usually put in an email, which says: ‘this employee went above and beyond for this guest.’ We post it up to make sure that employees are recognized.” In contrast, another said, “I have seen good employees joining the company who I thought were the best ever, and I have seen how the company treated them. It was really bad. And, it turned me off. I was a positive person, but you see good employees who put their hearts into the job, come to work every day to work hard, and the company just doesn't recognize it. That makes you feel a certain way towards the organization. And that's not good for the organization.”

Importantly, the communication issue was discussed by the managers. According to one, communication “is the number one [issue] that could be as the

biggest strength of a hotel, as easily [it] can be one of the biggest downfalls.” For example, “when there are multiple projects going on at once, whether it's deep cleanings or buildings are being painted, landscaping, pool, construction, anything like that, poor communication affects multiple departments and parts of the operation.” The simple things can make the whole team better. While it may take only a simple note in a reservation or a simple e-mail so everyone can have the same understanding, people do not do it. A manager commented that lack of communication is caused by the lack of time that employees experience or other managers or employees just don't feel that it is important and don't leave any notes at all. As a result, employees can't handle situations with guests efficiently since there are not enough details about the problem. Another emphasized that communication is expected to be improved because “the number one condition for every company is the structure and communication. If you don't have this, nothing is going to work.”

Finally, it is important to note that what managers originally identified as company strengths (i.e., customer service, communication, and consistency), were also considered as areas for improvements when weaknesses were discussed. According to the respondents' points of views, these factors are vital to increase employee job satisfaction, guest satisfaction, and hotel performance. However, at their present quality level these factors do not favor The Hotel's interests.

Sub-theme 1.2: Hotel Performance. EB-5 ownership affects operations, customer service, and satisfaction. Participants explained that EB-5 owners who

fail to maintain the rooms affect The Hotel because guests experience older and non-renovated rooms. One said, “It makes us look bad. Guests see some units are renovated and some are not. And we have to explain to the guests that each unit is individually owned, and some owners choose to be a part of a renovation process while some don’t. But, it means little to the guests.” Another spoke about what it means to deal with the non-renovated rooms: “We lose money, we lose patience, we struggle. You want to make the guests happy. But because of these owners that don't want to renovate, there is nothing else we can offer to them... When we are sold out, we don't have anything, we have to give a non-renovated room to the guest, unfortunately. It's sad because these guests are paying a lot of money, taking their vacation time or time to celebrate something, and we ruin it.”

Another explained, “We would rather give the guests a non-renovated room than walk them out [cancelling the booking] and refund their money.” Non-renovated rooms are clean rooms because housekeepers still clean and shampoo them; they are just old. They have a box TV and the couch that's been there for a few years instead of only a year or two.” However, another stated, “when we talk about non-renovated units, The Hotel will receive complaints about housekeeping regardless of how hard housekeepers work. The guest will feel the room is dirty because it is not updated. Such rooms bring more and more problems, and eventually get to the point where we can’t fix the problems.” In contrast, one manager did not share the opinion of other managers that EB-5 ownership affects The Hotel negatively. This manager said that an EB-5 hotel just has to create

additional processes and steps that non-EB-5 hotels normally don't experience. This point was acknowledged, "The Hotel has many ideas and projects on how to keep employees and guests satisfied, but unfortunately, considering the type of a property we are, the changes take longer."

Needed improvements cannot be made without budgetary reserves. One manager stated that The Hotel's operation is negatively impacted by a constrained budget, explaining that operating under a management company limits The Hotel to retain only 20 to 30 percent of every reservation that comes in. After commissions are paid to Expedia, Booking.com, and other agents, there is barely any budget left. Consequently, this affects employees' salaries and activities where other hotels can afford an outside dinner, bowling, gratitude, gift card, or other recognition for excellent employee performance. A manager specified, "Regardless if this hotel is the biggest property from all six hotels, if we don't have enough resources, just like tools or skills, we can't offer our agents anything..."

Theme 2: Job Satisfaction. According to the theoretical framework reviewed in Chapter 2, strategy, staffing, and system design factors directly impact the employee job satisfaction. During individual interviews, respondents shared their perceptions about what job satisfaction means to The Hotel and some practices that management implements to maintain employee job satisfaction.

In general, managers confirmed without doubt that employee job satisfaction topic was important for hotel management. "The employee motivation is the key here. If employees are not motivated, they will not be consistent, they

will not communicate, nor will they provide good customer service because it all will not be important for an unmotivated employee,” said one manager. Another added, “it [keeping the employee satisfied] means everything...when you have happy employees, you have happy guests. They [employees] will be willing to do that extra. For example, on a stressful day they will be happy to be there and stay longer if someone calls out...This way operations run smoother.”

Since some employees mentioned in the surveys that their immediate supervisor does not care about them, managers were asked to share their perspectives about this finding. One participant emphasized that “this is first time I have ever heard of that. So, if the employees are not 100 percent satisfied with the recognition, we're all open for suggestions and ideas. I don't think that's ever been an issue with anyone... Obviously, we do our absolute best to balance. I think there's also a fine balance, and maybe some employees don't understand that there's a fine balance.” Another assessed employee job satisfaction as four on a five-point scale where five reflects the highest level of satisfaction.

When participants were asked about whether the company had a set plan on how to increase employee job satisfaction, respondents shared different opinions. Some said yes while others said no. One replied that it is least likely that there was a set plan to improve employee job satisfaction. In contrast, two others stated that The Hotel had a set plan, and they referred to the package of benefits as a part of the plan. One added, “HR wants to have the monthly team lunches; that's why

when they set the budget, they set a budget for team food and things like that. They do it because they understand the importance of team satisfaction."

According to the service-profit chain model, employee job satisfaction has a direct impact on employee retention. The survey results indicated that an average employment term in The Hotel was two years. The majority of the service employees surveyed were just hired in the early part of 2017. So, all the participants were asked about the main reasons why people leave The Hotel.

One participant named two main reasons affecting employee turnover:

"Some people simply can't handle this job because they get tired of dealing with the guests' complaints. Unfortunately, we are the face of The Hotel, and every complaint is addressed at the front desk. Another reason is the lack of recognition, teamwork, and property standards that may also influence employee turnover rate. These are the reasons why we are unable to keep our front office team and have to deal with the high turnover rate, which affects us tremendously." Continuing discussion about employee appreciation and recognition confirmed that the majority of employees do not feel appreciated. The statement about lack of teamwork as a reason for employees' decision to leave The Hotel contradicts what one interviewee stated, "... All departments and everybody is a team. ... The team that we have is like a family. So, we have a lot of new people ... always everybody gets along really well. I think we all are like super close together and while we might have communication issues, I definitely like the way we treat each other here. It is a lot better than what you see in bigger companies."

Importantly, three interviewees emphasized that people leave because they find better pay elsewhere. One stated, “I don’t think they [employees] get paid enough. I know there's a lot of hotels around us that pay more. In my head, I wouldn't move for an extra dollar an hour, but some of them are really young or if it does make that much of a difference, they hop over; it's almost the same job. Another agreed, “Agents find companies who pay [a] little more.” Yet another clarified, “Even 50 cents more makes a difference. Unfortunately, here, in Orlando, Florida, it makes a difference.” Two agreed that recognition is important to retain employees, adding that employee development is also a reason why people leave. “It is not always about money, but also about employee recognition... Here it is hard to move up because there is not much growth here. And if you can find both higher pay and more growth opportunities, why would you stay here?”

Another added that: “In hospitality, in hotels in general, there is always a lot of turnover... You can see a lot of people will come in, and not everyone wants to make it a career. Someone just wants a part time position while they're in school. Some people may just want it for the summer. So, it also takes a special kind of a person to deal with other people day in and day out. Some people are not people persons, so maybe they would rather sit in a cubicle and do the computer stuff, and some people are still trying to figure out what they want to do.” Another added that some employees may leave due to high work-related stress.

Sub-theme 2.1. Pay and Rewards. All the participants contributed to the discussion about pay and rewards. According to the respondents, front office

employee pay consisted of an hourly pay and a commission. The Hotel offered employees a package of benefits after a three-month probation period. According to one manager, “Among them [benefits] are tuition reimbursement, monthly employee lunch, recognizing an employee of the month, and associate discounts. These things help The Hotel to increase employee motivation.” Another added that The Hotel offered employee luncheons, discounts, and hospitality industry association (HIA) cards. “That will cost the company money. Those aren’t free things. The company buys into those... but maybe they just don’t recognize them.” More importantly, employees leave because “the majority [employees] do not feel appreciated,” specified one participant, and added “...increased budget for the front desk payroll and a little bit more appreciation for our employees would help a lot. For example, at least once a month, take them out to bowling.” Another emphasized that one of the main reasons why people leave is for a better paying opportunity: “Agents find companies which pay little more, that are bigger, and are more structured.”

The positive changes in the pay system after the new AGM came in were noted by the managers. Specifically, they mentioned improvements related to employee bonuses. An example was provided where an “employee gets a commission from selling the guests early check-in and late check-out options.” One added that earning the bonus became simple: “Agents can see \$160 extra added to their paycheck, basically, just for typing it in.” Also, employees were rewarded with \$5 for each comment on TripAdvisor[®] when the employee’s name was

mentioned. Regardless of the noticeable improvements, managers still expect an increase in the budget for payroll and other employees' expenses. For example, one suggested that increased budgets for payroll and corporate events would help employees to feel more appreciated.

Sub-theme 2.2: Professional Development. The majority of respondents indicated issues related to employee development. One expressed concern about the lack of guidelines and poor training programs that managers follow to help new employees integrate within The Hotel. In self-reflection, this manager recalled being thrown in to learn by doing because there was no training manual nor any training program available, and managers were expected to handle everything from A to Z. It was stated: "...It would be easier for the managers not to scramble and think about where to put this person and what should we do this day for the new people," if there was a training manual for each department. So, it was suggested that The Hotel needs to employ better detailed guidelines. It seems like the HR department is trying to help with improving the guidance, "but the guidelines that they're working on are constantly changing, and it's just not sticking."

Another mentioned that there is a lack of tools and resources, and that managers are very limited: "If we don't have enough resources we can't offer our agents anything more than what we have. Especially now, with this new team that we have; everybody's brand new." A manager continued, "It is a new chance to start fresh, start all over again to get new resources for the agents... Often, it is up to the budget, company, and permissions, but I think the beginning of employee

motivation comes from us: [the] Front Desk Manager, Supervisors, and the Assistant General Manager. At the end of the day, we are all here because of the Front Desk agents.” Another agreed, but admitted it takes a lot of training and time to explain to employees what is important since the staff members are mainly new and have no hospitality background. In contrast, a manager declared, “I get e-mails from HR every day or every other day promoting certain things” in terms of employee development. For example, the opportunities at other properties are introduced. Yet another stated, “Here it is hard to move up because there is not much growth here.”

Theme 3: Guest Satisfaction. According to the service-profit chain model, employee job satisfaction and retention affect guest satisfaction. One manager assessed The Hotel’s guest satisfaction score (GSS) on the scale four out of five, where five means that guests are completely satisfied. When interviewees were asked to name the most common guest complaints, all respondents indicated that the main cause for guest dissatisfaction is non-renovated rooms. One stated, “I believe those rooms have to be out of order. This is my opinion because it's not helping us on TripAdvisor[®]. This is the social media platform that everybody reads. And because of that, we have guests coming to stay here.” Another said, “when we talk about non-renovated units, The Hotel receives complaints about housekeeping regardless how hard housekeepers work.” A respondent reflected guest opinions, “we saw online it is a four-star hotel, but in reality, it is a one-star hotel because everything is old.” Another added, “A guest sees some units are renovated and

some not. And we have to explain to the guests that each unit is individually owned, and some owners choose to be a part of a renovation process while some don't."

In contrast, one manager did not agree that having non-renovated rooms is a serious factor for guest dissatisfaction. The respondent emphasized, "But we provide them with a good, clean, quality room, smile from all the agents, warm greetings; that's how we align. For the size of the room that they get here, our smallest room is a [sic] two bedrooms, two bathrooms, dining room, living room, balcony, hot tub, full sized kitchen suite, they're only paying \$150 a night and you can fit six people in there comfortably. Full kitchen, washer, dryer, that's how we do it... For example, you can't go to a J.W. Marriott for \$150 for a two bedroom, two bath suite with a full kitchen, balcony, hot tub, pullout sofa, and a dining room. They are not bad rooms; they just maybe have a box TV or maybe the microwave has old school colors and black frames around, but everything works fine. Everything is clean." Continuing, "we need to stay consistent. When they check into a one or two bedroom suite and then a year later they check into another two bedroom suite with older furniture, the big box TVs, and stuff like that, it's a reflection on the hotel itself. And it just brings the satisfaction scores down."

Besides the non-renovated rooms, participants mentioned some routine maintenance problems. One pointed out that there are some problems that can't fix due to the developer's error. More specifically: "There are two types of Jacuzzis in buildings three and five that are different than the ones than in buildings one and

two. From what I heard from maintenance, these Jacuzzis have different piping. And it looks like zigzag. When they do a flush like in any normal Jacuzzi in the buildings one and two, it flushes out, and it's good. But in these ones apparently, I think, each time they flush, it breaks up a little, and it's always going to happen. And how to fix it in the entire two buildings is unknown. And we can't fix it. Maybe it was even a developer's error.”

Sub-theme 3.1: Workplace Environment. Discussing the working environment, managers agreed that the guest service job is stressful. Then further discussions went in different directions. One said, “... at the front desk, we face guests daily who curse us out, yell at us...” In contrast, another believed that stressors in a hotel do not differ from those in any other customer service organization. More specifically, the interviewee said: “In my opinion, I think it's the same. If you've worked in retail, like at the mall, in a restaurant, or hotel, you can deal with the highest level of guest stress, stress that you get from your customers.” One manager admitted that it is stressful to deal with angry guests, for example, when employees need to follow up with the guest who was just checked into a non-renovated room, adding that employees should have no fear of these rooms because they are not bad rooms. Another noted, “No matter how bad the day is going or how hard it is, we still have to do our job: greet people, talk to people, fix the problems, and apologize. Therefore, customer service, communication, and consistency are the three items that you need to have in place, otherwise you're going to fail.”

In summary, these notes were a compilation of 5 interviews in an effort to answer the three main research questions:

- RQ1. What is organizational alignment within an EB-5 hotel?
- RQ2. How does organizational alignment of EB-5 hospitality firms affect employee job satisfaction and performance?
- RQ3. How does EB-5 ownership distinguish business performance of hospitality firms?

Following a report template (see Appendix L), the interview findings were organized by the research questions. The report template was used to make sure that no data had been missed during thematic analysis.

As was recommended by Bloomberg and Volpe (2016) and Creswell (2013), a data summary visual was developed to promote a better understanding of interview findings (Appendix O). Within this table, participants responded in direct correlation to the research questions that were presented. More specifically, the presented response rate and percentage show commonalities among the experiences of the respondents. The response rate of 40 percent and above was utilized in the study. Further, the interview findings were merged with the survey and supplementary findings.

Supplementary Findings

During the act of qualitative fieldwork, the researcher integrated data from diverse sources. Data describing The Hotel, its events, employee reflections, guest satisfaction, and benchmarking data helped to produce an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

A Hotel Meeting

According to Besner (2016), meetings are a microcosm of the company culture because they reflect the cultural behaviors, dynamics, and characteristics that are present elsewhere in the organization and employees' engagement. An effectively-handled company meeting may encourage new behaviors and drive a cultural change.

The Hotel management held a Front Desk meeting on August 28, 2017 in one of The Hotel's conference rooms. It was scheduled at 12 pm, but did not start until 12.25 pm. Ten employees attended the meeting. Among them were the AGM, Front Office Manager, Front Office, both morning and evening shift Supervisors, and six Front Office agents. This was only the second Front Desk meeting in the last 18 months.

The AGM started the meeting by sharing some company news. One part of the news was that The Hotel had just hired another full-time Front Desk agent. Then he thanked everyone for their hard work during the busiest time, summer season. Afterwards, the Front Office Manager took over to emphasize the meaning

of fine customer service. The main questions addressed in the meeting were guest satisfaction, incremental revenue, and employee policies and procedures. Appendix P provides an overview of The Hotel meeting, and Appendix Q describes the Hotel HR policies and procedures.

Throughout the meeting, managers tried to encourage employees to participate and ask questions. However, there were no questions from the agents. Also, agents were asked specific questions such as “Do you know why it is important to mark the time when the guest request was completed?” No questions were answered by the agents. When managers asked for feedback, one agent mentioned that the reservation software is old and uncomfortable to work with. The AGM replied that because it is not only reservation software but property management software, it is the best available solution on the market. Then managers tried to encourage employees to share their ideas. For example, they asked if employees have any ideas about how reviews on TripAdvisor® can be increased, but no employees shared their ideas. All employees were thanked for attending the meeting. The actual meeting took 70 minutes.

Findings about Hotel Guest Satisfaction

Based on the theoretical framework of this study, guest satisfaction level affects employee job satisfaction and retention, and EB-5 ownership influences both employee job satisfaction and guest satisfaction. While survey data provided employees’ opinion on guest satisfaction, interview participants supported their key points and contributed with their additional points of view. To explore the research

questions to understand the phenomenon that is being studied in-depth, supplementary data was needed. Therefore, guest satisfaction analysis was conducted.

The Hotel's Guest Service Manager is responsible for monitoring The Hotel guests' reviews, responding to the feedback, and maintaining The Hotel's online visibility. The Hotel maintains its visibility and reputation through six main channels including Google, Expedia, Booking.com, Facebook, TripAdvisor[®], Orbitz, and Yelp. To learn more about what actual guests said about their experiences and their satisfaction, online reviews left by The Hotel's guests between January 1, 2017, and September 15, 2017, within the six main channels were analyzed.

Within the selected timeframe, these channels collected 2,425 guests' feedbacks and ratings (See Appendix R). Fully half of The Hotel's guest reviews were left on TripAdvisor[®] (See Figure 9). The number of comments left on Orbitz and Yelp was insignificant so they were not included in the data displayed in Figure 9.

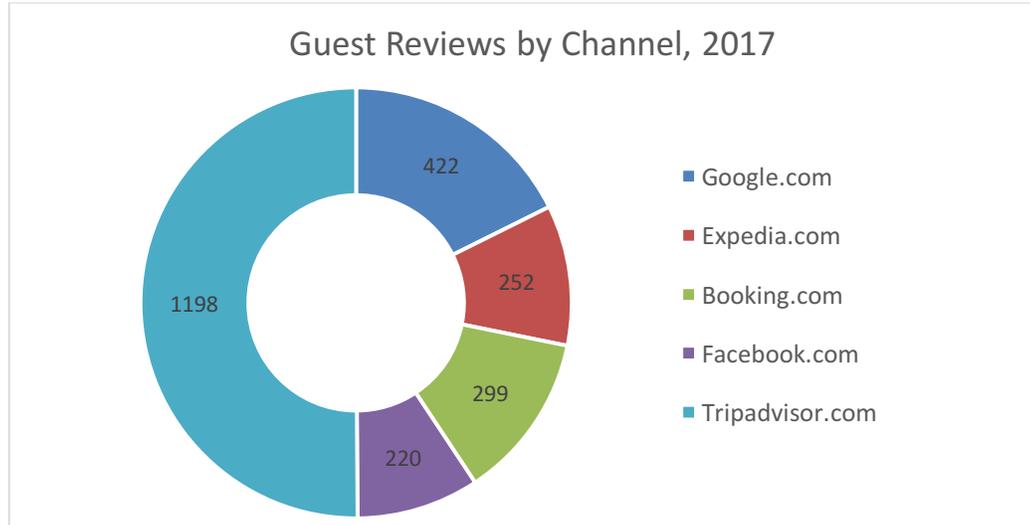


Figure 9. Hotel guest reviews by channel.

The Hotel recognizes the value of TripAdvisor® and focuses its efforts on maintaining its online visibility at the highest possible rating within this channel. For example, Front Office employees start their shift by checking the TripAdvisor® score. TripAdvisor® is important because it offers a score comparison among the same group of hospitality organizations. TripAdvisor® travelers select the accommodation based on its position among the same group of similar organizations. Throughout the two months that the researcher spent on the site, The Hotel's average TripAdvisor® position varied between 95 and 98 (out of 321). As Tripadvisor.com (2016) explains, the hotel position displays the hotel popularity ranking. The ranking is based on the quality, recency and quantity of reviews that a hotel receives from guests. The quality is explained by the rating provided by the guests. Recency stands for the notion that recent reviews are more valuable than older reviews because they give more accurate representation of how well the hotel

is meeting guest expectations. Finally, referring to quantity, the number of reviews is a critical indicator of the property's position on TripAdvisor® (TripAdvisor; 2016).

To calculate the average GSS, the researcher summed up all the 5-star reviews and multiplied the sum by 5, all 4-star reviews and multiplied it by 4, all 3-star reviews and multiplied it by 3, all 2-star reviews and multiplied it by 2, and all 1-star reviews and multiplied it by 1. After summing them up together, the total was divided by 2,425, the total received reviews in 2017. Based on data presented by Figure 10, the average GSS was 4.23 out 5. This figure also provides GSS distribution among the channels. Figure 11 illustrates how the collected reviews were distributed among the rating scores. The scores varied between 3.0 and 4.6.

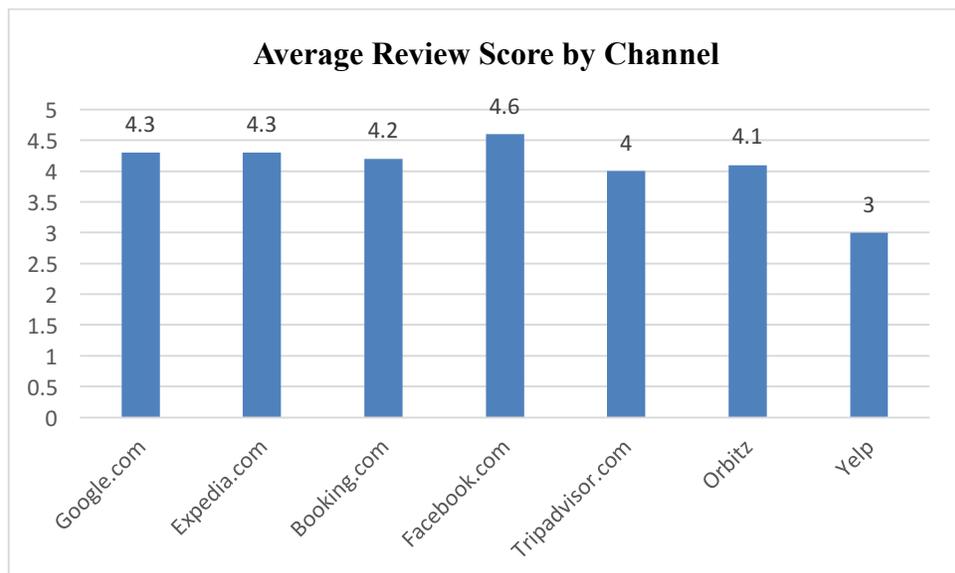


Figure 10. Average guest review scores by channel.

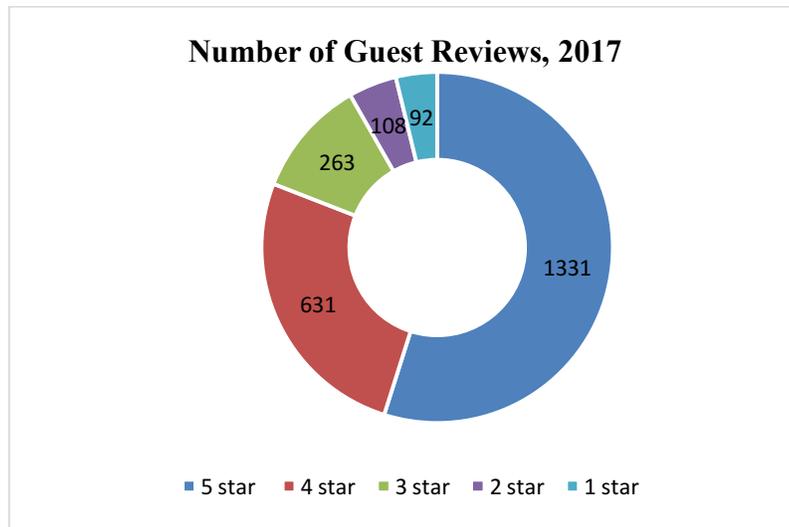


Figure 11. Guests reviews (2017).

While favorable comments' rate well exceeded unfavorable ones, nearly 31 percent of the guest reviews were complaints; specifically, 747 out of 2,425. The main concerns were broken items, old furniture, lack of cleanliness, and bad food (see Figure 12). According to Guzzle and Guzel (2016), these factors influence guest dissatisfaction the most. For example, clean bed sheets and towels are something that hotel guests do not experience at their own homes every day and give guests a feeling of cleaner rooms (Jones, 2012). The Hotel does not provide a complimentary daily housekeeping service. For fresh towels, guests are charged \$5 per set of fresh towels, and there is a fee for changing the bed sheets. The fee depends on the size of the room and can be between \$25 and \$40 per cleaning. Per the reviews, more than 6 percent of the guest complaints referred to rooms not

being cleaned daily. Also, Jones (2012) believed that broken items and old furniture may increase guest dissatisfaction with the room's cleanliness. Moreover, hotels are expected to replace every sheet and towel during the course of a year because good hotels never use a sheet or a towel more than a year old. He also added that mattresses have a life expectancy of five years, even if they are flipped regularly, and carpet, drapes, and furniture in a room should be no more than ten years old (Jones, 2012). However, according to The Hotel management, not providing daily housekeeping to the Hotel Guests enables The Hotel to keep operational expenses low.



Figure 12. Major guest complaints (2017).

According to Guzel and Guzel (2016), hotel food is a critical factor of guest satisfaction. Guests who “stay with their families and have a child consider the food option very seriously” (p. 195). However, The Hotel’s guests have expressed

dissatisfaction with onsite restaurants because within walking distance, there are very limited food choices. The Hotel offers its guests a café by the pool and a pub, which both serve breakfast, lunch, and dinner. According to the data, guests expressed their dissatisfaction with these food experiences at least 74 times. For example, a traveler who stayed at the hotel with the family in January 2018 left the following review on TripAdvisor®:

Much better places to stay. Not enough hot water to fill tub. Pool bar closed early every night and pool itself most nights. ATM charges \$15!!! Breakfast is served at pool bar at 8:00 am (terrible food) Or you could go to restaurant for breakfast at 8:30am. Shuttle to Disney at 8:10am. See the problem here. Wouldn't stay here. Especially if you don't have a rental car.

Importantly, the review above points to the restaurant-related issue other than the food quality. This review points to misalignment between The Hotel departments – specifically, the restaurants and transportation departments. Both departments are operated and managed by third parties, which are unrelated to The Hotel.

Finally, guest satisfaction analysis pointed to the group of reviewers who believe that the property's higher rating is inaccurate. For example, on August 18, 2017, an Expedia guest left a review named *Horrible Experience* and gave The Hotel the lowest possible score. The comment was: “we booked this hotel via Expedia based on the Expedia reviews on this hotel. I think Expedia gave the high

rating for this hotel without proper feedback. Our stay was very terrible and disappointing in lot of other ways” (Expedia.com, 2017).

Findings from the Market Analysis and Benchmarking

According to Thompson et al. (2018), in 2015 the hospitality industry of the U.S was highly concentrated with the top five companies earning approximately 42 percent of the industry revenue. Among them are Hilton Worldwide Holdings Inc. (14%), Marriott International, Inc. (14%), Intercontinental Hotels Group PLC (8%), Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc. (4%), and Wyndham Worldwide Corporation (4%). The same data source confirmed that the second-largest hotel market in the United States is the Orlando area, home of 489 hospitality properties and 127,420 rooms. The largest hotel owner and operator in Orlando, with 19 properties and 24,432 rooms, is the Disney World Resort. This organization alone accounted for 20 percent of the Orlando hotel market (Thompson et al., 2018, p. C-353).

This hospitality market background points out that the market is saturated with hotels. To compete, hospitality firms develop new strategies and strengthen their capabilities. Benchmarking is an important component to use when hotels are interested in improving employee job satisfaction, reducing costs, strengthening guest loyalty, and increasing profitability. Benchmarking in this study was conducted to gain a better understanding of The Hotel’s performance while supplementing survey and interview data.

First, The Hotel was compared to the average hospitality organization operating in the Orlando area (See Table 21). The Hotel was benchmarked based on the number of units/rooms, average occupancy rate, average daily rate, and the revenue per available room (RevPAR). RevPAR is the key performance metric in the hotel industry. Per Thompson et al. (2018), RevPaR is a metric the hotels use to track the demand for a hotel room in relation to room inventory.

Since July 2017 was the best month for occupancy of Orlando's hotels (*Orlando Sentinel*), the benchmarking findings display July 2017 hotel figures in both Table 21 and Table 22. To calculate how many rooms the average Orlando hotel had, the total Orlando hotel rooms were divided by the total properties within the area, which gave 260.57 rooms. According to the *Orlando Sentinel*, the average hotel occupancy rate in July 2017 was 81.5 percent (Russon; 2017). Statista (2018) reported that the average cost for overnight accommodation for the same month was 140 dollars. Consequentially, RevPAR, the revenue per available room, was calculated as the average daily room rate times the occupancy rate, which was 114.1 dollars.

According to Table 21, The Hotel, with its inventory of 496 rooms, maintained its occupancy rate below average while the average nightly rate was 14 percent higher than the market rate. Specifically, the nightly rate was 159 dollars per night for 353 guest rooms booked. The lower than market average RevPar shows that The Hotel was slightly less effective than its competitors in generating nightly revenue.

Table 21

Benchmark against the Average Hotel in the Orlando Area

Metrics	The Hotel	Market Average Hotel
Rooms	496	260.57
Occupancy Rate	71.16%	81.50%
Daily Rate	159	140
RevPar	113.14	114.1

Note. Adapted from “Central Florida hotels collect heaper daily rates in busy July, report finds” by G. Russon, 2017, *Orlando Sentimental & Statista* (2018).

Second, comparative analysis of The Hotel against the industry’s key players was conducted. Three resorts that provide accommodation for families within the resort near Walt Disney World were identified and compared based on six metrics. Among the metrics were guest satisfaction rating, TripAdvisor[®] position, number of the rooms (villas), number of employees, how many employees per room, and employee satisfaction with the organization. Table 22 displays the benchmark figures.

Table 22

Benchmark against the Main Competitors

Hotel Name	Guest Satisfaction Rating	TripAdvisor® Position	Rooms	Employees	Employee/ Room	Employee Satisfaction	Data Source
The Hotel	4	96.5	496	89	0.18	3.3	Hotel Documents
Wyndham Grand Orlando Resort Bonnet Creek	4.5	72	1549	700	0.45	4.3	Hotel Manager
Sheraton Vistana Resort Villas	4.5	68	1682	670	0.40	3.8	Hotel confirmed via Facebook
Villas of Grand Cypress	5	1	146	325	2.22	3.0	Hotel HR manager

The Hotel guest satisfaction and TripAdvisor® positions were adopted from TripAdvisor.com. Guest satisfaction is measured on a scale of one to five, where one is completely dissatisfied, and five is completely satisfied. At the time of the research, The Hotel's position on TripAdvisor® varied between 95 and 98 across 321 hotels located in the Orlando area. So, the arithmetic average of 96.5 was used to compare The Hotel with other resorts offering a similar type of accommodation. The number of rooms in each hotel was found on the official website of the hotel.

To determine how many people worked at the hotel, the hotels' managers were contacted by phone and social media. Managers also verified the number of hotel rooms. The metrics showing how many employees per each hotel room was provided to measure the workload of the hotel employees. It was found that among all benchmark hotels, The Hotel's employees experienced the highest workload.

Also, by using Indeed.com, employees' satisfaction with their workplace was analyzed.

According to benchmarking results, hotel size and workforce may relate to guest satisfaction. The smallest hotel maintained the highest level of customer service and guest satisfaction. No other hotel employed as many people as this top-rated hotel. It seems like the significantly higher number of personnel enabled this hotel to provide outstanding service to its hotel guests, which led to the top position on TripAdvisor®.

In contrast, The Hotel had the least amount of staff available per room and the worst rating and position on TripAdvisor®. This information was aligned with the interview data, which suggested that The Hotel suffered from lack of balance between employees/manager and workload. However, according to survey data, there were more significant factors decreasing employee satisfaction than workload. The employees seemed mainly concerned about the lack of recognition, lack of encouraging professional development, and differences between employee and hotel values. Also, among the reasons provided as contributors to employee turnover were low pay and guest complaints. While the employees of Villas of Grand Cypress experienced lower job satisfaction with a rating of 3.0 out of 5.0, this has not affected the hotel's superior position on Tripadvisor.com and an outstanding 5 out of 5 guest satisfaction level. Indeed, The Hotel has room for improving its performance.

Merged Findings by Research Questions

To explore the research questions of this study, data was collected through surveys, interviews, and supplementary sources. According to Creswell (2014), the quantitative and qualitative data are integrated in the design analysis through merging and connecting the data. Integrating the results is needed to triangulate, clarify, and elaborate on findings (Mills et al., 2016). The merged findings organized by the research questions are presented in the following section.

RQ1. What is organizational alignment within an EB-5 hotel?

Based on the theoretical framework introduced in this study, organizational alignment is measured by strategy, staffing, and system design factors. Survey participants assessed strategy factors with the score 4.22 out of 5, staffing factors with the score 4.04 out of 5, and system design factors with the score 3.86 out of 5.

Strategy Factors. The survey findings displayed the importance of commitment to guest service. It was emphasized that commitment to customer service is a part of the mission statement, corporate values statement, and each manager's objective. Managers almost always show their commitment to excellent guest service by visibly "walking the talk." It is important for the employees to see their managers "leading by example." For example, employees of Rosen Hotels & Resorts, another hospitality organization based in Orlando, Florida, said about the hotel owner, Mr. Harris Rosen, that his leading example, great care for the

associates, and giving back to the community make them proud to be a part of the organization (Thompson, et al., 2018).

Also, The Hotel managers have established standards of service quality for all aspects of the hospitality experience that hotel guests consider important. As a result, employees try to follow a set plan to consistently record how long guests have to wait for service, collect information about customer satisfaction, fix discovered customer service problems, and keep guests informed about all aspects of their hospitality experience. However, it is not an easy task since The Hotel is required to involve EB-5 hotel owners in decision making where changes take longer. Moreover, 80 percent of the managers indicated a low consistency level associated with the slow decision-making process due to the limited authority at The Hotel.

As The Hotel facilities age, guest complaints are rapidly increasing. As a result, 40 percent of the interviewees described the working environment as uncomfortable; 80 percent of managers confirmed that a guest service job within an EB-5 hospitality company is stressful. In addition, increasing complaints from the guests develop even more stress in a job daily.

The Hotel promotes an open-door policy. However, employees declared that they receive insufficient support from leadership. An employee review on Indeed (2018) supported this finding; it was reported: “[they] don’t really care about you; not good with full-time employees; managers are always negative; everything is through email; even when managers are sitting right next to you; no

open-door policy.” This finding is consistent with survey data findings and helps explain why hotel managers may not continually seek employee feedback on how well they provide support to employees.

Staffing Factors. The aspect of excellent customer service is an important part of the recruitment literature, employment interviews, employee selection, and new employee orientation. The professional background of employees is not as significant as their commitment to excellent customer service. The majority of the managers confirmed that The Hotel hires employees who come from industries other than hospitality.

The employee handbook reminds its employees about the commitment to excellent guest service. According to this document, the annual performance evaluation, training system, and empowerment measures employee commitment to excellent customer service and encourages employee development. However, employees noted that annual continuing education could be more focused on how to provide excellent customer service. It was also established by both survey and interview data that employee development opportunities are very limited within The Hotel.

The quality of customer service could lead to either rewards or discipline/discharge actions. To recognize employees who provide outstanding guest service, management has a formal celebration and gives rewards to employees with pins, awards, or other symbols. Also, employees are provided with a benefits package and incentives. Incentives include bonuses for generating

additional revenue and collecting positive guest reviews on TripAdvisor[®].

Notwithstanding the opportunity to generate extra income, managers believe that the low hourly rate is what pushes employees to leave the organization and seek employment elsewhere. According to hotel documentation, the average service employee of The Hotel receives \$10.00 per hour compared with the national average for non-management hospitality workers at \$15.40 per hour (DailyPay, 2017). An online review posted by an employee on Glassdoor (2018) also pointed that The Hotel wages are the lowest.

Importantly, the staffing factors play the most significant role in predicting The Hotel employee's job satisfaction. All interview participants agreed that employee job satisfaction is important to The Hotel. Regardless of the fact that employee job satisfaction is higher than in some non-EB-5 hotels, the findings indicate that employee recognition, encouragement of professional development, and employee-company value fit as the most critical areas for improvement. Improving these areas will likely lead to an increase of job satisfaction among employees and a reduction in employee turnover.

The study results pointed out that the majority of employees are happy that they selected The Hotel as a place to work, and this factor had the strongest influence on employee job satisfaction in general. In contrast, another finding showed that there are many who do not share the organization's values. It was supported that employees who joined The Hotel in 2017 experienced higher satisfaction with their selection of the employer than people who joined in 2008.

Nearly 50 percent of hotel staff was hired in 2017. This implies that recently hired employees were happy, mainly because The Hotel provided them with employment. This may have limited their opportunity to assess the fit between The Hotel's values and their personal values.

According to survey data, hotel managers remain under-rewarded for achieving great customer service regardless that they almost always show their commitment to excellent guest service by visibly "walking the talk." Survey participants believed that The Hotel needs to be fairer in rewarding the managers who help their departments to achieve better ratings.

System Design Factors. Data supported the hypothesis that communication and feedback are the main areas decreasing the score of system design factors. Most of the managers (80%) admitted there is a lack of communication among the staff. They suggested that improving feedback and communication should become an important part of the employee development program.

The main issue with employee feedback was that managers did not continually seek employee feedback. The Hotel did not utilize any employee job satisfaction surveys to learn more about their employees. Managers did not ask how well they provide support to employees. In addition, the findings indicated that The Hotel did not compare the customer service performance details among either hotel departments or other organizations. If they did, the details of this comparison did not appear to be shared across hotel departments and employees.

Finally, by merging the data of different sources, organizational misalignments were outlined. It is important to emphasize them to adequately address the research question about EB-5 organizational alignment and provide recommendations to practitioners. The sections below provide an overview of organizational misalignments.

- 1. Strategy Factors: Mission.** Per survey data, employees demonstrate confidence that company mission statement and corporate values strongly address The Hotel's commitment to guest service. While all managers stated that guest satisfaction is very important, during the interviews, only one interviewee clearly was able to describe the mission and values. Specifically, Participant I5 explained that The Hotel is a self-service resort providing a high-quality product at a fair price. The Hotel does not provide any luxurious services, but provides guests with good clean quality room, smiles from all the agents, and warm greetings. However, while employees stated that guest service commitment is the key, hotel practices do not seem to be aligned with this commitment. It starts with the managers' definition of a "self-service resort." Nowhere on the company website was it mentioned that The Hotel is a self-service facility and rooms are not being cleaned daily. The broken guest commitment and guest expectations start right at this point.

Also, for some interviewees, naming the strengths of The Hotel or even their own team was a challenge. According to research, company values and

corporate mission, when they “live” within the company, are considered one of the most influential attributes of employee job satisfaction (Kotter, 2012).

2. **Strategy Factors: Working Environment.** In general, managers admitted that the guest service job in The Hotel is stressful. Stress creates an uncomfortable working environment. Instead of discussing the importance of how to minimize stress, some managers just consider stress as an inherent part of the customer service industry. One manager believed that any retail, restaurant, or hotel employees are expected to deal with the stress that they get from customers. Lack of understanding from managers may explain why employees mentioned that managers provide insufficient support. For example, during supplementary data collection, one of the night audit agents shared how stressful it is to deal with guests at night time. When the Night Audit shift starts, there are no managers, no maintenance personnel, and no housekeepers on duty. There are only two Night Audit agents, and sometimes only one agent, and a subcontracted security officer. When the Night Audit agent faces a dissatisfied guest, for example, one who is not happy with the quality of a room, there is only one way to solve the problem: by moving the guest to another room, simply because there is no one available to go in the room to fix the problem. In the event that The Hotel is sold out, there is no way to solve the problem at all regardless of how urgent and important the issue is. The agent mentioned that this feeling

when you absolutely cannot do anything to help is the worst: “We are basically thrown here to be screamed at with no resources to solve the issue. Often complaining guests express their concerns to the daily shift representatives, but because nothing was fixed, the guest has no choice, but to seek assistance from the night shift. When this happens, it becomes extremely discouraging because throughout the day shift, in contrast to the night shift, the hotel staff has many options and variations to satisfy the guests.” Obviously, non-renovated rooms are key stressors for front line employees. Regardless, one of the leaders admitted that The Hotel cannot do much to reduce stress in the workplace. Normally, it is inexperienced employees who stress the most due to their high expectations and lack of understanding as to why The Hotel rooms remain non-renovated. The Hotel leader explained that it is hard to train every employee to understand those expectations.

It was noted that work-related stress turned the work environment into an unfavorable one. Benchmark results showed that in contrast to other key market players, The Hotel employed the fewest number of people per room. The staff shortage was indicated as a problem that increases employee turnover and decreases guest satisfaction. When there is not enough staff, guests do not receive the expected attention, which negatively affects their experiences.

- 3. Staffing Factors: Employee Policy.** According to the employee handbook, an employee must request an urgent time off four hours before the beginning of the shift. However, supplementary data pointed to an example when one employee provided a request for a day off 24 hours in advance, which was denied. The denial occurred even though the hotel had only 45 arrivals due to the low occupancy and three front office agents scheduled to be on duty that day.
- 4. Staffing Factors: Recognition and Development.** There is rich content on the corporate website of The Hotel promoting employee recognition and development. "Sky's the limit" is HR's motto. However, while two managers participating in the interview mentioned that the employee recognition system is intact and balanced, both survey data and interview data showed that employee development is a problem. Also, employee recognition and appreciation areas require improvements. When this mismatch was addressed to management, the manager was not aware of the lack of recognition. The manager emphasized that a fine balance was maintained, which some of the employees simply did not see. The abovementioned pointed out that some of the leaders and owners may not even see the misalignment problem. As a result, they miss opportunities to improve.
- 5. Staffing Factors: Empowerment.** During The Hotel staff meeting, employee empowerment was promoted. The Hotel manager said: "In 99

situations out of 100, agents are able to fix the guests' situations on their own. Agents have so many options to make guests happy." In real hotel life, there is a guide displayed at the front office explaining to agents what they can and cannot do. Per the employee guide, when dealing with the complaining guest, the employee is only authorized to provide the guest with a complimentary early check-in, late check-out, send an apology note, or send a gift basket to the room. The gift basket is made of snacks and soda. For any refunds, adjusting the rates, complimentary nights, or monetary compensations, the agent must ask for the manager's permission. While the managers emphasized that agents are responsible for creating guest loyalty, it is questionable whether this task is possible with the level of authority that The Hotel provides to its employees.

- 6. System Design Factors: The Feedback.** The Hotel managers mentioned some communication problems. The company promotes an open-door policy, but what does it mean for employees? Survey data pointed out that managers do not seek employee feedback nor provide sufficient support. At the meeting, managers tried to encourage the employees to share their ideas. For example, they asked about how the TripAdvisor[®] reviews can be increased, but no ideas were shared. In practice, employees may not share their knowledge for two reasons. One reason is that there may not be a positive consequence for employees to share ideas. This assumption leads to the notion that the \$5 reward that an employee receives for his/her name

being mentioned on TripAdvisor® is not sufficient to create the interest for generating more reviews. Another possible reason why employees remain silent is that there are no established or well communicated goals for knowledge sharing. The next example demonstrates how The Hotel management did not appear to model the desired behavior among employees. When an employee suggested modifying a package log to help agents more easily locate the packages in storage, the idea was ignored. However, this simple modification of routine practice could save employees time and reduce stress. During busy times, when employees are required to multitask and the stress level is very high, employees must go to storage to locate a guest's packages. Storing guest packages is an optional service provided to guests for \$5 per package. In general, storage has between 150 to 300 packages of different sizes, colors, and packaging. It is hard to locate the package by the tiny sticker with a four-digit number on the package. The suggestion was to add a column in the package log, where the agent registering the package can specify the type of package: box or bag. By having this simple note, the agent could use working time more effectively since there is no need to sort both boxes and bags to locate the respective number.

- 7. System Design Factors: Guest Satisfaction.** The Hotel stated that excellent customer service is an important part of recruitment literature, employment interviews, employee selection, and new employee orientation.

However, regardless of guest and employee feedback, some managers believe that a non-renovated room is not a significant issue. For example, one manager said that regardless of the rooms being old, they are not bad: *“Little things like sometimes a guest will see that this room has this while that room has that, like a different color of armchair. But when you explain to the guest that we are condo-owned and as long as they have two armchairs, guests understand and really don’t care. However, it could be confusing sometimes when guests don’t understand, but nothing negative, I think, comes from that.”*

- 8. System Design Factors: Inter-Communication.** The Hotel guests suffer from a lack of communication between departments. For example, one guest pointed out that the last shuttle leaves for the park before The Hotel restaurant stops serving breakfast. Such an overlap between the hours of operations among the departments suggests a lack of communication and agreement, which could cause conflicts in a workplace. Consequently, a negative guest reaction is reflected on hotel employees and hotel performance.

RQ2. How does organizational alignment of EB-5 hospitality firms affect employee job satisfaction and performance?

The findings displayed a strong relationship between organizational alignment of The Hotel and employee job satisfaction. All three—strategy, staffing, and system design factors—positively correlate with employee job satisfaction.

This finding, therefore, supported the proposition of this dissertation: *There is a relationship between The Hotel employee job satisfaction and independent variables, such as EB-5 organizational alignment attributes and their aggregated dimensions, which are strategy, staffing, and system design.* The findings pointed to four predictors of organizational alignment that influence employee job satisfaction the most. Among them are events when new employees comprehend The Hotel's commitment guest service, when employees know that their feedback about management is heard, when managers lead by example, and when employees receive rewards for excellent service. Importantly, the study revealed that the staffing factor influences employee job satisfaction the most.

The Hotel reported 80 percent for employee job satisfaction. All managers understood the importance of this. The results determined that lack of employee recognition, encouragement of professional development, and employee-company value fit factor negatively affected hotel employees' job satisfaction in general. Since these three factors influence employee job satisfaction the most, job satisfaction of employees and turnover rate could be significantly improved primarily by increasing the quality of these areas.

Managers pointed out that high employee turnover rate negatively affects guest services. While the average employee turnover rate among the U.S. hospitality organizations is 31 percent, The Hotel experienced 48 percent for the past 12 months.

Among the most common reasons provided for people leaving were low pay, lack of recognition and appreciation, lack of standards and structure, lack of development opportunities, and work-related stress. Even though 40 percent of the managers stated that recognition is in balance, survey participants mentioned that they do not receive regular recognition or praise for doing their job well. When employees are willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond what is normally expected to help the organization be successful and they do not receive recognition and appreciation, they become discouraged. Also, 80 percent of the managers stated that The Hotel working environment is stressful due to the staff shortage and quality of accommodations. Benchmarking results supported that The Hotel has the least number of employees, only 0.18 employees per hotel room.

RQ3. How does EB-5 ownership distinguish business performance of hospitality firms?

The Hotel's business performance strongly depends on its ownership. It was supported by the interview respondents and well explained by the supplementary data. For example, the owners of the rooms directly impact guest satisfaction with the quality of the accommodations. They also affect guest satisfaction with the service quality. When EB-5 owners do not renovate the hotel rooms, the units are removed from the rental program. Since these units do not generate any income, The Hotel's total revenue is decreased. Lower revenue leads to lower pay and staff shortage, which decrease employee job satisfaction and, eventually, guest satisfaction. Several limitations related to EB-5 ownership, including lack of

authority, slow the process of decision making, and the lack of the owners' motivation were suggested. For example, The Hotel's managers cannot solely decide to renovate rooms or flexibly to adjust room rates to changes in market demand. For example, Rosen Hotels & Resorts maintains RevPAR, in part, through yield management, and when the market requires, they drop their rates (Thompson, et al., 2018). The company policy is focused on making sure that their hotel has "heads in beds." It is important for them to maintain hotel occupancy to generate revenue, so their employees have jobs, and they do it at any price. "You cannot generate revenue from an empty room," said Mr. Rosen (Thompson, et al., 2018, p. C-354). This practice is not followed at The Hotel.

Another finding demonstrated a strong commitment to guest satisfaction. Some employees even stated that customer service is a key strength of The Hotel. The Hotel managers have established standards of service quality. In addition, employees have set procedures to educate the guests about their hospitality experience, so guests know what to expect. For example, within 60 minutes after guests check in, the Front Office Agent reaches out to the guest to ask about the service quality. At check-out, employees are required to encourage the guest to leave a review on the TripAdvisor[®] website, where The Hotel focuses its efforts to maintain its visibility at the highest possible ranking.

Notwithstanding the fact that employees demonstrated confidence that The Hotel facility, room layout, temperature, lighting, and environmental conditions are "customer friendly," managers confirmed that hotel customer service requires

improvement. At the time of data collection, The Hotel was ranked by TripAdvisor[®] between 95 and 98 (out of 321). Among 2,425 online guest reviews, 747 feedbacks (31 percent) were guest complaints. However, the average of The Hotel's GSS was 4.23 out of 5. Importantly, some guests of The Hotel raised a concern about the online review quality and validity.

The main guest complaints were related to the non-renovated hotel rooms. This is consistent with the interviewee experiences: "when we talk about non-renovated units, The Hotel will receive complaints about housekeeping regardless how hard housekeepers work." Guests complained about lack of cleanliness of the rooms and even more complaints were submitted about lack of maintenance. Analysis of guest satisfaction based on online reviews confirmed that the broken items, old furniture, and lack of cleanliness influence guest dissatisfaction the most.

Maintaining hotel rooms requires funding. When EB-5 owners refuse to invest in their properties, the hotel is unable to provide needed care and attention even though these rooms significantly reduce guest satisfaction. While lack of maintenance influences guest dissatisfaction, there is another factor making guests upset that needs to be considered. Hotel rooms are not being cleaned daily. It is obvious that, with the small number of staff members employed, providing daily housekeeping is next to impossible. If guests like to get fresh towels, there is a cost. The price for changing the sheets varies between 25 and 40 dollars per service. While The Hotel aims to keep organizational expenses low with this approach, clean bed sheets and towels changed daily, something that hotel guests do not

experience at home every day, give guests a feeling of a cleaner room. Moreover, if The Hotel does not provide a full-service lodging facility, it is misleading to call The Hotel a resort.

In addition, the findings pointed to other issues that hotel guests experience during their stay. One of them is food options. Since there are very limited food choices within walking distance of The Hotel, guests consider their food experiences seriously as indicated by previous research. Besides the quality of the food, guests also complain about the lack of communication between departments. The main complaint is the time overlapping between breakfast and the shuttle to the theme parks. Some guests are not happy choosing between having breakfast or taking the complimentary shuttle as they expect shuttle service to be available after breakfast is over.

In closing, low guest satisfaction has multiple negative effects on The Hotel. Due to the increased level of job related stress, employees experience lower motivation and productivity. As a result, The Hotel faces a lower employee retention level. With the annual turnover rate of nearly 50 percent, providing excellent guest service with the employees who lack hospitality experience and guest service training is not an easy task for The Hotel. The Hotel faces lower nightly rates, lower guest satisfaction, and increased guest refunds. The refunds lead to the loss of revenue and together with the negative reviews, which lead to an increase in vacancy. Altogether, this means lower business performance and profitability.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to report the data analysis and research findings as they pertain to the themes. The steps of data analysis described in Chapter 3 were used to arrive at the research findings. First, survey data was analyzed. Second, interview data analysis was conducted. For better understanding of the phenomena, supplementary data was analyzed. All findings were merged to answer the research questions, and merged findings were presented in response to each of the research questions. Based on the results presented in this chapter, recommendations on how an EB-5 hotel can improve employee job satisfaction, reduce turnover rate, and maintain a higher guest satisfaction level were developed. Conclusions, recommendations for the practitioners, and implications for future research are discussed in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

The hospitality industry continues to thrive and grow each year with millions of tourists and business visitors. The exceptional quality of guest services that hospitality organizations provide helps make the U.S. the top world destination for international travelers. At the same time, the hospitality industry is one of the largest employers in the U.S. The industry's fast growth has been stimulated, in part, by large inward FDI including EB-5 investment as previously described. Today, the hospitality industry receives one of the largest portions of EB-5 capital.

Considering the importance of the hospitality industry in the U.S. economy combined with the fact that more and more hospitality organizations are financed by EB-5 immigrant investors, the purpose of this research was to examine the effect of EB-5 ownership on employee job satisfaction, guest satisfaction, and hotel performance at one Orlando-based hotel. Previous research suggested that employing the concept of organizational alignment enabled hospitality organizations to improve their performance. To the researcher's best knowledge, organizational alignment and linkages of the service-profit chain model within

hospitality companies financed by EB-5 investment capital is a topic that had not previously been studied.

Organizational alignment lies at the heart of success of any business because it adds meaning to every customer interaction. Past research placed the organizational alignment factors into three groups: business strategy and tactics, staffing policies and procedures, and system design factors. When companies managed these factors in a coordinated way, their satisfied employees reinforced the customer experience and satisfaction. However, only a few organizations spend enough time and effort to ensure their actions, policies, and procedures align with the mission. Focusing primarily on maximizing profits, business owners often neglect to align internal resources with employee satisfaction and company performance. As a result, hotel employees may suffer from poor management and decreased job satisfaction, which can negatively impact guest satisfaction and in turn, hotel performance.

High performance of service employees providing exceptional customer service is important in any business and is vital in the hospitality industry. The literature suggests that satisfied employees increase the value of services that fulfilled the needs of guests and even exceeded their expectations. Thus, satisfied customers would, in turn, become loyal to the company, leading to improved business performance, such as revenue and profitability growth. These linkages fit within the Heskett et al.'s (1994) service-profit chain model, which was adopted by Crofts et al. (2007) in terms of adding organizational alignment factors.

Organizational alignment factors stand for the high-quality support services and policies, which enable employees to deliver results to guests. Organizational alignment had a strong effect on employee job satisfaction and behavior; therefore, when company policies, procedures, and systems align with the company mission, employee job satisfaction is higher, employee turnover rate is lower, and hotel guests are more satisfied.

The research questions guiding this single, instrumental case study focused on examining the links of the service-profit chain model and relationships between EB-5 ownership and hospitality firm performance. Through the prism of organizational alignment, the relationships between EB-5 ownership and The Hotel's employee job satisfaction, guest satisfaction and performance of the EB-5 hotel were examined. The participating site was a resort hotel located near the popular Disney World in Orlando, Florida. Managed by a property management company, the resort features 496 rooms and 89 on-site employees. Data were collected between July 1 and August 31, 2017.

This study was based on primary and secondary data, and information was collected through surveys, individual interviews, and supplementary sources. While both hotel employees and their managers participated in the survey, only the managers were interviewed. First, 47 service employees were surveyed. Secondly, one-on-one interviews were administered to five homogeneous participants, the hotel managers who had daily contact with hotel guests. Secondary data were obtained from supplementary sources such as company documents and events,

guest satisfaction reviews, and hotel benchmarking. Public websites, such as Tripadvisor.com and Google.com, aided in collecting secondary data.

In terms of data collection instruments, a structured and self-administered questionnaire, adopted from Crotts et al. (2007), was used to collect survey data. The survey questionnaire consisted of two main parts. The first part consisted of four employment-related questions designed to collect background information of hotel respondents, such as their position, length of stay, and shift. The second part, 55 questions, included 18 questions about employee job satisfaction as well as 37 questions detecting the level of organizational alignment in The Hotel. The interview protocol with pre-determined, open-ended questions were created and used for the interviews.

Primary research data was analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Survey data was analyzed with descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha test, correlation analysis, regression analysis, and Analysis of Variances (ANOVA). To analyze interview data, the researcher closely followed the guidelines of thematic analysis for a single, instrumental case study per Braun and Clarke (2006).

Summary of Findings

Central to the study was understanding if and how EB-5 ownership distinguishes employee job satisfaction, guest satisfaction, and business performance of one hotel located in Orlando, Florida. To develop this knowledge,

two models were integrated and tested within the hotel setting, where 90 percent of the rooms were owned by EB-5 investors: 1) service-profit chain, and 2) organizational alignment. The results empirically supported that the linkages of this adopted model were functional. For example, a strong relationship between EB-5 hotel employee job satisfaction and organizational alignment was found. More specifically, strategy, staffing, and system design factors shaped by EB-5 ownership influenced the linkages of the service-profit chain within the setting of the EB-5 hotel. The research questions were explored while studying these connections. As a result, the research pointed to the uniqueness of one EB-5 hospitality organization and its performance.

The study findings suggest that both organizational alignment and employee job satisfaction of the EB-5 hotel are higher than the same metrics of non-EB-5 hotels studied by Crotts et al. (2007). According to Crotts et al., the hotel with a lower level of organizational alignment is expected to perform less effectively than the hotel with higher organizational alignment. Based on this notion, the EB-5 hotel was expected to have higher employee job satisfaction level and lower turnover rate than the hotels in the Crotts et al. study. However, the results of this study pointed out that, while employee job satisfaction in this EB-5 was higher than in some non-EB-5 hotels, the employee turnover rate was also significantly higher. Findings reported that employees leave The Hotel due to lack of recognition, lack of professional development and poor employee-hotel value fit. Nearly 50 percent of the staff was hired in 2017. Data supported that newly hired employees assess their

job satisfaction at the highest level, and higher than the employees who were employed longer. Due to the limited time the new employee has spent with the company, it is not easy to assess the fit between The Hotel's values and their personal values and adequately measure job satisfaction. The same logic may be used to explain the high level of organizational alignment of The Hotel.

To investigate the performance of the EB-5 hotel further, benchmarking was utilized. The data supported that The Hotel had a lower RevPAR (revenue per available room) rate, and generated revenue less effectively than its competitors. Also, among the market's main players, The Hotel had the lowest guest satisfaction score and lowest position on TripAdvisor[®]. The study findings suggested that guest satisfaction may not be influenced solely or primarily by employee job satisfaction and retention. For example, this dissertation benchmarked companies with a high employee job satisfaction and a low guest satisfaction, or a low employee job satisfaction and a top position on TripAdvisor[®], i.e., the highest guest satisfaction. Also, EB-5 ownership influenced The Hotel guest satisfaction through renovated or non-renovated hotel rooms. Therefore, study findings suggested the need to redefine the cause and effect model displayed in Chapter 1 (Figure 5) by adding a link for Service Concept.

While there are many definitions for service concept, Edvardsson & Olsson (1996) identified service concept as understanding the needs of customers in the target market and aligning this with the organization's strategy and competitive intentions. Goldstein et al. (2002) likened the service concept to the "customer

benefit package” or the things that provide benefit and value to the customer. In the context of this study, service concept is referred to as simply, a focus on results for customers. Figure 13 introduces the revised model.

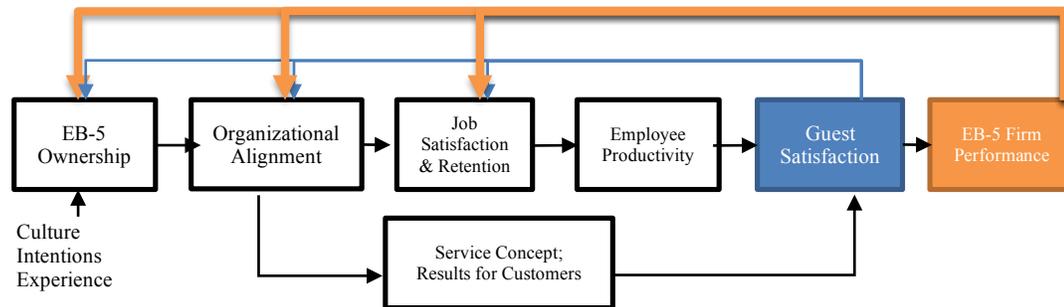


Figure 13. Redefined conceptual cause and effect model of organizational alignment in EB-5 hospitality firms.

Previous research suggested that since the EB-5 investor’s main goal is to receive permanent residency in the U.S., financial returns on EB-5 investments are often negligible, and service value decreases the hotel’s guest satisfaction (Mahmoodi and deRoos, 2015). While this study supported that The Hotel had the lowest guest satisfaction among its competitors, there was not evidence that EB-5 owners directly impact hotel performance. Since EB-5 owners are absentees and did not participate in the study, it was also impossible to conclude whether cultural differences, entrepreneurial intentions or international experience may explain the behavior and attitude of EB-5 owners. However, the study found that some EB-5 owners may have non-entrepreneurial intentions since, ignoring the needs of The

Hotel guests, they are reluctant to invest in renovating their properties. One can conclude that these EB-5 owners are guided mainly by USCIS regulations. And because the EB-5 visa program requires each investor to create ten jobs and invest \$500 000 and not to keep employees or guests happy, EB-5 owners may have little interest to do so.

Finally, it was found that organizational alignment of The Hotel was shaped by both EB-5 ownership and the management company. Research supported that there is a gap in the relationship between the EB-5 owners and the management company that decreases The Hotel's performance. For example, The Hotel underperformed against its competitors in generating revenue. One reason is that limited authority did not allow The Hotel solely to adjust the rates for changes in market demand. Because there is no balance between price and service quality, The Hotel faces increased vacancy. Importantly, it was suggested that performance of The Hotel can be improved if the management company reinforces strategy, staffing, and system design factors used to operate The Hotel.

Discussion

The review of the literature placed a foundation behind EB-5 ownership and its impact on company performance. The theoretical framework developed connections between the investment of foreign immigrants through the EB-5 visa program, organizational alignment, employee job satisfaction, customer

satisfaction, and business performance of the firm financed by them. From this knowledge, the research questions were developed to guide this case study. The results of this study were described as the survey findings, themes formed from interviews, notes generated from document reviews, and hotel benchmarking. The findings emerged when the data was triangulated. Further, the results are discussed in relation to the applicable research questions.

RQ1. What is organizational alignment within an EB-5 hotel?

Based on the theoretical framework introduced in this study, the level of organizational alignment of The Hotel was measured to be 78.1 percent, which is higher than the organizational alignment within non-EB-5 hotels from the study of Crotts et al. (2007), where organizational alignment measurements varied between 50.8 percent and 63.8 percent. This finding challenged the notion that an EB-5 hotel will perform less effectively than a non-EB-5 hotel.

Strategy factors were assessed higher than the other factors of organizational alignment. Survey and interview findings showed the importance of customer service for hotel staff members. Commitment to great customer service is part of the mission statement, corporate values statement, written guidelines, and, as reported, each manager's objectives. When asked, hotel managers were challenged to name the company's strengths and values, and restate the mission statement. The findings supported that The Hotel has not practiced comparing customer service performance details among other organizations, and this can help explain the lack of management awareness. In addition, the company website does

not inform its visitors that this is a self-service hotel, thus rooms are not cleaned daily. Also, regardless of guest and employee feedback, some managers believe that a non-renovated room is not a significant issue. Moreover, The Hotel hires employees from outside the hospitality industry. Obviously, this enables The Hotel to pay lower wages to an inexperienced laborer. However, it raises a concern about whether these employees are capable of providing excellent customer service and achieving desired outcomes – and if so, how soon and for how long?

Another key finding was related to the EB-5 hotel work environment. It was admitted that the work environment for service employees is not comfortable and is stressful. As The Hotel facilities age, the increasing guest complaints create more stress for service employees, which affects their motivation and productivity. The main barrier of preventing The Hotel from maintaining the quality of services and rooms are the EB-5 owners, who have not proactively invested in improvements and hotel renovation. In addition, The Hotel experiences a staff shortage. The benchmarking results pointed out that the EB-5 hotel had the lowest number of employees per guest room, which pointed to work overload. Servicing the resort guests when there is not enough help is stressful for the front desk agents. In addition, employees mentioned that the reservation management software utilized by the hotel is old, and it is not easy to work with it. The hotel tries to address this problem by bringing in more front desk agents during middle shifts, which are the shifts overlapping between morning and evening shifts. These employees work from 11 am to 7 pm or 12 pm to 8 pm. Importantly, the study found that mixed

shift employees were the least satisfied with their job. The employees also mentioned that managers provide insufficient support in resolving the issues. As a result, the staff shortage increases the employee turnover rate and decreases guest satisfaction.

Staffing factors of the EB-5 hotel are unique, and in some cases, contradictory. On one hand, the company policy provided information about the importance of excellent customer service, which is an important part of recruitment literature, employment interviews, employee selection, and new employee orientation. On the other hand, because hiring managers believe that the professional background of employees is not significant, and inexperienced employees may deliver higher commitment to excellent customer service, the majority of employees come from outside the hospitality industries. In practice, to train new employees who have never experienced a hotel job is very time and effort consuming, and during the training, there are a lot of communication problems that prevent the rest of the staff from properly functioning.

The employee handbook reminds employees about the commitment to excellent guest service. According to this document, the annual performance evaluation measures employee commitment to excellent customer service and the training system encourages employee development. However, employees noted that annual continuing education does little to help employees in providing excellent customer service. Also, the company promotes opportunities for employee development with the motto "Sky's the limit." It was stated that HR

shares information that may benefit employee development with the key managers. In contrast, employees reported that development opportunities are very limited within The Hotel. This points to a problem with communication or availability of created opportunities.

In addition, employees do not have the empowerment that managers advertise. While managers believe that almost every case can be solved by the agents, employees lack the needed tools to perform in such a way. Per the employee guide, when dealing with a complaining guest, the employee is only authorized to provide the guest with complimentary early check-in, late check-out, an apology note, or a gift basket to the room. For any refunds, rate adjustments, complimentary nights, or monetary compensations, agents must ask for the manager's permission. While the managers emphasized that agents are responsible for creating guest loyalty, it is questionable whether this task is possible with the level of authority that The Hotel provides to its employees.

Finally, the quality of customer service led to both rewards or discipline/discharge actions. To recognize employees who provide outstanding guest service, The Hotel had formal celebrations and provides rewards to employees such as pins/plaques, trophies/symbols, and bonuses. Also, the employees were offered benefits and incentives. For example, employees received a \$5 bonus for a positive guest review and a certain percentage commission for selling early arrival and departure times to the guests. Guests did not mention the agent's name(s) in their reviews often. In addition, findings point out that selling

early arrival and departure times was perceived by some employees to be unethical when it costs nothing to the hotel to accommodate the traveler's request. Therefore, employees displayed dissatisfaction with the quality and value of the bonus package. It is possible that employees were not excited about the bonus system because they were not happy with their compensation in the first place. It was noted that their wages were significantly lower than the national average for non-management hospitality workers. Hotel managers were also found to be under-rewarded for achieving great customer service. All the above-mentioned factors create a need for employee recognition to be improved.

System design factors were assessed by employees with the lowest score. Employees were dissatisfied mainly with the quality of the communication and lack of feedback among staff members. It was found that The Hotel managers do not continually seek employee feedback nor do managers inquire about how well they provide support to employees. While The Hotel promotes an open-door policy, employees were concerned with its quality and functionality. In comparison, the employees of Rosen Hotels & Resorts, also in Orlando, explained the meaning of their open-door policy exercised by hotel management. According to Thompson, et al. (2018), a true open-door policy is when everyone shares ideas with each other and employees can address their ideas to any department head and even the hotel owner. In contrast, at The Hotel company meeting, when managers tried to encourage employees to share their ideas, no ideas were shared. One employee was asked to share his success story at the meeting, which he did with excitement. It

shows that employees may be willing to share their thoughts when they see that The Hotel respects their training and experience. A properly functioning open-door policy can increase employee job satisfaction.

In addition, hotel guests indicated that there is a lack of communication among hotel departments. As previously mentioned, one guest pointed out that the last shuttle to the parks leaves the hotel before the restaurant stops serving breakfast. Such overlap between the hours of operation among departments suggests the lack of communication and agreement, which causes another conflict in the workplace. Consequently, negative guest reactions reflect on hotel employees and hotel performance. The fact that these departments are owned and managed by third parties explains why guest satisfaction with them was not discussed by hotel managers during the interviews. The hotel has little to no insight or authority to influence third-party business practices. Even though the poor restaurant and transportation experiences of the guests affect The Hotel's reputation, the problems may not be solved unless The Hotel begins to control these operations. If The Hotel had control over these functions, guest satisfaction could increase. However, this may not happen unless The Hotel attracts more EB-5 owners, which will require creating more jobs. This may also help address the daily housekeeping problem.

RQ2. How does organizational alignment of EB-5 hospitality firms affect employee job satisfaction and performance?

A strong relationship between EB-5 organizational alignment attributes and their aggregated dimensions (i.e., strategy, staffing, and system design) and hotel employee job satisfaction supported the proposition of this dissertation. The EB-5 hotel demonstrated both metrics with a value higher than non-EB-5 hotels in the study of Crotts et al. (2007). At the time of the research, EB-5 employee job satisfaction level was 72 percent while non-EB-5 hotel employees assessed their level of satisfaction at 52 percent. While all managers admitted the importance of maintaining employee job satisfaction, it was emphasized by employees that it is not likely that management has a set plan to maintain the employee job satisfaction level.

Staffing factors played the most significant role in predicting employee job satisfaction. As dissatisfied employees were leaving the company, the managers pointed out that the high employee turnover rate affects the hotel and its guests tremendously. Notwithstanding the high employee job satisfaction level, The Hotel has experienced a 48 percent turnover rate for the past 12 months. This compares with an average employee turnover rate among U.S. hospitality organizations of 31 percent. Among the most common reasons why people leave were: low pay, lack of recognition and appreciation, lack of standards and structure, lack of development opportunities, and work related stress. Also, some employees felt that their immediate supervisors did not care about them. As a result, many employees did not feel that The Hotel is the best place to work since their values were quite different from the values of The Hotel.

According to the conceptual cause and effect model, the employee turnover rate impacts employee service commitment. Many employees displayed low commitment and engagement. Lack of employee engagement was supported by the employees' behaviors at hotel meetings, where employees remained passive and disengaged. Reilly (2014) suggested that there is a well-established connection between employee engagement and key performance outcomes such as turnover rate reduction, increase of work quality, customer ratings, and company profitability. Improving the employee engagement level can also enable The Hotel to improve the quality of its meetings. Effectively handled company meetings may encourage new behaviors and drive cultural change. It will be nearly impossible to achieve a positive change if The Hotel holds a meeting only once every 18 months. Routinely scheduled meetings help employees to develop a habit of sharing ideas and creating positive changes.

Interestingly, it was found that the majority of employees are happy that they selected The Hotel as a place to work. Moreover, this factor had the strongest influence on overall employee job satisfaction. The high turnover rate helped to explain this finding. Only 50 percent of The Hotel staff was retained in 2017. It was empirically supported that employees who joined The Hotel in 2017 experienced higher satisfaction with their selection of the employer than employees who joined the company earlier. Again, this may explain the higher level of job satisfaction than in non-EB-5 hotels referenced in this dissertation. Without having an adequate opportunity to assess the fit between The Hotel and their personal values, recently

hired employees seemed to be happy mainly because The Hotel provided them needed employment.

RQ3. How does EB-5 ownership distinguish business performance of hospitality firms?

Business performance depends in part on the type of ownership. However, this hotel has unique ownership, which features 30 different EB-5 owners. Because EB-5 owners are absentees, The Hotel is managed by property a management company. The study found a gap in relationship between hotel owners and the management company. For example, The Hotel has many ideas and projects on how to keep employees and guests satisfied, but considering the type of property, changes, when implemented, take longer. Managers cannot solely decide to renovate the rooms or have flexibility to adjust the room rates in response to market demand. In comparison, Rosen Hotels & Resorts has succeeded where yield management is part of their strategy. Their company policy is focused on making sure that their hotels have “heads in beds.” It is important for them to maintain hotel occupancy to generate revenue, so their employees have jobs. “You cannot generate revenue from an empty room” said Mr. Rosen (Thompson et al., 2018, p. c-354). Therefore, when the market requires, they drop their rates as low as needed to maintain hotel occupancy. With EB-5 ownership in The Hotel, this practice was not observed.

According to the conceptual model of organizational alignment, guest satisfaction has a direct impact on hotel performance. The EB-5 hotel employees

stated that customer service was a key strength of The Hotel. Also, employees demonstrated the confidence that the facility, room layout, temperature, lighting, and environmental conditions are “customer friendly”. The average of The Hotel’s guest satisfaction score (GSS) on TripAdvisor.com was 4.00 out of 5.00. When compared with its main competitors using TripAdvisor[®], The Hotel had the lowest guest satisfaction score due to the high number of guest complaints. Some guests were even concerned with the quality and validity of the TripAdvisor[®] rating system that assessed The Hotel with a 4.0 score.

The main guest complaints were related to the non-renovated hotel rooms, the rooms with older and deteriorated furniture, flooring, or other attributes. Managers emphasized that older rooms is the major issue caused by the type of hotel ownership. Maintaining The Hotel’s rooms requires funding. When EB-5 owners do not invest in their properties, The Hotel is unable to provide the needed care and attention, despite the fact that these rooms significantly reduce the guest satisfaction score. Non-renovated units owned by EB-5 investors make guests unhappy, even with the cleanliness and maintenance of the units. Managers said that regardless of how well this job is done by hotel staff, this is just a reality that The Hotel faces due to the non-renovated rooms. Guest satisfaction analysis supported that broken items, old furniture, and lack of cleanliness influence the guests’ dissatisfaction the most.

This study outlined several misalignments that decrease performance of The Hotel. Since EB-5 owners are not involved in daily operations of The Hotel due to

absenteeism, the factors reviewed below display consequences of decisions made most likely by the management company.

First, the majority of new employees do not have the needed hospitality background. To get the best people, hotels often monitor competitors' employees. This strategy may not work for this EB-5 hotel due to its low pay strategy. Inability to attract qualified service employees leads to employee dissatisfaction, which creates employee turnover and guest dissatisfaction with hotel services.

Second, The Hotel rooms are not being cleaned daily. The Hotel charges additionally for a bed linen change, towel change, and room cleaning. The Hotel's website does not inform its visitors that it is a self-service hotel and rooms are not being cleaned daily. Since the guests perceive the resort as a full-service facility, they become more dissatisfied with the lack of daily room cleaning service and the misleading type of accommodation. Then, during the stay, guests start experiencing dissatisfaction with the room cleanliness. Having fresh towels and rooms cleaned daily, or something that hotel guests do not experience at home every day, is what also give the guests a feeling of a cleaner and more desirable room.

Third, food choice significantly influences hotel guest satisfaction. Since The Hotel subcontracts these services from a third-party who rents the facilities located on the property, The Hotel has little control over the food or service quality provided at these locations. The fact that guests complained about overlapping times for serving breakfast and taking a shuttle to the parks supported the notion

that having a third-party service provider in its logistics can negatively impact the satisfaction of hotel guests.

The final and most significant reason that undermines hotel performance is that some of the key managers do not consider the abovementioned reasons to be the key factors of guest dissatisfaction. Among the key managers are those who believe that non-renovated rooms are not bad rooms; “there are just older items, but everything works fine and is clean.”

Implications

This case study contributed to the existing body of literature by providing valuable insights about one EB-5 hospitality organization located in Orlando, Florida. The findings of this research can have a positive influence on practitioners and policy makers. The popularity of EB-5 ownership in the hospitality industry increases the relevance and importance of these findings.

For practitioners, the EB-5 owners, property managers, and onsite managers of EB-5 hospitality organizations, the perceptions and themes that were produced by this research enable them to observe the practices and outcomes that a hospitality organization based on EB-5 capital and its employees experienced. The study findings help property managers of The Hotel become more aware about what causes the challenges in keeping EB-5 owners, EB-5 employees, and customers of EB-5 investors aligned and balanced. For example, they will realize

that there is a need for more efficient instruments to work with EB-5 owners to keep both employees and customers happy. By observing the results of this study, the hotel managers will have a better understanding of what EB-5 organizations are made of and what it takes to lead one successfully. They will be able to increase their awareness and understanding of the benefits of organizational alignment and how it may affect employee job satisfaction. EB-5 owners will learn more about what hotel management, employees, and guests expect from them. They may also learn why hotel guests may perceive the services provided by the EB-5 organization in a specific way. As a result, they may begin to become more active and motivated to participate, and improve their business acumen in The Hotel. This study may also benefit entrepreneurs who consider absentee ownership. For those who have not decided what type of ownership may work best, this study begins to outline possible outcomes of absentee ownership.

For policymakers, the research findings can help U.S. policymakers at the federal, state, and local levels evaluate the effectiveness of the EB-5 program. While originally the EB-5 investment program was designed by the U.S. government to foster economic growth, to respond to labor market needs, and to enhance U.S. global competitiveness, today the EB-5 program raises multiple questions. One question is the longevity of EB-5 jobs. Another question is the survival rate of the firms founded by the foreign immigrant investors through the EB-5 program. Moreover, more opinions sway towards the notion that the EB-5 immigrant investment program is a relatively inexpensive way for the global elite

to “purchase” U.S. citizenship, so the abuse of the program and the national security risks bring more concerns. It is questionable whether the EB-5 program is an effective tool to attract inward FDI and how the EB-5 foreign investors impact the U.S. economy. The study findings supported that an EB-5 organization can be efficient and potentially take a superior position above non-EB-5 competitors. However, today U.S. policymakers should be focused on improving policies for the EB-5 program as never before and monitor its outcomes to help practitioners in improving their business performance. This is especially important in today’s politically-sensitive immigration climate.

Also, another possible benefit for policymakers is that this research sheds more light on EB-5 investments through private developers. Since about 97 percent of EB-5 investment funds flow through Regional Centers, which facilitate the concentration of the EB-5 immigrant investor capital, only a few EB-5 projects are being administered by private developers. The site studied in this project was managing EB-5 investments through a developer. Therefore, the study provides valuable insight on the outcomes of developer-EB-5 investor relationships.

Future Research

Since organizational alignment and linkages of the service-profit chain model within the hospitality companies that are financed by foreign investment capital coming from immigrants is a topic that has not been studied before, this

case study has implications for future research. In the recent past, the EB-5 visa program was mainly a subject of interest to policymakers. Since the use of the EB-5 program has become more popular, having more information about the program and its relationship with important components of the hotel service-profit chain model is important. Some areas are particularly interesting to pursue for future research, and they are outlined below.

First, since this is the first analysis of its kind, its findings offer a foundation for future research. The findings of this case study will benefit researchers who aim to test the service-profit chain model within EB-5 hospitality settings further. Since this dissertation introduced new independent variables influencing key elements of the service-profit chain model, empirical research will be expected to develop a solid knowledge about how EB-5 absentee ownership, property management company, or manager's understanding about EB-5 ownership may affect EB-5 firm's outcomes, such as employee job satisfaction, hotel guest satisfaction, and company performance.

Second, organizational alignment theory can help to explain the differences between the EB-5 and non-EB-5 hospitality firms, and future research can compare these organizations through the prism of the service-profit chain model. Future research may use several hotels to empirically determine the between-group differences through the *post hoc* comparisons and perform a series of independent *t tests* to determine the level of hotel focus on their efforts in order to become a

benchmark organization in terms of impacting the employee workplace environment measures.

Third, past research suggested that cultural differences, entrepreneurial intentions, and international experience of the foreign investors may determine and predict the success of EB-5 companies. Future researchers could test this notion by studying an EB-5 hospitality organization being not just owned but lead by EB-5 visa program participants. As an example, to select a site where EB-5 investors can hold managerial positions and actively participate in day-to-day hotel operations.

Fourth, it is recommended to test whether the service concept alone may lead to happy guests. The benchmarking results showed that the top-rated resort, Villas of Grand Cypress, had the lowest employee job satisfaction. The employees assessed their satisfaction with the average score of 3.0. This score was found within the secondary data available on the Indeed website where employees can rate their employers, and it was the lowest score of employee satisfaction among the benchmark hotels. This example undermines the notion that happy employees lead to happy guests. While the guest satisfaction level in this study for benchmarking was based on secondary data, i.e., Tripadvisor.com scores and ratings, future researchers are encouraged to collect primary data to determine the level of hotel guest satisfaction. It is also worth testing whether employee job satisfaction may influence hotel profitability directly. For example, unhappy employees affect company profitability by creating expenses related to employee

turnover while the hotel guests may remain happy. Since the answers to these questions may redefine the service-profit chain model, further research is needed.

Finally, this dissertation did not find any support that a very high employee turnover rate leads to a low organizational alignment level. In contrast, the study found that both employee turnover and organizational alignment levels were high. This finding can be explained by the cultural differences of research participants. For example, while Crofts et al. (2007, p 23.), who supported relationships between organizational alignment and employee turnover rate, studied Hong Kong hotels and their employees, the sample of this study is an American hotel located in Florida. It would be interesting to learn how future research can address how cultural differences of employees may influence organizational alignment and employee job satisfaction in other hospitality organizations.

Recommendations

The rationale for conducting this study was to help practitioners improve performance of EB-5 hospitality organizations by generating recommendations from the research findings. Considering that findings of this case study relate only to one participating site, and that this site may or may not represent a typical EB-5 hotel, practical recommendations are provided to The Hotel. Recommendations, drawn from the findings of this research, are to aid The Hotel managers to enhance employee job satisfaction, guest satisfaction, and hotel performance.

While keeping hospitality employees satisfied with their jobs, which is not an easy task, EB-5 organizations experience unique challenges due to the type of ownership. Because EB-5 investors have unique entrepreneurial intentions that affect the performance of an EB-5 hotel (Mahmoodi and deRoos, 2015), EB-5 entities need a set of unique tools to influence business performance. The hotel examined in this case study displayed less successful scores when benchmarked with other market players. However, based on the results presented here, the performance of this EB-5 hotel can be reinforced through increasing the quality of the hotel's organizational alignment, employee job satisfaction and retention, and guest satisfaction. According to the model presented in this study, the performance of The Hotel is impacted by both EB-5 organizational alignment and guest satisfaction influenced by the employee job satisfaction and retention level, which depend on organizational alignment.

Recommendations for Organizational Alignment. According to the models provided in this study, improving organizational alignment can have a positive impact on employee job satisfaction and retention and lead the company to increased profits and growth.

The research findings pointed to four predictors of organizational alignment that influence employee job satisfaction. Among them are events when new employees comprehend The Hotel's commitment to guest service, when employees know that their feedback about management is heard, when managers lead by example, and when employees receive rewards for excellent service. The Hotel can

minimize organizational limitations and keep employees more satisfied with the job and workplace by consistently following its plan to maintain these areas as effectively as possible. However, employees expressed concern about whether The Hotel management even had an appropriate plan.

According to some managers, improvement plan exists. This section provides detailed recommendations that managers can use within their plans to improve alignment. The Hotel needs to do a better job in terms of communicating what is important, including strategy and plans, to its employees. The recommendations were developed according to the key factors of organizational alignment.

Strategy factors start with a key suggestion that the company mission statement and values should be clearly communicated to the employees at all organization levels. Employees are expected to display the commitment to guest services in every task they complete. One cannot state that great customer service is the top priority and then not disclose important facts to guests. The Hotel should provide specific accommodation details to guests in advance. The company website and other portals where The Hotel maintains its visibility should inform their visitors that The Hotel is “self-service” and rooms are not being cleaned daily. Company values and corporate mission, when they “live” within the company, are considered one of the most influential attributes of employee job satisfaction. To keep what is important “live,” the managers must be expected to keep their promises at all times. Some employees expressed concerns that managers may not

keep up with promises made. It is vital that managers follow The Hotel policies and procedures that were promoted to employees.

Importantly, The Hotel is expected to pay more attention to improving the work environment. Creating a comfortable working environment is important. Work overload and stress are the main concerns that question the healthiness of The Hotel work environment. First, it is recommended to re-evaluate the workforce need to mitigate staff shortages. Guest service can be improved if guests received more attention from guest service employees. Also, when management schedules extra staff for the front desk, they should refrain from scheduling employees to work from 11 am to 7 pm or 12 pm to 8 pm. The study findings pointed that employees working mix shifts are the least satisfied with their jobs.

Secondly, employees expect more support from managers because some managers do not understand that work stress within the hotel settings is different from that in other organizations. As hotel facilities age, more customers are not happy with the quality of service. As a result, rapidly increasing guest complaints develop more stress in the routine of service employees.

Staffing factors influence employee job satisfaction the most, and several recommendations were developed for their improvement. The study found that improving employee pay, recognition, encouragement of professional development, and work environment will increase the employee-company value fit. Consequentially, these factors will lead to an increase of overall employee job satisfaction and reduction of employee turnover rate the most. The high turnover

rate is a red flag calling on management to act. Increasing both employee job satisfaction and retention must be a top priority for The Hotel. Managers are expected to take needed approaches to mitigate the misalignment between organizational alignment and employee job satisfaction.

The vast majority of The Hotel employees come from other than hospitality industries. Professional background may have a more significant impact on excellent customer service than managers may think. First, it is recommended that The Hotel hires employees from appropriate professional environments. It will allow The Hotel to deal with people who share the values of the hospitality industry and help save company resources, especially time and money. However, with significantly lower than national average wage (\$10.00 per hour vs. \$15.40 per hour), this opportunity is not likely possible for The Hotel. Therefore, it is suggested that The Hotel conduct routine wage monitoring within its industry to analyze the results to correct company pay policies and work toward establishing fair pay for its employees. Employees are aware about pay rates that other companies pay, and they compare the rates with their earnings. Employees need to feel that they are treated fairly to stay satisfied with their jobs and to be productive. After the misalignment related to main pay is addressed, The Hotel is encouraged to re-evaluate its bonus package. The Hotel offers bonuses for selling the guests basic services such as early arrival or late departure. Some employees provided feedback that they were uncomfortable doing so when they knew that the room was

ready for the guests as is. It is recommended to increase the \$5 bonus for a positive review and let the agents satisfy the guests' needs without overcharging them.

Secondly, employee recognition and appreciation areas require improvements. While the study found that there are employees who experience dissatisfaction with the recognition, some managers believe that there is a fine balance between employee recognition and job satisfaction. Some employees even emphasized that their immediate supervisors do not care about them. The Hotel's managers and owners are expected to recognize that the problem exists, analyze it, and take needed approaches to mitigate the misalignment. Regular recognition or praise to the employees for doing their job well will help employees feel more recognized and appreciated. Also, managers should consider having more personal interaction with employees. The recognition board in the back office cannot replace a handshake and verbal communication. Also, the survey participants believed that The Hotel needs to be fairer when rewarding the managers who help their departments to achieve better ratings.

Third, it is strongly recommended that The Hotel should constantly seek how to mitigate these barriers and provide employees with adequate development opportunities. Study results determined that employee development opportunities are very limited within The Hotel. Employees expect The Hotel to encourage them to develop professionally. Employees need to be more aware of opportunities. HR shares some development information with top managers, but this information is either communicated poorly to employees or has little value to them, and therefore

remains unnoticeable. Employees suggested that annual continuing education could be more focused on how to provide excellent customer service. Another suggested approach is to empower employees. The Hotel indicated limited employee empowerment, and it is important for managers to reconsider these policies and increase authority levels where possible, so employees have more freedom and tools to assist hotel guests. The strict policies and limited decision making tools can indicate The Hotel's attempt to reduce the possible risk from an employee's mistake. More specifically, since The Hotel does not have a solid trust in the employees' competency, their authority is limited.

System design factors data supported that communication and feedback were the main areas of concern. The managers suggested that improving feedback and communication should become an important part of the employee development program. However, a major change is required from the managers themselves. For example, they should remind employees routinely about the commitment to service excellence. This can be done by sharing guests' experiences with the employees to improve future performance. While positive feedback from a guest can be placed on the board at the back office, negative feedback should be shared face-to-face. Hotel managers should continually seek employee feedback, and ask them about not only how the work quality can be improved but how they, as managers, can provide better support to employees. Surveying employees regularly will aid managers in learning more about the employees, their expectations, and their satisfaction.

Moreover, the open-door policy, which shows employees how managers care about them and support them, is another approach that the company needs to learn how to utilize more effectively. The open-door policy should work in a way so that it enables employees to share their ideas. The Hotel needs to overcome barriers. First, The Hotel is expected to establish and communicate the goals for knowledge sharing to stimulate employees to share their ideas. It means that employees need to see that their ideas are valuable and that the company is eager to implement good ideas that come from employees. It is important that The Hotel displays appropriate respect for employee training and expertise. The Hotel should provide positive consequences to encourage employees to share ideas. For example, a \$5 reward for a TripAdvisor[®] review may not be sufficient to develop interest among employees for generating more reviews.

It is also recommended to run regular audits to measure customer service quality and compare it across departments and other organizations. Hotel guests pointed to the lack of communication and agreement between departments, which affects their satisfaction. Also, it is suggested that The Hotel regularly benchmark its important business outcomes such as RevPAR, occupancy rate, and nightly rates against key market players. Sharing the results systematically with the employees and keeping them involved is vital to increase employee engagement level which has room for improvement.

Recommendations for Guest Satisfaction

Based on the study findings, there were several recommendations developed to help the participants in this case study EB-5 hotel improve the level of guest satisfaction, market position, RevPar index, and overall performance.

However, to start, both managers and owners need to recognize that improvements are needed. For example, some interview participants displayed strong confidence that all factors of organizational alignment are in fine balance and no change is needed.

To improve key performance indexes, The Hotel requires good care, maintenance, and renovations. Based on Jones (2012) carpet, drapes, and furniture in a room should be no more than ten years old because old furniture increases guest dissatisfaction with room cleanliness and maintenance. For that reason, it is important that all the managers who interact with EB-5 owners share the same vision: non-renovated rooms negatively affect the guests' opinions as well as hotel performance. When this idea has the same meaning to all, the managers of the hotel will have more opportunity to influence behavior of EB-5 owners. The Hotel should seek ways to influence EB-5 owners, so they can be more cooperative and motivated to improve the quality of accommodations. However, at this point, there are managers who do not recognize the detrimental effect that non-renovated rooms have on The Hotel's success.

The Hotel experiences lack of authority and flexibility. Important decisions like pricing cannot be made solely by The Hotel and room rates cannot be

immediately adjusted to adapt to market demand. The change must be approved by EB-5 owners first, which takes time. In the event where RevPAR can be improved either by a) lowering rates to increase the occupancy rate or b) keeping high nightly rates with a lower occupancy rate, the EB-5 hotel can only utilize the second approach. For example, if The Hotel rate was \$200 instead of \$159, the occupancy rate would likely decrease. For example, instead of 411 rooms, if only 350 guest rooms were booked, this would mean a 71 percent occupancy rate instead of 83 percent. However, the RevPAR would go up \$141.12 ($\200×0.7056), which practically means higher profits, less wear and tear to the property, and less work for the employees. However, using this method requires The Hotel guests to be loyal and satisfied.

Based on the study findings, there are some recommendations The Hotel managers can address immediately to improve its key performance indicators. Providing its customers with correct information about The Hotel is one of the first steps The Hotel can take to demonstrate its commitment to guest services. Since The Hotel is not a full service lodging facility, it should be clearly communicated to the guests before they place the booking. The Hotel's website advertises the property as a luxury hotel. The managers agreed that the hotel is not offering any luxury accommodations. While hotel employees are confident that they work at a self-service resort, few guests realize that before they are told by the front desk agent. Also, it was noticed that The Hotel advertises one bedroom suites while the smallest room is a two-bedroom suite. It is recommended that The Hotel avoid

misleading advertising and inform guests that they will stay in a self-service resort, which means no complimentary daily cleanings during their stays, limited food and transportation choices, etc. In addition, it is recommended that The Hotel provide feedback for all guest reviews. Between January 1 and September 15, 2017, almost 15 percent of guest feedback was left with no response. By reducing the non-response rate, The Hotel can manage online visibility more effectively. Finally, it is suggested to change the employee selection requirements. Hospitality background should be a mandatory criterion for employee selection. People already experienced in the hospitality industry are more likely to bring with them the proper attitude. Also, attracting employees with good customer service skills is vital to improve guests' experiences. Together, employee experience and attitude warrant higher quality interaction with guests, higher guest satisfaction, and improved hotel performance.

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Appendix A

EB-5 Program Overview

At the time of this study, the USCIS administered the EB-5 program primarily through three application forms, I-526, I-924, and I-829 (see Figure A-1). The application process had multiple milestones and was time-consuming.

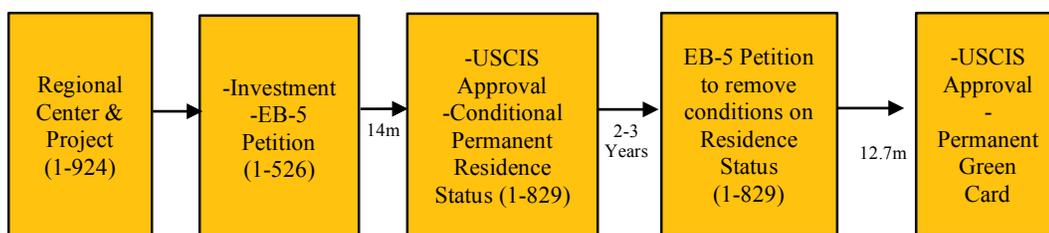


Figure A-1. EB-5 process (USCIS, 2015).

Per information from the USCIS (2015), more than 97 percent of EB-5 investment funds flow through the Regional Center program, which facilitates the concentration of EB-5 immigrant investor capital into larger projects deemed more likely to affect regional and national interest significantly. When immigrant investors express an interest in the program, a Regional Center program guides them through the pre-qualification process. It also helps investors research the requirements of the investment and estimate the associated risk and the overall investment opportunity. Once the investment project is approved by the Regional Center, the investors must prove their commitment by executing an investment agreement and submitting the required capital. As a next step, the investor files an

immigration petition by submitting form I-526 (Immigrant Petition by Alien Entrepreneur). In approving the application, the USCIS certifies the intended investment for conditional permanent residency. Normally, the USCIS initial review may take up to 14 months. In case of application denial, the immigrant investor's capital is returned to the investor. If the I-526 form gains approval, the investor may apply for conditional permanent residency by completing form I-485 (Conditional Permanent Residence by Adjustment of Status). The USCIS (2015) reported that, due to the program popularity, processing times have increased. For example, investors from China may encounter a three-year or longer wait before they acquire Conditional Permanent Resident. Approximately two years following the conditional permanent resident status approval, the investor will be eligible to file an application, form I-829, to remove conditional residency. After all steps are successfully finalized, the investor becomes a lawful permanent resident of the U.S. The new status will grant the investors indefinite permanent residency and work permission. Later, investors and their immediate family members may also choose to naturalize and become U.S. citizens.

Appendix B

List of the Florida Regional Centers Contacted

Number	Regional Center Name	ID number
1.	America's Regional Center, LLC	ID1320551181
2.	American Builders Regional Center	ID1034350100
3.	American Immigration Fund Regional Center	ID1507252626
4.	American Lending Center Florida, LLC	ID1432851998
5.	American Liberty Regional Center, LLC	ID1131250348
6.	American Life Investments, LLC	ID1031910192
7.	American Opportunity Regional Center LLC	ID1034850133
8.	American Venture Solutions Regional Center	ID1031910037
9.	America's Center for Foreign Investment	ID1031910090
10.	ARCG Florida Regional Center, LLC	ID1421251836
11.	Bart Investment Group, LLC	ID1507052623
12.	Birch Miami Dade Regional Center	ID1310051121
13.	Birch LEAF Miami 31, LLC Regional Center	ID1031910170
14.	BLMP Florida Healthcare Regional Center LLC	ID1208050614
15.	CanAm Florida Regional Center, LLC	ID1414151759
16.	Central Florida EB5 Regional Center	ID1330451257
17.	Charlotte Harbor Regional Center	ID1031910198
18.	Citizens Regional Center of Florida	ID1208650618
19.	City of Miami Regional Center	ID1320351178
20.	Civitas Miami Regional Center, LLC	ID1310151122
21.	Civitas Northern Florida Regional Center	ID1428851925
22.	Clearwater Beach Resort Regional Center, LLC	ID1307151103
23.	CMB Southeast Regional Center, LLC	ID1231250800

Number	Regional Center Name	ID number
24.	Cornerstone Regional Center, Inc.	ID1321851186
25.	Discovery Florida, LLC	ID1507652627
26.	EB5 Affiliate Network State of Florida Regional Center, LLC	ID1403151665
27.	EB5 Financing Management Company, LLC	ID1415451772
28.	EB5 Florida Hotels & Investments Regional Center LLC	ID1435752249
29.	EB5 Florida Real Estate Regional Center, LLC	ID1429351932
30.	EB-5 Regional Center Florida, LLC	ID1209550637
31.	EB5 Visa Fund LLC	ID1205250593
32.	Education Fund SE Regional Center	ID1510551754
33.	Encore Alabama/Florida Regional Center	ID1218450701
34.	Fairhaven Capital Advisors Regional Center	ID1524452886
35.	Florida East Coast EB5 Regional Center LLC (former name United States Growth Fund, LLC)	ID1228650784
36.	Florida East Coast Regional Center, LLC	ID1232550818
37.	Florida EB5 Investments LLC Regional Center	ID1031910185
38.	Florida EB-5 Quantum Investments, LLC	ID1508352632
39.	Florida EB-5 Regional Center, LLC	ID1031910204
40.	Florida Equity & Growth Fund Regional Center, LLC	ID1031910124
41.	Florida First Regional Center, LLC (former name USEGF Florida Regional Center)	ID1502052556
42.	Florida Gulf Coast Regional Center, LLC	ID1226550766
43.	Florida Overseas Investment Center RC	ID1031910161
44.	Florida Regional Center, LLC	ID1031910194

Number	Regional Center Name	ID number
45.	Future American Now Regional Center, LLC	ID1504252592
46.	Gardens Regional Center, LLC	ID1135450411
47.	Gold Coast Florida Regional Center	ID1031910179
48.	Greystone EB5 Southeast Regional Center LLC (former name Greystone Florida Regional Center LLC)	ID1215650675
49.	Gulf Coast Regional Investment Center, LLC	ID1031910068
50.	Gulf States Regional Center, LLC	ID1201750575
51.	Index Regional Center	ID1502852578
52.	LCR Atlantic Gulf Regional Center	ID1434252047
53.	Live in America - Florida, LLC	ID1210850642
54.	Mainsail Florida Regional Center	ID1527453300
55.	Miami Film Regional Center	ID1335751407
56.	Miami Metropolitan Regional Center	ID1119450242
57.	Miami Regional Center, LLC	ID1318451170
58.	Mirzam Investor Green Card Regional Center	ID1031910186
59.	My Florida Regional Center LLC DBA My EB5 Green Card Regional Center	ID1206950609
60.	New Orleans & Gulf Coast Regional Center, LLC	ID1216350684
61.	Omega Florida Regional Center	ID1209050632
62.	Orlando EB-5 Investments Regional Center	ID1031910001
63.	Orlando Regional Center, LLC	ID1403751676
64.	Palm Beach RC	ID1031910136
65.	Queensfort Capital Florida Regional Center	ID1224950750
66.	Regional Center of South Florida, LLC	ID1031910166

Number	Regional Center Name	ID number
67.	Green Card Solutions Regional Center (former name Shrimp House US LLC)	ID1423851860
68.	SOBE EB5 Regional Center, LLC	ID1210050640
69.	South Atlantic Coast Regional Center LLC	ID1436352266
70.	South Atlantic Regional Center (SARC)	ID1031910182
71.	South Florida Investment Regional Center (SFIRC)	ID1031910118
72.	Southeast Florida EB-5 Regional Center, LLC	ID1305251090
73.	Southwest Florida Regional Center, LLC	ID1436352267
74.	Sunshine State EB5 Regional Center	ID1300751052
75.	Sunshine State Regional Center, Inc.	ID1324951207
76.	U.S. Immigration Fund – FL	ID1236250924
77.	US Access Florida Regional Center, LLC	ID1231850806
78.	Watercrest Florida Regional Center, LLC	ID1508452634

Appendix C

Inquiry Sent to the EB-5 Regional Centers

Good Afternoon

I am a doctoral student of Florida Institute of Technology, and I am working on my dissertation. The research question is how EB-5 ownership impacts employees' and guests' satisfaction. I believe that this research can support that EB-5 companies display high performance and contribute to the hospitality industry and the U.S. economy. Moreover, the research findings are beneficial for the hotel. The hotel management will obtain in-depth knowledge about how the company can increase guest satisfaction through employee job satisfaction.

Could you please suggest any EB-5 hotel in Florida that may be willing to participate in my research? All I need is to provide some online questionnaires for employees and conduct a few interviews.

I hope you can help, and I appreciate your time.

Sincerely,

Valentina Naumenko

Phone: 407-494-6018

Email: vnaumenko2015@my.fit.edu

Appendix D

Research introduction letter used to recruit a site

Good Afternoon,

I am seeking an opportunity to survey your employees to measure the level of their satisfaction and engagement with the company. In theory, Dr. Ford from UCF suggested that employee satisfaction increases employee retention and productivity, which improves guest satisfaction. As a result, guests become more loyal, and the company increases its profitability.

To collect data, I will ask service employees to complete questionnaires which were developed by Dr. Ford. I promise to be unobtrusive and not interfere with employees' duties. Also, I may need to ask managers questions to better explain the quantitative findings.

This study is beneficial because it will provide helpful guidance for decision making. You will receive a copy of the research results. It will also shed light on some areas that may require improvements. I have both hospitality background and research experience, so I can definitely provide you with high-quality research. While consulting firms charge thousands of dollars for this research, my time and services are completely free.

Your participation is extremely critical for the success of the study. I am a candidate for the Doctor of Business Administration degree at Florida Tech, and this research is the empirical part of my dissertation. The purpose of the entire project is to advance the understanding of how ownership (in companies with

foreign investment capital using EB-5 program) influences employee job satisfaction.

I guarantee full anonymity for study participants as well as the organization itself, and I truly hope for your approval and appreciate your consideration,

Sincerely,

Valentina Naumenko

Phone: 407-494-6018

Email: vnaumenko2015@my.fit.edu

Appendix E

Notice of Exempt Review Status. Certificate of Clearance for Human Participants Research



Florida Institute of Technology
Institutional Review Board

Notice of Exempt Review Status Certificate of Clearance for Human Participants Research

Principal Investigator: Valentina Naumenko
Date: July 14, 2017
IRB Number: 17-105
Study Title: The impact of EB-5 leadership on employee job satisfaction in the hospitality industry

Your research protocol was reviewed and approved by the IRB Chairperson. Per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.101, your study has been determined to be minimal risk for human subjects and exempt from 45 CFR 46 federal regulations and further IRB review or renewal unless you change the protocol or add the use of participant identifiers.

All data, which may include signed consent form documents, must be retained in a secure location for a minimum of three years (six if HIPAA applies) past the completion of this research. Any links to the identification of participants should be maintained on a password-protected computer if electronic information is used. Access to data is limited to authorized individuals listed as key study personnel.

The category for which exempt status has been determined for this protocol is as follows:

2. Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior so long as confidentiality is maintained.
 - a. Information is recorded in such a manner that the subject cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the participant and/or
 - b. Subject's responses, if known outside the research would not reasonably place the subject at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subject's financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Appendix F

Letter of Introduction

The Impact of EB-5 Ownership on Employee Job Satisfaction in the Hospitality

Industry: A Case Study

Valentina Naumenko is a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Business Administration and interested in conducting a case study in your organization. The purpose of this case study is to advance the understanding of the phenomenon of EB-5 ownership and its impact on strategic outcomes of the hospitality organization. More specifically, through the prism of organizational alignment, the study will examine the ways in which EB-5 ownership impacts employee job satisfaction and retention, guest satisfaction, and the hospitality firm's performance. As a result of the study, the participating hotel will receive information about the working environment of their organizations and recommendations for improvements.

Your participation is critical for the success of the study. Please respond to the contact information provided below to address any questions. The researcher guarantees full anonymity for study participants. All participants must sign a consent form.

Sincerely,
Valentina Naumenko
Phone: 407-494-6018
Email: vnaumenko2015@my.fit.edu

Appendix G

Human Subjects Consent-to-Participate Form

*The Impact of EB-5 Ownership on Employee Job Satisfaction and Guest
Satisfaction in the Hospitality Industry: A Case Study*

Dear Participant:

The following notice invites you to participate in the study listed above. You are free to decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time without affecting your relationship with your co-workers, managers, or other hotel members.

The purpose of this research is to advance the understanding of phenomenon of EB-5 hotel ownership and its impact on strategic outcomes of the hospitality organization. More specifically, through the prism of organizational alignment, the study will examine the ways in which EB-5 ownership impacts employee job satisfaction and retention, guest satisfaction, and the hospitality firm's performance.

The study will involve a single- case study method and instrumental case-study design. Research data will involve survey questionnaires and transcripts of interviews. Individuals involved in the survey will be service employees. Individuals involved in the interviews will be managers and hotel managers. Please do not hesitate to contact the researcher with any questions about the study either before participating or during participation. Your anonymity is guaranteed.

Your name will not be associated with the research findings in any way, and only the researcher will know your identity as a participant. The recordings and any related notes will be stored on a password protected memory disk, and only the researcher will have access to any research data. The questionnaires, audio-recordings and interview transcripts will be stored in a locked, fireproof safe for five years following the dissertation's final approval and will be destroyed at that time.

There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this study. After completion, the researcher will share the study findings with you. The expected benefits associated with your participation include information about the working environment and recommendations for its improvement.

Please indicate consent with full knowledge of the nature and purpose of the procedure. You will have a copy of this consent form to keep.

Date _____

Signature of Participant _____

Email address of Participant _____

Valentina Naumenko, Principal Investigator _____

Appendix H

Questionnaire: Organizational Alignment Audit

Organizational Alignment Audit

START
HERE

Instructions: Please place an X in the box by the answer that best applies to you.

1. What is your current position at this property?
 - Hourly Part Time
 - Hourly Full Time
 - Supervisor/Department Head
 - Management
 - Contract
2. On what unit do you work? (primarily)
 - Front Office (Reservations/Front Desk/Bell)
 - Food & Beverage
 - Housekeeping
 - Engineering/Maintenance
 - Convention/Meeting Planning
 - Sales/Marketing
 - Management
 - Other
3. On what shift do you work? (primarily)
 - Day shift
 - Night shift
 - Other shift
4. What year did you begin working at this property and what year did you begin your present position?
 Year I joined this property _____
 Year I started in my present position _____

Instructions: Please circle one answer for each statement below.

1- Strongly disagree; 2- Disagree; 3- Neither Agree nor Disagree; 4- Agree; 5- Strongly Agree; N/A –not applicable

5	Our mission statement mentions our commitment to customer service.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
6	Our corporate values statement mentions our commitment to customer service.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
7	Customer service excellence is part of each manager/supervisor's annual plan/goals/objectives.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

8	Our physical facility/room layout is designed to be “customer friendly.”	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
9	Our temperature, lighting, and environmental conditions are designed to be “customer friendly.”	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
10	We follow a set plan to consistently record how long guests have to wait for service.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
11	We follow a set plan to consistently collect information about customer satisfaction.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
12	We follow a set plan to consistently fix discovered customer service problems.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
13	We follow a set plan to consistently identify ways to get guests to participate in creating their own hospitality experience.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
14	We follow a set plan to consistently keep our guests informed about all aspects of their hospitality experience.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
15	Management has established standards of service quality for all aspects of the hospitality experience that our guests tell us are important to them.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
16	We follow a set plan to consistently ask our guests about any complaints they may have about our service.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
17	We follow a set plan to consistently share customer feedback with our employees.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
18	Unit/department comparisons of <i>customer service</i> performance scores are systematically and publicly shared across units/departments.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
19	Unit/department comparisons of <i>employee satisfaction</i> survey scores are systematically and publicly shared across units/departments.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
20	Management formally shares questionnaire results it systematically collects on how well each department is providing service to other departments.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
21	Management has a set plan to continually seek employee feedback on how well it provides support to employees doing their jobs.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
22	We have a checklist or other procedure that ensures we educate our customers about their hospitality experience so they know what to expect.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

23	Management routinely compares the details of our customer service performance against those of other organizations.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
24	Management routinely schedules time to remind staff members of their commitment to service excellence in regular staff meetings.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
25	Our recruitment literature mentions our commitment to excellent customer service.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
26	We routinely ask applicants about their customer service commitment in employment interviews.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
27	Commitment to excellent customer service is one criterion we use to decide who gets hired.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
28	We routinely explain our commitment to customer service in our orientation for new employees.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
29	Annual continuing education refreshers include how to provide excellent customer service.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
30	Commitment to excellent customer service is part of everyone's annual performance evaluation.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
31	Excellent customer service is formally recognized and rewarded in our reward system.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
32	Poor customer service can lead to employee discipline/discharge actions.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
33	We routinely train employees how to properly respond to customer service failures.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
34	We routinely empower employees to resolve customer service problems within set limits.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
35	Management has formal celebrations for employees who provide excellent customer service.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
36	Management gives our employees pins/awards/symbols to recognize excellent customer service.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
37	Management shows its commitment to excellent customer service by visibly "walking the talk."	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

38	Management specifically rewards unit/department managers on how well they score on customer service measures.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
39	Management specifically rewards unit/department managers on how well they do on employee satisfaction scores.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
40	Management specifically rewards managers on how well their unit/department provides excellent service to other units/departments.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
41	Management specifically rewards managers on how well their unit/department provides excellent service to outside suppliers/contractors.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
42	I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
43	I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization to work for.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
44	I would accept almost any job assignment to keep working for this organization.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
45	I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
46	I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
47	This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
48	I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
49	I really care about the fate of this organization.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
50	For me, this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
51	I know what is expected of me in my job.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
52	I am able to do what I do best every day.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

53	I regularly (e.g. weekly) receive recognition or praise for doing my job well.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
54	My supervisor, or someone at work, cares about me as a person.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
55	There is someone at work who encourages my development.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
56	I have the materials and equipment to do my work correctly.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
57	Overall, I feel that this organization respects my training and experience.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
58	Overall, I am satisfied with my job in this organization.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
59	Overall, I am satisfied with this organization as a place to work.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

**** Thank you for your time in completing this questionnaire. ****

This questionnaire is the property of Robert C. Ford and may not be reproduced in any way without prior written permission.

Note. Organizational alignment and hospitality firm performance” by J. Crotts, R. Ford, V. Heung, & E.W.T. Ngai, 2007, International Journal of Culture Tourism and Hospitality Research, 3(1), 3-12. Reprinted with permission.

Appendix I

Interview Protocol

*The Impact of EB-5 Ownership on Employee Job Satisfaction and Guest
Satisfaction in the Hospitality Industry: A Case Study*

Time of interview:

Data:

Place:

Interviewer:

Position of interviewee:

1. What are the key strengths of your organization or team?
2. How can you increase your use of these strengths?
3. What are the barriers and obstacles that may keep you from improving these?
4. What strategies and actions should be undertaken for improvements and increasing performance?
5. How does HR department and corporate office of the hotel support the need of improvements?

Appendix J

Descriptive Statistics of Individual Independent Variables

Independent Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q5_Mission_statement_mentions_guest_commitment	47	4.43	0.972
Q6_Corporate_values_mention_guest_commitment	47	4.34	1.027
Q7_Guest_excellence_is_part_of_manager_goal	46	4.52	0.836
Q8_Hotel_layout_is_guest_friendly	47	4.21	0.999
Q9_Physical_conditions_are_guest_friendly	47	4.3	0.883
Q10_We_record_guests_waiting_time	45	4.02	1.158
Q11_We_collect_guest_satisfaction_info	46	4.07	1.124
Q12_We_fix_discovered_guest_problems	45	4.22	1.064
Q13_We_influence_guests_to_create_their_experience	46	3.89	1.100
Q14_We_keep_guests_informed	46	4.17	1.102
Q15_Management_has_service_quality_standarts	47	4.3	0.998
Q16_We_ask_guests_feedback	45	4.24	1.069
Q17_We_share_guests_feedback_with_employees	45	4.11	1.210
Q18_GS_performance_scores_are_shared	45	3.73	1.214
Q19_ES_survey_scores_are_shared	45	3.62	1.353
Q20_Management_shares_survey_results	45	3.44	1.486
Q21_Management_seeks_employees_feedback_about_it	46	3.87	1.327
Q22_We_educate_guests	46	4.17	1.081
Q23_Management_compares_GS_with_competitors	44	3.89	1.205

Q24_Management_reminds_about_service_excellence	47	3.94	1.374
Q25_Recruitment_literature_mentions_service_excellence	45	4.29	0.920
Q26_Hotel_asks_applicants_about_service_commitment	46	4.22	1.134
Q27_Commitment_to_service_excellence_is_hiring_criterion	46	4.26	0.929
Q28_Excellent_service_is_part_of_orientation	46	4.09	1.208
Q29_Continuing_education_provides_excellent_service	44	3.82	1.299
Q30_Excellent_service_is_part_of_performance_evaluation	45	4.24	1.151
Q31_Excellent_service_is_recognized_and_rewarded	47	4.11	1.127
Q32_Poor_service_leads_to_punishment	45	4.2	1.014
Q33_Employees_are_trained_how_to_respond_to_failures	45	4.07	1.214
Q34_We_empower_employees_to_resolve_issues	45	4.16	1.127
Q35_Excellent_customer_service_is_formally_celebrated	44	4.14	1.025
Q36_Employees_receive_awards_for_excellent_service	45	4.09	1.083
Q37_Managers_lead_by_example	44	4.07	1.129
Q38_Managers_are_rewarded_for_service_measures	42	3.62	1.306
Q39_Managers_are_rewarded_for_ES_scores	42	3.79	1.220
Q40_Managers_are_rewarded_for_helping_other_departments	42	3.79	1.317
Q41_Managers_are_rewarded_for_servicing_contractors	41	3.73	1.361

Appendix K

Regression Coefficients for Job Satisfaction Attribute Questions

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	10.667	2.264		4.712	0
Q48_I_am_glad_I_chose_this_place_to_work	3.059	1.135	0.214	2.695	0.012
Q53_I_am_regularly_recognized	1.808	0.823	0.143	2.196	0.037
Q57_Hotel_respects_my_training_and_experience	1.749	1.063	0.119	1.645	0.111
Q54_My_manager_cares_about_me_as_a_person	1.640	1.033	0.108	1.587	0.124
Q55_Someone_at_work_encourages_my_development	1.627	1.059	0.119	1.537	0.136
Q45_My_values_and_hotels_are_the_same	1.523	0.899	0.109	1.694	0.102
Q56_I_have_needed_tools_to_do_my_job_correctly	1.453	0.788	0.088	1.844	0.076
Q50_This_hotel_is_the_best_place_to_work	1.321	1.02	0.104	1.295	0.206
Q44_I_will_accept_any_job	1.176	0.769	0.083	1.529	0.138
Q47_The_hotel_inspires_me_to_maintain_high_performance	0.570	1.599	0.042	0.356	0.724
<i>Note.</i> Dependent Variable: JSI.					

Appendix L

Case Study Report Template

Research Questions:

RQ1. What is organizational alignment within an EB-5 hotel?

Themes & Sub-themes:

RQ2. How does organizational alignment of EB-5 hospitality firms affect employee job satisfaction and performance?

Themes & Sub-themes:

RQ3. How does EB-5 ownership distinguish business performance of hospitality firms.

Themes & Sub-themes:

Key Findings:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Narrative:

Appendix M

Evaluation Reports

DocuSign Envelope ID: EF8B7B81-81D6-4329-AD4B-1CE66C3D0B4D

Evaluation Report

Name: Valentina Naumenko

Purpose: Establishing validity of the interview transcripts

Date: 9/13/2017

It is the judgement of Donna Smith, doctoral student of Florida Institute of Technology, that Valentina Naumenko made no significant differences between the audio recordings and their transcripts and presented data accurately. Five audio recordings/ transcripts were evaluated.

DocuSigned by:

442D328A46C24A4...
Donna Smith

DocuSign Envelope ID: 7998D103-662D-4881-93D8-A024BEA344FA

Evaluation Report

Name: Valentina Naumenko

Purpose: Establishing validity of the interview transcripts

Date: 9/16/2017

It is the judgement of Danielle Schukoske, doctoral student of Florida Institute of Technology, that Valentina Naumenko made no significant differences between the audio recordings and their transcripts and presented data accurately. Five audio recordings/ transcripts were evaluated.

DocuSigned by:
Danielle Schukoske
5C0D5526848E477...
Danielle Schukoske

Appendix N

Correlation Matrix

	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41		
05_Mission_statement_mentions_guest_comment_DA	1																																						
06_Corporate_values_mention_guest_comment_DA	0.81	1																																					
07_Guest_excellence_is_part_of_manager_goal_DA	0.476	0.631	1																																				
08_How_layout_of_guest_friendly_DA	0.554	0.542	0.634	1																																			
09_Physical_conditions_are_guest_friendly_DA	0.605	0.505	0.555	0.790	1																																		
10_We_record_guest_waiting_time_DA	0.520	0.462	0.536	0.515	0.523	1																																	
11_We_collect_guest_satisfaction_info_DA	0.621	0.533	0.652	0.482	0.561	0.780	1																																
12_We_discovered_guest_problems_DA	0.514	0.525	0.656	0.481	0.510	0.791	0.880	1																															
13_We_influence_guests_to_create_their_experience_DA	0.593	0.521	0.623	0.544	0.488	0.743	0.888	0.824	1																														
14_We_help_guests_informed_DA	0.566	0.490	0.671	0.531	0.588	0.702	0.742	0.842	0.712	0.792	1																												
15_Management_likes_service_quality_scores_DA	0.481	0.448	0.680	0.623	0.584	0.623	0.762	0.788	0.802	0.701	0.802	1																											
16_We_ask_guests_feedback_DA	0.432	0.542	0.612	0.462	0.334	0.404	0.544	0.605	0.516	0.532	0.476	0.636	1																										
17_We_share_guests_feedback_with_employees_DA	0.475	0.484	0.594	0.636	0.487	0.648	0.584	0.64	0.655	0.634	0.597	0.665	0.652	1																									
18_GS_performance_scores_are_shared_DA	0.411	0.525	0.620	0.486	0.524	0.515	0.596	0.580	0.575	0.528	0.665	0.706	0.837	0.837	1																								
19_ES_survey_scores_are_shared_DA	0.334	0.488	0.565	0.408	0.381	0.446	0.574	0.611	0.576	0.533	0.488	0.568	0.646	0.748	0.877	1																							
20_Management_shares_survey_results_DA	0.386	0.534	0.632	0.486	0.326	0.368	0.535	0.580	0.583	0.688	0.574	0.644	0.804	0.830	0.785	0.794	1																						
21_Management_likes_employees_feedback_about_it_DA	0.493	0.500	0.561	0.537	0.647	0.685	0.631	0.600	0.587	0.664	0.786	0.548	0.322	0.447	0.476	0.486	0.510	1																					
22_We_evaluate_guests_DA	0.506	0.580	0.625	0.444	0.464	0.722	0.711	0.679	0.807	0.795	0.740	0.853	0.466	0.562	0.449	0.471	0.551	0.736	1																				
23_Management_compares_GS_with_competitors_DA	0.314	0.524	0.727	0.486	0.484	0.516	0.620	0.686	0.534	0.674	0.585	0.566	0.663	0.576	0.656	0.688	0.791	0.562	0.633	1																			
24_Management_cerries_about_service_excellence_DA	0.480	0.528	0.685	0.681	0.703	0.335	0.551	0.475	0.586	0.64	0.609	0.575	0.562	0.624	0.670	0.598	0.640	0.548	0.446	0.537	1																		
25_Reputation_literature_mentions_service_excellence_DA	0.393	0.463	0.633	0.580	0.580	0.516	0.624	0.586	0.584	0.645	0.688	0.573	0.621	0.614	0.610	0.604	0.640	0.681	0.553	0.701	0.778	1																	
26_Hotel_likes_applicants_about_service_comment_DA	0.555	0.480	0.593	0.595	0.524	0.455	0.553	0.494	0.529	0.628	0.743	0.635	0.573	0.587	0.575	0.466	0.607	0.595	0.496	0.553	0.688	0.746	1																
27_Commitment_to_service_excellence_is_hiring_criteria_DA	0.361	0.312	0.524	0.543	0.437	0.433	0.495	0.477	0.476	0.570	0.501	0.531	0.630	0.583	0.563	0.645	0.543	0.394	0.626	0.676	0.814	0.769	1																
28_Excellent_service_is_part_of_orientation_DA	0.400	0.503	0.574	0.414	0.365	0.555	0.581	0.673	0.526	0.623	0.635	0.638	0.773	0.740	0.737	0.727	0.822	0.580	0.676	0.788	0.463	0.628	0.612	0.651	1														
29_Community_education_provides_excellent_service_DA	0.405	0.381	0.591	0.600	0.437	0.430	0.504	0.505	0.447	0.618	0.535	0.510	0.585	0.652	0.575	0.545	0.743	0.573	0.472	0.671	0.614	0.724	0.762	0.657	0.725	1													
30_Excellent_service_is_part_of_performance_evaluation_DA	0.295	0.400	0.761	0.501	0.317	0.479	0.411	0.472	0.435	0.512	0.435	0.505	0.621	0.672	0.624	0.538	0.688	0.371	0.590	0.664	0.545	0.574	0.484	0.677	0.600	0.708	1												
31_Excellent_service_is_recognized_and_rewarded_DA	0.691	0.629	0.548	0.447	0.518	0.645	0.711	0.640	0.687	0.636	0.538	0.568	0.389	0.507	0.391	0.480	0.459	0.590	0.699	0.430	0.398	0.458	0.448	0.452	0.485	0.424	0.465	1											
32_Proc_service_level_to_punishment_DA	0.431	0.412	0.653	0.489	0.408	0.576	0.707	0.62	0.683	0.753	0.528	0.789	0.683	0.686	0.675	0.697	0.724	0.525	0.671	0.688	0.555	0.642	0.700	0.807	0.747	0.699	0.604	1											
33_Employees_are_trained_how_to_respond_to_issues_DA	0.572	0.611	0.701	0.543	0.457	0.597	0.665	0.753	0.623	0.693	0.583	0.777	0.762	0.725	0.751	0.686	0.744	0.516	0.671	0.688	0.553	0.623	0.810	0.633	0.848	0.616	0.729	0.596	0.923	1									
34_We_improve_employees_to_solve_issues_DA	0.724	0.698	0.505	0.742	0.691	0.498	0.532	0.633	0.487	0.645	0.660	0.486	0.498	0.571	0.525	0.452	0.584	0.702	0.627	0.578	0.842	0.543	0.575	0.572	0.579	0.690	0.473	0.581	0.543	0.681	1								
35_Excellent_customer_service_is_formally_celebrated_DA	0.678	0.646	0.430	0.673	0.612	0.473	0.489	0.477	0.508	0.463	0.473	0.409	0.320	0.468	0.411	0.328	0.417	0.518	0.606	0.472	0.473	0.376	0.468	0.461	0.460	0.588	0.451	0.583	0.591	0.843	1								
36_Employees_receive_awards_for_excellent_service_DA	0.493	0.555	0.753	0.596	0.586	0.484	0.703	0.670	0.641	0.76	0.554	0.681	0.495	0.491	0.597	0.596	0.679	0.581	0.724	0.646	0.640	0.547	0.572	0.529	0.599	0.607	0.642	0.666	0.783	0.732	0.640	0.602	1						
37_Managers_lead_by_example_DA	0.525	0.538	0.604	0.533	0.403	0.641	0.661	0.681	0.557	0.652	0.546	0.517	0.716	0.562	0.630	0.670	0.540	0.731	0.631	0.471	0.594	0.590	0.706	0.747	0.801	0.732	0.684	0.774	0.783	0.663	0.725	0.683	1						
38_Managers_are_rewarded_for_service_measures_DA	0.538	0.551	0.597	0.493	0.445	0.430	0.610	0.587	0.550	0.656	0.675	0.713	0.786	0.800	0.802	0.795	0.428	0.795	0.688	0.686	0.785	0.72	0.630	0.533	0.624	0.637	0.666	0.683	0.663	0.725	0.683	1							
39_Managers_are_rewarded_for_ES_scores_DA	0.502	0.583	0.597	0.486	0.352	0.550	0.583	0.538	0.533	0.575	0.575	0.585	0.487	0.474	0.386	0.487	0.494	0.688	0.683	0.386	0.487	0.474	0.533	0.777	0.747	0.634	0.647	0.704	0.716	0.653	0.662	0.668	0.901	0.738	1				
40_Managers_are_rewarded_for_helping_other_departments_DA	0.525	0.635	0.627	0.518	0.435	0.602	0.600	0.584	0.557	0.695	0.661	0.483	0.573	0.750	0.722	0.785	0.727	0.620	0.697	0.722	0.534	0.646	0.595	0.621	0.815	0.725	0.673	0.596	0.688	0.738	0.707	0.593	0.671	0.838	0.784	0.846	1		

* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
 ** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Appendix O

Evaluation of The Interview Findings

	response rate	response rate, %
RQ1. What is organizational alignment within an EB-5 hotel?		
Strategy Factors		
Slow decision making and implementing the changes due to limited authority	5	100%
Low consistency	4	80%
Guest service job is stressful	4	80%
Uncomfortable working environment	2	40%
Low employee motivation	2	40%
Insufficient management support	2	40%
HR fights for employee and maintains safe and fun work environment	1	20%
Employees make a good solid base family.	1	20%
Disagreements between staff members	1	20%
Low Budget	1	20%
There is fine balance and alignment, but employees don't understand it	1	20%
Staffing Factors		
Employee job satisfaction is important	5	100%
Employees have incentives (commission split)	4	80%
Low pay	3	60%
Selecting employees from outside of hospitality industry	3	60%
Limited development opportunities	2	40%
Employees have benefit package	2	40%
Open-door policy for employees (4, 5)	2	40%
No constant training guidance for new employees. "Learning by doing"	1	20%
Hotel has a set plan how to increase employee job satisfaction	1	20%
Insufficient budget managing people effectively	1	20%
Measuring employee motivation at the selection level	1	20%
Employees demonstrate lack of communication skills	1	20%
Insufficient resources like tools or skills	1	20%
System Design Factors		
Providing feedback and communication is important development programs	4	80%

Lack of communication between staff	4	80%
Communication is the strength of the Hotel	3	60%
RQ2. How does organizational alignment of EB-5 hospitality firms affect employee job satisfaction and performance?		
High employee turnover rate	5	100%
Guest service job is stressful	4	40%
Lack of recognition & appreciation	3	60%
Low pay	3	60%
High employee turnover rate	5	100%
Turnover affects hotel significantly	3	60%
Uncomfortable working environment	2	40%
Low employee motivation	2	40%
Lack of property standards	2	40%
Employees are recognized	2	40%
Staff shortage	2	40%
Lack of corporative events for front desk	1	20%
RQ3. How does EB-5 ownership distinguish business performance of hospitality firms?		
Guest satisfaction is important	5	100%
Customer service requires improving	4	80%
Guests complain about non-renovated rooms (old or broken furniture)	4	80%
Guests complain about lack of maintenance	4	80%
Guests complains lower guests' satisfaction.	3	60%
Non-renovated rooms are not bad rooms	2	40%
Increased guest refunds	2	40%
Customer service is a key strength	2	40%
Guests complain about lack of cleanliness of the rooms	2	40%
Slow Wi-Fi	1	20%
Hotel maintains fine balance between rate and product	1	20%
Bad reviews on TripAdvisor [®]	1	20%
Ruined guests vacation	1	20%
There is no difference that comes from the ownership type: it is all about making the guests happy.	1	20%

Appendix P

A Meeting Protocol

Guest Satisfaction. The front desk is the main spot at the hotel where guests address the issues and hope to get them resolved. Depending on the service quality, guests leave the reviews on TripAdvisor[®]. The Front Office is the voice and the face of The Hotel. Therefore, the front desk agents are expected to make a difference by listening to the guests, understanding them, and improving their experience.

Mainly, the meeting was dedicated to the subject of how to make guests feel taken care of. Managers stated that the guests must receive full attention, and Front Office agents are responsible for creating guest loyalty. Also, agents are expected to be extraordinary and go above the guests' expectations. Therefore, the agents were reminded that they must always ask the guests if there is anything else that could be done. Also, the agents should be patient, especially, when dealing with upset guests.

Every agent experiences unhappy guests, but agents should do all possible things to fix the issues and make the guest happy. Managers said that agents should not be afraid to make decisions to satisfy the guest's needs. The Assistant General Manager specifically emphasized that in 99 out of 100 situations, agents can fix the guest's issues on their own. He said: "Agents have so many options to make guests happy"; for example, complimentary upgrades. To minimize the level of job related stress, it is acceptable for an agent to ask a guest to wait some time before an agent

comes up with a solution. After the agent offers the guest an apology, an employee can take some time and review the case to gather more details. What is not acceptable is to promise the guest to follow up and fail to do so. Being able to complete the tasks on time has a top priority for The Hotel.

The Front Office reminded that agents should encourage the guests to leave reviews on TripAdvisor® more actively. This topic was important, and managers dedicated at least 20 percent of the meeting time to it. The TripAdvisor® rating is vital for The Hotel occupancy, and management asked the staff to distribute the TripAdvisor® cards to the checking-out guests. Managers added that the cards must be given not only at the check-outs, but any time when guests express their satisfaction.

It was mentioned that during the busiest time of the year, two summer months, only three agent names were mentioned in guest reviews while prior to that, only one employee's name was mentioned 15 times in one month. Then employee X shared his experience on how he encouraged the guests to leave more reviews. His main tool was to make guests smile by telling them jokes. All employees were reminded that for every time a guest publishes a TripAdvisor® review with the agent's name, the employee receives a \$5 bonus. This bonus was designed to improve the company score on the TripAdvisor® website. Even though the company's scores varied between 96 and 97, the Assistant General Manager said that he believes that it is not too hard for The Hotel to achieve a position within a top 50.

Incremental Revenue. Some opportunities to generate more income for The Hotel were also discussed. Incremental revenue is especially desired due to The Hotel keeping 100 percent of this revenue without sharing it with The Hotel owners. This money can be used for an agent's lunch or fun activities. Discussing the opportunities to generate additional income, some optional services were named. Among them were late check-outs, early check-ins, or a room upgrade. Managers confirmed that employees receive a 15 percent commission from selling early check-ins or late check-outs and a 10 percent commission from upgrading the rooms. To increase the revenue, the hotel also started to charge guests for DVD rentals, which were complimentary before.

Employee policies and procedures. This topic was dissected into the Front Office paperwork and HR policies. The necessity to improve the communication between the shift agents and Front Office managers was discussed during the meeting. The Front Office Manager said that agents are team players, and they need to take care of each other. Communication between the shifts is a must because it helps to resolve guest issues more effectively and allows keeping guests happy. It was also added that if agents have any questions, ideas, or concerns, the manager's office is always open. Internal paperwork such as package log, 2nd effort log, registration cards, room move log, and importance of leaving the notes in the reservations were discussed. Some routine mistakes, like an incomplete registration form, were pointed out, so agents can learn how to avoid making mistakes. Finally,

the Supervisor handed out The Hotel policies to the employees, and the Front Office Manager read them to the employees.

Appendix Q

Site: Staff and HR Policies and Practices

There are 89 employees working at The Hotel. The organizational structure of The Hotel is divided into seven departments: administration, front desk, concierge, maintenance, housekeeping, recreation, and spa. Staff members' distribution by position is presented below:

1. Administration (4): General Manager (1), Assistant General Manager (1), Guest Service Manager (1), and Property Manager (1).
2. Front desk (15): Front Desk Manager (1), Front Desk Supervisors (2), Front Desk Agents (9), and Night Auditors (3).
3. Concierge (4): Concierge Supervisor (1) and Concierge Agents (3).
4. Maintenance (15): Chief Engineer (1), Chief Engineer Assistant (1), Maintenance Supervisors (5), and Maintenance (8).
5. Housekeeping (32) Housekeeping Manager (1), Housekeeping Supervisors (5), Runner Supervisor (1), Dispatch (2) Runner (2), Inventory (2), Housekeepers (21).
6. Recreation (7): Pool attendants (6) and Kids Club (1).
7. Spa (12): Spa Manager (1), Receptionist (1), and Spa technicians (10).

The Hotel believes that outstanding people are the key to success because every employee contributes to the company's strength and future growth. Every employee is introduced to the employee handbook to develop an understanding of

the company's policies and procedures. Some of the key policies and practices are listed below:

1. All employees are at-will employees.
2. The Hotel welcomes open communication between employees and managers. Therefore, the company provides an Open-door policy to encourage an exchange of information, and employees are invited to share their concerns and suggestions.
3. The Hotel provides equal employment opportunities and expressly prohibits unlawful discrimination, harassment, and retaliation.
4. An employee is expected to adhere to all (including, but not limited to attendance, behavior, and performance) policies and practices of The Hotel. Therefore, employees are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times and exhibit the highest level of integrity in performing their job.
5. It is important to maintain a positive work environment through good working relationships with the customers, guests, and co-workers, and to support an environment that emphasizes The Hotel's commitment to good customer service.
6. The health and safety of employees and others in The Hotel is of utmost concern. The Hotel makes every effort to provide working conditions that are as healthy and safe as feasible, and employees are expected to be equally conscious about work-place safety, including proper work

methods, reporting potential hazards, and reducing exposure to known hazards.

7. Upon request, employees are eligible for paid leaves. Among them are Family and Medical Leave (FMLA leave), military leave, bereavement leave, jury and witness duty leave, some holidays, and vacation. The Hotel recognizes Memorial Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. While an eligible nonexempt employee works a recognized holiday, the employee will be paid double time for the hours worked; full time non-exempt employees not scheduled to work the holiday will be paid holiday pay equal to 50% of their average workday wages for the previous six pay periods. Full time employees become eligible for vacation after completing one year of employment. After one year of employment, employee is eligible for one week paid vacation, after three years employment, for two weeks, and after seven years, for three weeks. Part time employees are not eligible to accrue vacation.
8. The full time employee benefits include Health Care Benefits and reward/recognition programs. Under Health Care Benefits, employees will enjoy medical care, dental care, vision care, and a wellness screening program. Short-term disability, long-term disability, and Life and Accidental Death Insurance plans are available. All employees are eligible for: a Disney Hospitality Pass, Employee of the Month recognition, guest service incentives, employee referral incentives,

attendance recognition, tuition reimbursement, and friends and family hotel and Spa rates. Also, front desk and reservations positions are paid commission.

9. The Hotel's manager will review each employee's performance to:
evaluate how the job has been performed, determine how the job can be improved, to evaluate short and long-term potential, set goals that support The Hotel and employee objectives, and determine a monitoring process for these goals.
10. The Hotel emphasizes throughout diverse hotel documents and signs that there is no limit to employee's growth and development. The management team is dedicated to helping and encouraging all The Hotel employees to achieve their best. Employees are provided with hands-on training, valuable feedback, coaching, and knowledge from The Hotel's team of dedicated management professionals on a consistent basis.
"There Really is No Limit" to what an employee can achieve because the career opportunities in The Hotel are endless: This is the most advertised HR promise.

Appendix R.

Online Reviews. Jan 1, 2017- September 15, 2017

Review/ Channels	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Sum
Total Reviews	713	5912	1312	1600	8555	254	58	18404
Total Score	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.6	4	4.1	3	28.5
2017 Reviews	422	252	299	220	1198	18	16	2425
Review/no respond	112	10	139	56	27	3	16	363
1-3 star review/no respond	12	1	59	6	4	1	13	96
5 star 2017	245	147	96	184	651	8	0	1331
4 star 2017	125	59	108	12	319	4	4	631
3 star 2017	33	21	60	10	131	3	5	263
2 star 2017	7	15	27	4	52	2	1	108
1 star 2017	12	10	8	10	45	1	6	92
Guest Complaints in 2017 reviews								
Broken Items	8	19	29	6	78	3	3	146
Bad bedding	2	3	8	2	35	2		52
Cleanliness	7	19	19	3	73	2	1	124
Old furniture	11	12	14		59	2	1	99
No daily housekeeping	1	8	8	9	21	1	2	50
Room readiness	1	2		2	7	1	1	14
Overpriced services	14	11	18	5	23	1	5	77
Parking	3	3	5	3	13		2	29
Lost and found				1	1			2
Unfriendly staff	10	4	2	5	7		2	30
Bedbugs/roaches	5	1		1	3			10
Kids activities	1		1	1				3
Unclear billing			1	2	2			5
Timeshare	3	4	4		2		3	16
Shuttle service	3		3		17			23
Unhelpful staff	3	8	3		21		2	37
Security & safety		2	5	14	16		16	53
Restaurants	2	1	7	1	13		1	25

Note. Channels: 1. Google; 2. Expedia; 3. Booking.com; 4. Facebook; 5. TripAdvisor; 6. Orbitz; 7. Yelp.