An Examination of Mississippi Gulf Coast Casino Management Styles with Implications for Employee Turnover

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of casino employees on management styles and the relationship of these perceptions on the employee turnover rate. The sample consisted of a balanced representation of supervisory and nonsupervisory employees. Supervisors tended to perceive themselves and their managerial style in a much move favorable light than did their employees. Future research should continue to address issues of employee retention in the casino industry and adopt strategies that can retain valuable employees while reducing employee turnover costs. Human resource development processes should support managerial styles that facilitate collaborative decision making and participative learning opportunities throughout the organization.

Keywords: Management styles, employee turnover rate, perception

Introduction

The casino industry in Mississippi has become one of the largest employers in the state. With over $800 million being paid to casino employees annually and casino construction accounting for an increase of 130% in hotel rooms on the Mississippi Gulf Coast alone, the casino industry has experienced unprecedented growth (von Herrmann, Ingram, & Smith, 2000). Since the adoption of gaming, the Mississippi Department of Economic Development has described the State's economy as the "Mississippi Miracle" (von Herrmann, 2002). With over $3 billion in gross gaming revenues and $330 million paid in direct gaming taxes, Mississippi has evolved over the past 10 years into the third largest gaming market in the United States (von Herrmann, 2006).

The demand for employees in many areas of casino operations in Mississippi has exceeded supply. The shortage of qualified workers is challenging casino operators, and the hospitality industry as a whole, to develop strategic human resource development processes. In the hospitality industry, discussions are dominated by strategies on how to find and keep good employees (Goldwasser, 2000). Companies have become more competitive in the search for loyal, productive employees. The incentive packages used to retain employees by employers not only include higher wages but also 401K retirement programs, free meals, paid vacations, uniforms, paid time off, in addition to other incentives.

New measures have to be taken to find more successful ways of using human resource development practices to retain employees (Goldwasser, 2000). Training and

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development, education, performance improvement, and learning are a number of common terms associated with progressive human resource development processes (Phillips, 1999). Once regarded as a personnel department's responsibility, human resource development has evolved into a process that can be integrated into all aspects of an organization (Nadler & Wiggs, 1986). Furthermore, Nadler and Wiggs argue that one of the most critical factors of success in an organization may be directly linked to human resources (people). In the hospitality industry, Iverson (2001) explains, that success is tied to organizations that are able to put people (customers and employees) first, despite increasingly higher levels of competition. Effective human resource development activities help develop employees to their fullest potential, leading to greater levels of employee and customer satisfaction (Nadler & Wiggs, 1986).

As reported from senior executives within the hospitality industry, some of the overarching issues for hospitality organizations include retention, education, training, and recruitment. In addition, positive solutions are needed to help transition employees and adopt strategies that help maintain a stable workforce to efficiently meet the needs of high growth areas such as the hospitality and casino industry (U.S. Department of Labor, 2005). In addition to hiring the right person for the job, employee retention in the casino industry has become a critical issue. Maintaining a stable workforce through employee retention will help reduce the employee replacement cycle that may be defined as employee turnover (Woods, 1997).

Analyzing individual employees' needs and perceptions can provide insight into effective leadership and an overall management style may be identified. Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson (2000) argue that managers must use different leadership styles depending on the situation as well as have a greater understanding of the needs and perceptions of different employees that may help fit a particular situation. Considering that managers are challenged to perform a variety of roles in a hospitality organization, management style may be defined as an overall method of leadership styles.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of management styles for supervisory and nonsupervisory employees working in the casino business. Furthermore, the relationship between the employee's perceptions on management styles and the employee turnover rate was also examined. Similar perceptions of favorable management styles between supervisors and nonsupervisors will contribute to lower employee turnover rates.

Review of the Literature

When investigating the issue of employee retention, many surveys and studies reveal that more people leave their job because they do not get along with their boss or supervisor than for any other reason (Joyce, 2006). Direct service employees, particularly, are the people who come in the closest contact with the customer on a daily basis. The customer will often make a decision to return to an establishment based on their interaction with a single employee. When valuable employees continually leave an organization, it has a direct effect on the customer experience. If customers cannot relate to the employees, business is affected in a negative way (Goldwasser, 2000).

Customer turnover (guests that leave and do not return) that is directly related to employee turnover is a challenge for many casino operations. Customer and employee turnover both have a direct link to the bottom-line and profit (Sanders & Knight, 1997). The seriousness of employee turnover is evident in the hotel and restaurant industry "with an average hourly employee turnover rate of 125% and rates as high as 300% in some segments" (Goldwasser, 2000, p. 1). There are direct and indirect costs associated with employee turnover, including time and effort. The U.S. Department of Labor declares that a company pays "at least one-third of a new hire's annual salary to replace an employee"

(Gustafson, 2001, p. 66). In addition to the impact employee turnover has on a company financially, many attempts to give excellent service are disrupted. Employee morale may suffer from turnover; customer confidence may weaken, resulting in a negative impact to the bottom line and profitability of the organization (Zuber, 2001). Many organizations may not fully appreciate the high costs associated with turnover, while others view employee turnover as inevitable (Nextera Enterprises, 2000).

In addition to the costs accumulated from hiring and training new employees, customer satisfaction is directly related to employee loyalty. Employee dissatisfaction may in turn jeopardize the objectives of the organization (Abbasi & Hollman, 2000). According to Abbasi and Hollman, "the experience, background, and training of managers appear to have a significant impact on the problem of turnover" (p. 4). A 1996 research study conducted by the *Wilson Learning Corporation* concluded that most of the "passion has gone out of America's work force" (Ramsey, 1997, p. 6). This does not bode well for employers that need loyal and dedicated workers to provide quality customer service. For a casino company to remain competitive in a highly competitive labor market, strategies must examine why employees voluntarily leave an organization.

As the hospitality industry continues to rapidly change, supervisors and nonsupervisors face new and challenging roles. One of the concerns with rapidly changing roles in a hospitality organization is whether the infrastructure of the organization has also changed to support employees with their evolving responsibilities. In highly competitive and uncertain operating environments, hospitality organizations will require infrastructures that support reciprocal channels of communication between both internal and external customers. While there is abundant research on the diverse types of leadership styles that can be applied to different business settings, there are a number of common elements that deserve mentioning. Behavioral skills, for example, often play a crucial role in effective management regardless of the management style. Although, hospitality management has not been researched as extensively as general business theories, there are a number of frameworks that may apply to the casino industry. Human resource development theorists, such as Peter Senge, who most notably coined the term 'learning organization', are providing needed support for industries with high human capital costs (Senge, 1990). Themes such as that found in learning organizations focus on engaging employee commitment and retention through individual learning opportunities that ultimately lead to achieving larger organizational goals. One of the major themes this study addresses is the shared perceptions of management styles and visions to create development opportunities, individual ownership, loyalty, commitment, and retention for hospitality organizations.

The supervisor's role is to facilitate participation and encourage employees to share their visions rather than forcing his or her own vision on them.

Senge (1990) indicated that shared visions bring together the goals and vision of the individual with the goals and vision of the organization to build reciprocal commitments. The individual visions of the employees and supervisors create the shared vision of the learning organization. The organizational vision must be created through the interaction of the employees rather than simply created by their supervisor. The supervisor's role is to facilitate participation and encourage employees to share their visions rather than forcing his or her own vision on them. The organizational vision will evolve out of the collective visions created by the employees of the organization.

Mental model is another part of Senge's (1990) learning organization theory that directs employees toward responses to situations and events while learning to recognize what has worked in the past and what has not. Mental models determine how an employee will think and act based on his or her perception of the situation. Recognizing mental models is important for making progress in learning and, without the realization of the mental models, learning will not happen.

Team learning is a process that allows dialogue among employees to help minimize inhibitions that may exist among employees to create learning that maximizes results

(Senge, 1990). Successful teams bring employees together to act on personal mastery and shared visions. Dialogue opens the flow among employees to develop a larger intelligence than any one individual. Senge describes three conditions that are necessary for effective dialogue to occur. Employees (supervisors and nonsupervisors) must suspend previous assumptions to allow a reshaping of reality. Next, employees must regard and respect other employees as colleagues. Finally, a facilitator (supervisor) is necessary to help guide the context of the dialogue until the team can develop the necessary skills.

Senge (1990) builds on the five disciplines of the learning organization with activities that develop learning organizations. Examining history is an important activity that allows organizations to review past successes and failures, assess them, and document the lessons learned. Organizations can anticipate results by utilizing stored information to bring new and innovative perspectives of processes. Feedback mechanisms for employees to learn from each other (supervisors and nonsupervisors) or from other organizations in a different field provide another opportunity to examine and gather benchmarking data. Transferring knowledge is the key for all learning initiatives. Learning activities that are disseminated through the organization and applied on the job connect the learning with action to benefit both the employee and organization.

Another human resource development theorist, Kirton (1994), formulated an adaptation-innovation theoretical model to explain the process of problem solving. Kirton suggests in his model that an adaptive style of problem solving is at one end of a continuum and an innovative style of problem solving is at the other end of the continuum. An adaptive style of problem solving is characteristic of structure, less inclined to risk taking with a tendency towards unquestioning processes. The adaptive style of problem solving may not be as flexible and prefer guidelines to minimize ambiguous situations. In contrast, at the other end of the spectrum, is the innovator style or problem solver. The innovator style is characteristic of risk takers who seek novel solutions to problems and typically look for solutions outside of conventional guidelines. These innovators are often attracted to problems where they can provide new solutions and feel gratified in using unconventional problem solving techniques. Often overly structured guidelines, created by supervisors, lead the innovators to perceive the boundaries as the problem and intrusive in their capacity to resolve situations. Organizational change, Kirton argues, happens when adapters are able to move along the continuum towards an innovator style of problem solving. Similarly, compared to Senge's learning organization theory, Kirton's adaptation-innovation theoretical model focuses on individual learning as a means to organizational effectiveness.

Problem solving strategies in the hospitality and workplace are becoming critically important for organizational effectiveness (Ross, 2003). Employees in the hospitality industry, Ross argues, require an enhanced capacity to think critically in spontaneous situations. In a comparative study by Ross of small enterprise and large hospitality organizations, learning styles were compared to the context of the organization (size). Specifically Ross's study examined the contexts of small enterprise employment or self employment with large enterprise employment or public service employment in the hospitality industry. The purpose of the study by Ross was to examine the person-environment fit by associating problem solving strategies between small and large hospitality employment enterprises.

Ross (2003) reported that the significant results of his study indicated that the small enterprise context had the most favorable prospects for problem solving strategies over the large enterprise context. Individuals, Ross explains, who prefer to be their own supervisor prefer to have control over their business activities. Furthermore, these individuals prefer to have a role in the direction of the business and seek active participation in problem solving activities. These individuals also seek entrepreneurial activities to satisfy their need for independent control of their learning. Preferences for learning, Ross reports, involve self-reliance as being critical in terms of the potential for advancement. Theoretical notions were not highly regarded for this group of individuals, while practical aspects of education and learning processes were perceived to be valuable for survival and critical for the future. Creativity of thought and action were also valued highly by this entrepreneurial group of individuals with the perception that innovative problem solving leads to greater rewards and job satisfaction.

In large enterprise employment contexts, Ross (2003) describes individuals who perceive learning as a method that is developed from the procedures and approaches of others in the organization. Success, perceived by individuals in the large enterprise organization, is the result of being shaped by established procedures that may be applied to suit any situation. Creativity, described by Ross, is not as strongly emphasized among these individuals, yet the degree of creativeness may be limited to the norms or conventional processes of the organization. The attractiveness of a large enterprise for these individuals may be that they only need to adapt or modify learning behaviors from a narrow range of established ideas and procedures. Unlike entrepreneurial problem solvers in small enterprises who seek to create and control the development process of new ideas and procedures, adapters prefer not to overturn or recreate established boundaries.

The research proposed by Ross (2003) reveals a number of interesting findings related to organizations in the hospitality industry. While attempting to categorize small and large hospitality enterprises appears somewhat ambiguous, parallels may be drawn from organizational strategies, learning styles, and management styles. The perception of learning and problem solving among different organizational structures has implications to suggest further that complex relationships exist internally and externally among organizations in the hospitality industry. In the context of learning and problem solving, the perception of learning processes may need further critical examination to ensure organizations are nurturing development processes that consider the unique characteristics of employees' needs. Organizations that perpetuate traditional procedures without critical analysis may find their enterprise resembling a system that fails to initiate rapid change. As competition in the hospitality industry continues to challenge organizations to compete effectively, problem solving processes that involve both supervisors and nonsupervisors will need to be developed strategically to improve organizational effectiveness. Through shared participation in decision making, personal responsibility may increase, along with opportunities for increased communication among supervisors and their employees. Supervisors working closely in conjunction with their employees may help to minimize areas of misperceptions among either group of employees and develop a sense of shared vision.

This study is of significant interest to casino and hospitality organizations, as well as, the field of human resource development. With 75% of employees leaving a company as a direct result of the relationship with their supervisors, an examination of this dynamic relationship is necessary when discussing employee retention (Joyce, 2006). The employee turnover rate in the casino industry is as high as 70% to 80%. The high costs associated with employee turnover rates in many rapidly expanding casino organizations have created an urgent need to address this important issue. Effective leadership has become integral in the role of retaining employees.

The employee turnover rate in the casino industry is as high as 70% to 80%.

The Mississippi casino industry has attempted a number of innovative strategies in order to obtain qualified workers. One strategy was to implement an "Adopt a Town" program that partnered with local communities and colleges to help overcome barriers to employment (von Herrmann, Ingram, & Smith, 2000). Various issues of transportation, childcare, social and communication skills were addressed to help transition potential employees from unemployment to employment. While programs such as "Adopt a Town" have proved to be effective in recruiting new employees, the challenge now must turn to how to retain these employees. Long (2005) similarly reported that hospitality organizations can not afford to continually lose employees that have been recruited; employee retention is a necessity for survival in highly competitive areas with short labor supply. As gaming rapidly expands throughout the United States, Stedham and Mitchell (1996) argue that competition for casino employees is increasing. Stedham and Mitchell investigated the relationship among employee turnover, worker perceptions, and job satisfaction with results indicating that job satisfaction and organizational commitment were the most strongly related factors to employee turnover. Labor market conditions and pay increases played a subsidiary role in an employee's decision to leave an organization.

Methodology

The sample for this study consisted of 251 employees in the Mississippi casino industry. Employees were categorized into two separate groups; the first group consisted of employees classified as supervisors and the second group consisted of nonsupervisors. The difference in these two groups is the level of rank the groups have in the organization.

One casino organization was selected for the current study because it had a diverse representation of voluntary participants. The convenience sample, which includes supervisory employees and nonsupervisory employees, made this casino appropriate for the study. The researchers chose a convenience sample to obtain an adequate sample size. Employees who made up the sample completed questionnaires in scheduled training sessions to create a more objective environment with less peer pressure from their routine place of work. There is an expansive employee base in this casino due to the large variety of departments ranging from areas of gaming, food & beverage, hotel, entertainment, security, valet, and administration. Each department comprises a diverse group of employees in terms of ethnicity, gender, age, and education. Although the perceptions of the sampled employees may be limited by the responses found at one particular casino organization, certain controls can be met which include the perceptions of industry status, the overall management climate (practices), and the internal organizational culture (values). By highlighting the shared consensuses of the employees who interact directly with that of their supervisors, identifiable implications within the context of one organizational culture may be determined. Closely linking employees' perceptions of management styles to employee turn over rates for this casino operation was the result of this study.

Two different questionnaires were used for this study. Upon combining identical managerial and employee statements, reliability analysis was run, resulting in a Cronbach's reliability alpha of .92. The first questionnaire was designed to gather data on personal assessments of management skills for supervisory employees. In addition to a number of demographic questions, this questionnaire contained Likert-scaled questions (1= strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=neither disagree nor agree; 4=agree; 5=strongly agree) designed to give an overall profile of the supervisor's perceived level of management skills and leadership attributes. Content for the questionnaire was adapted from several notable sources: Whetton and Cameron's (1998) *Developing Management Skills*, Bass and Deep's (1970) *Current Perspectives for Managing Organizations*, Bass's (1985) *Leadership and Performance beyond Expectations*, and Barney and Griffin's (1992) *The Management of Organizations*. Questions ranged from levels of trust among the relationships between supervisory and nonsupervisory employees; types of incentives supervisors offer for employee motivation; the amount of decision making the employees are involved in and whether the employees are part of a team.

The second questionnaire was specifically designed for nonsupervisory employees to gather data on what these employees perceive to be effective management skills and whether their direct supervisors possess those desired skills. The intent of this questionnaire was to get an overall profile on what the nonsupervisory employees perceive to be the most effective and supportive leadership behaviors. Content for this questionnaire was also adapted from Whetton and Cameron's (1998) *Developing*

Management Skills, Bass and Deep's (1970) *Current Perspectives for Managing Organizations*, Bass's (1985) *Leadership and Performance beyond Expectations*, and Barney and Griffin's (1992) *The Management of Organizations*. Furthermore, this questionnaire consisted of a number of demographic questions. The Likert-scaled questions (1= strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=neither disagree nor agree; 4=agree; 5=strongly agree) ranged from the level of trust the nonsupervisory employees perceive their relationships with their direct supervisors to be based on; types of incentives the nonsupervisory employees receive from their supervisors; the amount of decision making the nonsupervisory employees are involved in and whether the nonsupervisory employees believe they are part of a team.

The supervisor's questionnaire was tested for length and clarity by administering it to six supervisors at a hotel in Mississippi. The pre-test group was composed of employees classified as supervisors with a length of service ranging from four to eight years. The nonsupervisory employee questionnaire was tested for length and clarity by administering it to five nonsupervisory employees ranging in length of service from two months to eight years. Both questionnaires were deemed to be easily understood and appropriate for the study by analyzing the pilot tests results.

After completion of the pilot test, questionnaires were administered to 34 casino employees labeled as supervisory employees. The method of distribution was inter-office mail, personally addressed to each participant, with the surveys marked "Important." Responses were received from all respondents.

The second group was the nonsupervisory employees, and participants were selected with a stratified sample of each department, including both full-time and part-time employees. A total of 133 surveys were distributed to employees in seven departments. The questionnaires were distributed by trainers, who were also classified as nonsupervisory employees in scheduled training meetings. Employees were randomly selected in the meetings and distributed surveys. The employees put the completed surveys into individual envelopes and the trainers turned in these envelopes to the researcher. Anonymity and confidentiality of all participants was guaranteed. Ultimately, responses were received from 95 nonsupervisory employees, for a return rate of 71.4%.

In addition to the demographic profiles for supervisory and nonsupervisory employees, tests of significance were performed on identical Likert statements for supervisors and nonsupervisors. Dissimilar Likert statements from each questionnaire were deleted from the analysis. Upon combining identical managerial and employee statements, reliability analysis was run, resulting in a Cronbach's reliability alpha of .92.

Results

Illustrated in Table 1 is the demographic breakdowns for supervisors and nonsupervisors.

Table 1
Demographic Profile of Managers and Employees

	Percent of Respondents	
Demographic Variable:	Supervisor	Nonsupervisor
Department:		
Accounting	14	8
Administration	19	3
Engineering	9	11
Front Desk	24	23
Housekeeping	18	41
Operations PBX	9	5
Reservations	7	9

The largest percentage of supervisory respondents was from the front desk followed by the administration department. The largest percentage of nonsupervisory respondents was from housekeeping, followed by the front desk department.

Presented in Table 2 is the results of the significance tests (specifically, independent t-tests of means) for differences between the mean responses of the perceptions of supervisors and nonsupervisors, with respect to Likert questions on managerial styles, abilities, and actions. As was noted previously, two different questionnaires were administered to casino supervisors and nonsupervisors although both questionnaires contained many Likert-type questions which were the same for both groups. Table 2 illustrates the results of these comparisons. The hypothesis supported the null; there is no significant difference between the perceptions of casino nonsupervisors and supervisors, with respect to statements related to the managerial styles of the supervisors.

Table 2
Comparisons of Perceptions of Managers' and Employees' Perceptions of Managerial Styles of Casino Managers

Likert Statement	Casino Employees (n=183)		Casino Managers (n=68)		t-stat	p-value
	Means*	Std. Devs.	Means*	Std. Devs.		
1. Employee inputs perceived as important.	3.38	1.23	4.63	0.57	-7.965	.000*
2. Perceived trusting relationship between managers and employees	3.80	1.22	4.55	0.66	-4.767	.000*
3. Perceived opportunities for advancement by management and employees	3.32	1.45	4.78	0.49	-8.058	.000*
4. Perceived rewards for employees' extra effort	3.09	1.36	4.35	0.74	-7.102	.000*
5. Perceived feedback regarding employees' performance	3.38	1.25	4.11	0.79	-4.414	.000*
6. Perception of employees being informed about major decisions/changes within the company	3.74	1.29	4.48	0.89	-4.318	.000*
7. Perception of supervisor sharing knowledge/expertise with employees	3.68	1.28	4.55	0.66	-5.299	.000*
8. Perception of supervisor explaining to employees as to why changes are made	3.74	1.17	4.42	0.86	-4.348	.000*
9. Perception of supervisor's concern about employees' well-being	3.68	1.26	4.64	0.62	-6.022	.000*
10. Perception of supervisor encouraging employees to ask questions if they do not understand something	4.31	1.10	4.81	0.40	-3.589	.000*
11. Perception as to whether supervisor listens to both sides of disputes between employees	3.71	1.33	4.75	0.59	-6.179	.000*
12. Perception as to whether supervisor clearly states what is expected of employees	4.12	1.04	4.47	0.68	-2.558	.011*

*1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neither Disagree nor Agree; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly Agree

**Significant at alpha=.05

Table 2 (continued)
Comparisons of Perceptions of Managers' and Employees' Perceptions of Managerial Styles of Casino Managers

Likert Statement	Casino Managers		Casino Employees			
	Means	Std. Devs.	Means	Std. Devs.	t-stat	p-value
13. Perception of whether employees are encouraged to participate in decision-making	3.07	1.41	3.88	1.01	-4.296	.000*
14. Perception of whether or not supervisor gives employees adequate resources to do their jobs	4.05	0.99	4.60	0.60	-4.213	.000*
15. Perception as to whether or not supervisor praises employees often	3.12	1.33	4.37	0.76	-7.272	.000*
16. Perception as to whether or not supervisor makes sure employees are feel they are valuable assets to the company's overall success	4.30	0.93	4.40	0.68	-0.849	.397
17. Notification of employee when policy changes occur	3.92	1.13	4.70	0.67	-5.345	.000*
18. Perception as to whether employee feels he/she is part of a team	4.13	1.11	4.60	0.60	-3.284	.001*
19. Perception of supervisor encouraging employee to do a good job	4.07	1.03	4.79	0.45	-5.535	.000*
20. Employees encouraged to set work-related goals	3.60	1.21	4.25	0.96	-3.968	.000*
21. Perceived problem if employee disagrees with supervisor	2.60	1.44	2.10	1.13	2.537	.012*
22. Perception of willingness of supervisor to help employee if needed	4.15	1.09	4.79	0.45	-4.716	.000*
23. Supervisor perceived as showing little concern for employee	2.25	1.36	1.97	1.07	1.542	.124
24. Supervisor clearly defines employees' work role	3.82	1.06	4.14	0.95	-2.125	.035*

*1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neither Disagree nor Agree; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly Agree

**Significant at alpha=.05

Table 2 (continued)
Comparisons of Perceptions of Managers' and Employees' Perceptions of Managerial Styles of Casino Managers

Likert Statement	Casino Managers		Casino Employees			
	Means	Std. Devs.	Means	Std. Devs.	t-stat	p-value
25. Perception as to whether employee is given opportunity to take initiative in certain situations	3.38	1.15	4.18	0.99	-5.060	.000*
26. When counseling employee, supervisor perceived as making expectations clear	4.09	1.01	4.58	0.70	-3.641	.000*
27. Perception of clear lines of communication between supervisor and employee	3.77	1.17	4.49	0.68	-4.802	.000*
28. Perception of open, trusting relationship between supervisor and employee	3.83	1.24	4.61	0.63	-4.958	.000*
29. Perception of supervisor/employee having full support of employee/supervisor	3.79	1.19	4.18	0.80	-2.453	.015*
30. Perception as to whether decisions are made by entire department, and not just the supervisor	2.95	1.33	3.88	1.23	-5.018	.000*
31. Perception as to whether supervisor has an open door policy	4.10	1.20	4.69	0.68	-3.807	.000*
32. Perception as to whether supervisor ignores complaints from employee	2.42	1.31	1.46	0.97	5.440	.000*

*1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neither Disagree nor Agree; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly Agree

**Significant at alpha=.05

As noted in Table 2, there were many significant differences in employee perceptions. Supervisors showed a significantly stronger level of agreement than nonsupervisors, with respect to their performance in considering employee input into decision making activities. Likewise, supervisors indicated a stronger level of agreement that their relationship with their employees was open and based on trust. Supervisors also felt more strongly that their efforts helped encourage employees to advance themselves. With respect to rewards for extra efforts, supervisors showed significantly stronger agreement that they did provide such rewards, than employees perceived themselves as receiving these awards. Also, with respect to providing employees with timely feedback about their performance, supervisors once again felt more strongly that such feedback was provided.

When asked if they thought they were well-informed about major decisions or changes within the company, supervisors showed significantly more agreement with this statement than the nonsupervisory employees. The same conclusions were observed when nonsupervisory and supervisory employees were asked if supervisors shared their expertise with their employees, and if supervisors explained changes that were being made.

With respect to supervisor's concern for their employees' well-being, supervisors felt significantly stronger that they were in fact concerned for their employee's well-being, while nonsupervisory employees indicated, on average, a slight agreement that their supervisors cared about their well-being. Furthermore, when asked if they felt encouraged to ask questions when seeking clarification, both nonsupervisors and supervisors agreed that they were encouraged to do so, but once again supervisors indicated a significantly stronger agreement with this statement.

Supervisory and nonsupervisory employees were both asked if they felt that supervisors listened to both sides when there was a dispute between employees, and as cited in previous questions, supervisors demonstrated a significantly stronger level of agreement than employees that they did listen to both sides. The same result was true when supervisory and nonsupervisory employees were asked if they thought supervisors clearly stated what is expected of their employees, with supervisors showing a stronger level of agreement.

When asked if employees were encouraged to participate in decision-making, supervisors felt more strongly that this was true than reported by the nonsupervisory employees. Supervisors also felt more strongly that they gave their employees adequate resources to do their jobs than did the nonsupervisory employees, although the nonsupervisory employees did agree with this statement. Nonsupervisory employees also did not feel as strongly that they were praised by their supervisors, as did the supervisors themselves.

In one of the two statements where no significant differences were found, both supervisory and nonsupervisory employees showed the same level of agreement that supervisors made sure they let the employees know they were a valuable asset in the success of the company. However, when asked if supervisors notified their employees of changes in policies or procedures, supervisory employees again felt significantly stronger than nonsupervisory employees that they did make such notifications.

When asked if nonsupervisory employees are made to feel as if they are part of a team, both supervisory and nonsupervisory employees agreed.

When asked if nonsupervisory employees are made to feel as if they are part of a team, both supervisory and nonsupervisory employees agreed, but supervisors again showed a significantly stronger level of agreement than did nonsupervisors. This also held true when both groups were asked if supervisors encouraged their employees to do a good job. When asked if they felt if supervisors encouraged their employees to set goals relating to their work, supervisors again showed a stronger level of agreement than did nonsupervisors.

Both supervisory and nonsupervisory employees disagreed with the statement that employees would get into trouble if they disagreed with their supervisors, but supervisors, perhaps perceiving themselves as being more open-minded, showed a significantly stronger level of disagreement. Similarly, both groups agreed that supervisors were willing to help employees if needed, but supervisors showed a stronger level of agreement. Both groups showed about the same level of disagreement with the statement that supervisors show little concern for their employees (this was the only other Likert statement where there was no significant difference). However, supervisors again demonstrated significantly more agreement that they clearly defined their employees' roles at work.

When asked if supervisors were perceived as giving their employees the opportunity to take initiative in situations, supervisory employees had a significantly stronger level of agreement than nonsupervisory employees that they did give their employees such opportunities. While both supervisory and nonsupervisory employees both agreed that when counseling employees, the supervisors stated their expectations clearly; however, supervisors showed a significantly stronger level of agreement with this than did the nonsupervisor. This was also true when both groups were asked if there were clear lines of communication between them, whether the supervisory and nonsupervisory relationships were open, trusting, honest, and whether each group had the full support of the other.

There was also a significant difference between the perceptions of supervisory and nonsupervisory employees when asked whether decisions were made by the department as a whole, not just the supervisor; the supervisor indicated a stronger level of agreement with this than nonsupervisors, who in fact showed a slight disagreement. Both groups agreed that the supervisor had an open door policy, but just as with many of the previous results, the supervisors exhibited a significantly stronger level of agreement. Finally, both groups disagreed that employee complaints are largely ignored by their supervisors, but supervisors however, had a significantly greater level of disagreement.

Managers tended to perceive themselves and their managerial style in a much move favorable light than did their employees. While some of these differences are both positive, there are areas where the differences might be of some concern.

Conclusion

Based on the findings in this study, the following conclusions were drawn about supervisory and nonsupervisory employees. Supervisors and nonsupervisors at this Mississippi casino have similar perceptions of favorable management styles. The supervisors and the nonsupervisors high correlational relationship of agreement on issues of management styles which should contribute to the low turnover rate.

Managers tended to perceive themselves and their managerial style in a much move favorable light than did their employees.

With less employee turnover, the cost of training new employees is lower and thus has a direct positive impact on the casino's bottom line. The casino used in this study has a lower than industry average employee turnover rate, which is consistent with the results of this study.

Casino organizations that perpetuate traditional procedures without critical analysis may find their enterprise resembling a system that fails to initiate rapid change. As competition in the hospitality industry continues to challenge organizations to compete effectively, problem solving processes and critical analysis will need to be strategically developed. Frequent external (peer evaluation) and internal (self-evaluation) assessments of performance among supervisors and nonsupervisors may help to benchmark where gaps exist between perceptions and reality. Continual issues may be more easily identified by examining areas of significant differences between the actual performance of supervisors and the perception of the employees who are being supervised. Identifying areas where significant gaps exist allows the casino organization an opportunity to fix issues before employees exit the company and consequently reduce employee turnover.

The results of this study support previously mentioned literature such as Senge (1990) indicating that shared visions bring employees together to create a learning organization. Effective learning organizations are created with shared perceptions and visions through interactions among employees rather than simply created by supervisors. Developing shared understanding of expectations helps to overcome areas of personal indifference between nonsupervisors and supervisors and encourages employee retention with reduced employee turnover. Developing human resource development processes that focus on shared visions among supervisors and nonsupervisors will lead to increased participation in decision making and personal responsibility for performance outcomes. Providing employees opportunities to actively participate in decision making processes may motivate employee learning and problem solving capabilities. With increased access to problem solving processes, learning to develop critical thinking skills may motivate employees to look for underlying organizational issues that may affect both employees and/or customer issues. Opportunities for increased dialogue among supervisors and nonsupervisors may also help to overcome misperceptions of expectations. For hospitality organizations that may be implementing new forms of technology which may greatly shift employee responsibilities; problem solving capabilities will need to be emphasized on an individual basis.

The concept of shared perceptions is also supported by Kirton (1994) who asserted that individual learning may be maximized when problem solving techniques are perceived to be created through collaboration and understanding among supervisors and nonsupervisors. Rather than overly structured guidelines created by supervisors, employee's motivation to pursue productive opportunities are created through common visions. As employees in the hospitality industry are engaged in organizational problem solving, they develop a greater sense of commitment to the company that results in achieving the organizational goals through individual commitment. With a greater sense of personal investment and purpose, increased opportunities for commitment and employee retention will result as similarly reported by the results in this study. Ross (2003) also proposed, as mentioned in the previous review of literature that shared perceptions of management styles leads to mutual ownership of responsibilities that is most often successfully achieved in smaller hospitality organizations. However, Ross also argued that within larger hospitality organizations an entrepreneurial spirit may be more easily obtained when shared visions of management styles are part of the organization rather than a process that separates and only imposes the supervisors' perceptions on nonsupervisory employees.

While this study limited the examination of employees perceptions to one casino in Mississippi, future research should focus on developing processes to positively facilitate the dynamic supervisor and nonsupervisor relationship. Considering the significant relationships between supervisors and nonsupervisors on employee retention, effective strategies may not only help to benefit one Mississippi casino operation as identified in this study, but other hospitality organizations as well. Future studies should examine human resource development strategies that support organizational learning and participative employee processes as identified by Ross (2003) and Senge (1990). Employee turnover should continue to be examined to identify progressive strategies to understand the underlying issues associated with reasons why employees leave a particular organization for another one. Human resource development strategies must look beyond short term incentives and promotions that may lure employees into their organization and focus on underlying processes that work to successfully retain these employees.

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