RESTAURANT EMPLOYEE ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOR TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

Environmental sustainability initiatives are a necessity for restaurants today in order to lessen the negative impacts inflicted by restaurants on the environment. Success of environmental initiatives is contingent upon the buy-in and commitment of restaurant employees. This study investigated restaurant employees' reactions to restaurant environmental sustainability initiatives. Qualitative analysis consisted of document review, on-site observation, and semi-structured interviews with 29 restaurant employees from two restaurants located in the Midwestern United States. Findings revealed that the employees in this study were environmentally aware, and possessed job satisfaction, pride, and loyalty.

Keywords: sustainability, green restaurants, employee attitude, employee behavior, qualitative

INTRODUCTION

The environment is under attack and unfortunately, restaurants are responsible for much of the demise to the environment (Choi & Parsa, 2007). Restaurants generate a large amount of waste, use a great deal of energy, and deplete natural resources in order to operate (Barclay, 2012; United States [U.S.] Environmental Protection Agency, 2010). It has been estimated that the food waste in all full-service and fast food restaurants in America is over 60,000 tons per day (Jones, Dahlen, Cisco, Bockhorst, & McKee, 2003). In addition, these restaurants use three times more energy than other commercial buildings (U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2013). To reduce their impact on the environment, restaurants are now promoting and implementing sustainability initiatives (Choi & Parsa, 2007).

The restaurant industry currently contains approximately 990,000 locations with only approximately 560 restaurants certified "green" in accordance to the Green Restaurant Association's certification standards (Green Restaurant Association, 2013; National Restaurant Association, 2014). Restaurants have introduced several environmentally friendly initiatives; however, employers have expressed difficulty with buy-in and participation because employee support is integral to success (Checkley-Layton, 1997; Sirota, Mischkind, & Meltzer, 2005).

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the reaction of restaurant employees to the restaurant's sustainability initiatives. The collective case study focuses on two groups of employees at restaurants with multiple sustainability initiatives in practice in the Midwestern United States. Data was collected through multiple methods including on-site observations, semi-structured on-site interviews with restaurant employees and management, and documents acquired from the restaurants relating to environmentalism. This in turn resulted in a qualitative investigation into the attitude and behavior of current restaurant employees regarding sustainability initiatives.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Current State of Environmental Research

Environmentalism is not new to Americans (Easterling, Kenworthy, Nemzoff, & College, 1996). In the 1960s and 1970s, several environmental protection laws went into effect because of Americans' recognition of the need for environmentalism spawning into research areas covering environmentalism and sustainability (U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2013). A renewed interest sparked the resurgence of environmental research in the 1990s, with investigations on the costs associated with environmentalism (Barbier, Markandya, & Pearce, 1990) more defined constructs of environmental sustainability and the relationships with social sustainability and economic sustainability (Goodland, 1996), and the operational impacts relating environmentalism to institutional theory (Hoffman, 1999). Hospitality scholars took notice in the late 1990s and early 2000s and industry centric studies emerged.

Environmentalism Research in the Hospitality Industry

Environmental sustainability research in the hospitality industry focused strongly on sustainable tourism, especially in the accommodation sector (Liu, 2003). Kasim (2006) furthered this notion and targeted the hotel sector stating that small and medium hotels want to appear politically correct, but do not have a thorough understanding of environmental management. Kirk (1995) investigated hotels in the United Kingdom and found that less than 20 percent of surveyed hotels had written environmental management policy statements and that most of the environmental improvement had financial gains for the hotels. Consumers' attitude and behavior towards green practices were studied in the Indian lodging industry finding that consumers were not willing to pay extra for green practices, but will choose green hotels if the price is right (Manaktola & Jauhari, 2007). At this time, there is a lack of published research concerning environmental sustainability in restaurants and the perspectives of restaurant employees, even though employees are essential to sustainability (Choi & Parsa, 2007). Koys (2001) states that restaurant employees' attitude and behavior influence the success of the business.

Employees' Attitude and Impact

Sharma (2000) states managers' interpretations of environmental issues influence environmental strategy and success of the environmental sustainability initiatives. Since employees and management have an impact on the success of an environmental sustainability initiative, it is important to explore the attitude and behavior of the employees relating to the initiative (del Brio, Fernandez, & Junquera, 2007). Employees with high job satisfaction exhibit pride in their organization which encourages positive employee behavior consequently making the sustainability initiatives more successful (Arnett, Laverie, & McLane, 2002; Checkley-Layton, 1997). According to Sirota, Mischkind, and Meltzer, (2005) and Katzenbach (2003) employees find pride when companies display excellent moral character including environmental sustainability initiatives. Sustainability initiatives can act as a workplace attractor.

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Workplace attractors can influence an employees' decision to join and remain committed to an organization. As a dimension of person-organization fit, workplace attractors serve an important role in employee organizational selection and employee success (Amundson, 2007; Kristof, 1996).

In order to assist in filling one of the gaps in restaurant sustainability research, specifically, restaurant employees' reaction towards environmental sustainability initiatives, the following questions were proposed for this study: 1) What are current green restaurant employee attitudes towards sustainability initiatives? 2) What are current green restaurant employee behaviors in sustainability initiatives?

METHODS

Design

This descriptive design uses a case study approach (Yin, 2003) to illustrate the impact of the sustainability initiatives on employees' attitude and behavior working in green restaurants. A collective case study allows the researchers to examine two cases to understand the similarities of attitude and behavior in two groups of employees in green restaurant environments (Stake, 1995). The scope of the environmental sustainability research includes: initiatives involving energy efficiency, water efficiency, waste management and reduction, recycled and biodegradable disposables, chemical and pollution reduction, sustainable foods, and sustainable furnishings as established by the Green Restaurant Association (2013). Investigating employee attitude and behavior, job attitude toward the initiative, job satisfaction, and the level of pride in the organization are explored.

Sample

The cases in this study were the groups of employees in two restaurant environments consisting of differing sustainable practice contexts in the Midwestern United States. For the restaurants to be considered "green" in the study, they had to satisfy the following requirements: 1) use local sourcing with humane practices, 2) utilize composting programs, 3) use biodegradable containers, 4) utilize recycling programs, 5) reduce and eliminate chemicals used in the restaurant, and 6) conserve energy and water. Specific sustainable practices of each restaurant are listed in Table 1. The restaurant environments in this study are recognized publicly as businesses dedicated to environmental sustainability. The restaurants selected for this study were derived from a collection of restaurants that were awarded and/or recognized for environmentalism. In total, five

restaurants within travel distance of the investigators met the inclusion criteria of the study, but only two restaurants granted permission to conduct the study. The primary investigator set up a schedule with both of the restaurants' managers to visit the restaurants for observation, document collection, and interviews with all employees (back of house, front of house, and management). The Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board gave approval for all research protocols and materials related to this study prior to data collection.

Method of Inquiry and Instrumentation

The semi-structured interview in this study collected participant information in three areas: attitude, behavior, and demographic data. The interviews were conducted to gather information from employees concerning their attitude towards their job and restaurant, as well as their attitude towards the sustainability initiatives. The interviews collected perceptions on the employees' level of pride toward the organization and the sustainability initiatives along with their current thoughts about their job satisfaction and their feelings toward the sustainability initiatives. The interview included questions such as: 1) Can you tell me about the green practices in your restaurant? 2) Tell me about what practices you find most effective? 3) How do you feel about these practices? and 4) Specifically, how do you contribute to the green practices? Demographics included the employees' age, gender, job position, length of service with the restaurant and tenure in the restaurant industry. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed by a professional, independent, transcription company.

Data Collection and Procedure

Following Yin's (2003) case study design, the rationale for using multiple sources of evidence in this study is to receive a wider array of attitudinal, behavioral, and historical issues (Yin, 2003). Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions about the attitude and behavior on certain environmental initiatives and demographics were conducted with participants including front of house (FOH), back of house (BOH), and management, on-site in the restaurants over several days, at several times during the day, dependent upon the restaurants' operating schedule and convenience of employees and management. The documents collected from the restaurants were concerned with environmentalism, such as local sourcing purchasing lists, biodegradable and recyclable content for products, inventory sheets, and employee handbooks. The document review was intended as an additional source of data triangulation. In this study,

Table 1: Sustainable Practices Used in Restaurants in Sample	
Restaurant A	**Restaurant B**
Local Sourcing	Local Sourcing
Biodegradable To-Go Products	Biodegradable To-Go Products
Use of Recycled Paper	Use of Recycled Paper
Energy Efficient Equipment	Energy Efficient Equipment
Energy Efficient Lighting	Energy Efficient Lighting
Water Efficient Faucets, Toilets, & Sprayers	Water Efficient Faucets, Toilets, Sprayers, & Dishwashers
Recycling Program	Recycling Program
Composting Program	Composting Program
Recycled Furnishings	Recycled Furnishings
	Using Suppliers with Humane Practices
	Sustainable HVAC Unit
	Rain Water Collection Program
	On-site Garden
	Chemical Reduction through Sustainable Cleaning Processes
	Eco-Friendly Building Materials
	Natural Pest Control (No Pesticides)
	Building Design to Reduce Energy Usage

the document review identifies and confirms green practices in the restaurant which are a reflection of upper management and owners' attitude toward sustainability efforts. The primary investigator conducted on-site observations in the restaurants over the course of several days during several shift times recording the duties, operations, attitudes, and behavior of the management, FOH, and BOH employees. In this sense, the primary investigator collected multiple sources of evidence, created a case study database, while maintaining a chain of evidence to enhance reliability and validity (Yin, 2003).   All employees interviewed were also observed throughout the data collection. Consent was given by employees verbally on audio recording at the beginning of the interview.

Data Analysis

Data analysis included examining, coding, and categorizing the qualitative evidence from the case study (Yin, 2003). To examine and categorize the evidence, the data analysis process included categorizing information into different groups, making a matrix of categories, and creating data displays with tabulation of the frequency of events (Miles & Huberman, 1994). To further the creditability and validity of the study, data analysis involved investigator triangulation by including multiple investigators to oversee the data analysis process including, the primary investigator, an investigator specializing in restaurants, and an investigator with sustainability research experience (Hussein, 2009).   Three investigators independently used these techniques to create categories for the data. Through a meeting of the three investigators, the member-checking process occurred by assessing the categories that were common within all three thematic analyses. Overarching themes and categories were developed during the member-checking meeting to further group the data and ensure validity. An external auditor trained in research was recruited for this study and assessed the validity and accuracy of the themes and categories after the member-checking meeting.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 29 employees in two separate restaurants in the Midwestern United States.   The participants were employees in management, FOH, and BOH positions. Participants largely were male, 69.0%; in the age group of 26-30 years old, 38.0%; worked in FOH positions, 65.5%; worked in the restaurant for four or more years, 27.6%; and worked in the restaurant industry for 10 or more years, 48.2%. Neither restaurant has been in operation for more than five years. Therefore, no participants worked at the restaurant over five years. Workplace attractors such as sustainability initiatives, contribution to the green practices, and the interpersonal relationships among employees were similar for all employees (FOH, BOH, and management) thus contributing to the decision to group all of the responses regardless of position or title (Amundson, 2007). Attitudes and behaviors of frontline employees did not differ from those of the management team.

Employee Reactions to Restaurant Sustainability Initiatives

The study was performed to answer questions of what are current green restaurant employee attitudes and behaviors relating to sustainability initiatives. The findings suggested two overarching themes, sustainability and satisfaction.   Within the theme of sustainability, the following categories surfaced: practices, benefits, and education, (see Table 2). The categories suggested that sub-categories also exist. For example, within the practices category, participants commented on sourcing, chemical reduction, conservation, and waste management.   The benefits category included the sub-categories of environmental benefits and business benefits.   The sub-categories in the education category include promoting green and following practices.   Under satisfaction, the following categories surfaced: employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction as shown in Table 3. The sub-categories in the employee satisfaction category include job characteristics theory and organizational commitment.   The sub-categories in the customer satisfaction category include existing customers and new customers.

Sustainability Efforts in Restaurants

Participants exhibit high awareness of environmental practices throughout the interviews.   Respondents identified several sustainability practices followed in their respective restaurants including local sourcing, conservation efforts, chemical and pollution reduction, and waste diversion.   One manager stated, "we pride ourselves on sustainability" (FOH Manager, male, 26-30 years old). Local sourcing and other procurement procedures were the best practices in the restaurant that were most mentioned.   The employees explained the benefits of local sourcing for the environment and the local economy.   The restaurants purchase products from local farmers, ranchers, and anglers.   One employee explained, "we are a local business supporting other local businesses" (Server, female, 18-21 years old).   The employees are able to visit the farms, pick crops, observe the animals in their healthy, humane environment, and attend farmers' markets.   The ability of the employees to all these activities allows them to support the promise of being humane and environmentally friendly to their customers. One employee expressed:

> Everything is free-range and humanely raised. We call them micro-local restaurants because of the fact that all of our farmers are no more than 2 hours away. So, that allows us to go to the farm and pop in whenever we want and make sure our farmers are doing what we practice here. We can go to farm and see the cows being grass-fed, and walking around being treated well, probably better than most humans (Chef, male, 31-35 years old).

Table 2: Taxonomy of Sustainability Theme Categories and Sub-Categories				
Practices	**Sourcing**	**Chemical Reduction**	**Conservation**	**Waste Management**
	Procurement	Organics	Water Efficiency	Recycling
	Benefits	Eliminating Pesticides	Energy Efficiency	Composting
		Eliminating Cleaning Chemicals		Upcycling/ Dual Purpose
Benefits	**Environmental Benefits**		**Business Benefits**	
	Saving the Environment		Profit	
	Giving Back		Marketing	
			Retention	
Education	**Promoting Green**		**Following Practices**	
	Boosterism		Understanding	
	Innovation		Level of Perceived Difficulty	

Table 3: Taxonomy of Satisfaction Theme Categories and Sub-Categories		
Employee Satisfaction	**Job Characteristics Theory**	**Organizational Commitment**
	Motivation	Organizational Citizenship Behavior
	Performance	Workplace Attractors
	Satisfaction	Pride
	Absenteeism	
	Turnover	
Customer Satisfaction	**Existing Customers**	**New Customers**
	Customer Reaction	Introducing Green Practices
	Customer Appreciation	Selling Point

Conservation efforts in the restaurants are observable through energy and water saving initiatives. The restaurants conserve energy through replacing old incandescent light bulbs with more energy efficient light bulbs, using programmable thermostats, and energy conserving air conditioning units. The equipment throughout the restaurants was either pre-existing, used, or energy efficient models. The restaurants conserve water through using low-flow toilets and faucets, irrigation systems, and rain collectors. The employees frequently mentioned the conservation efforts as interesting. For example, one employee stated, "I think the most unique practices that we have are the AC system and that's what we get most comments on" (Manager, female, 26-30 years old). Another employee expressed, "what I find interesting is the water system we have. They told me it collects rainwater from the top of the facility and then we actually reuse that" (Server, male, 18-21 years old).

Chemical reduction practices in the restaurants include eliminating pesticide use in the on-site garden, reducing the use of harsh cleaning chemicals while cleaning, and purchasing organic and biodegradable products that are environmentally friendly. The waste management practices were the most identified initiatives in the restaurants. Recycling and composting were the most identified waste management practices. One employee shared:

> Being able to compost and send back out to the farms is a fantastic feeling instead of just throwing something away, we are able to help and make something grow. . . restaurants are inherently something that just produces a lot of waste so, being able to take steps to prevent that, being able to recycle every single bit of glass that comes through, every single can that comes through the building it's a great feeling. It makes you feel like for every one person that's not recycling and throwing away their stuff at home, we are actually making a difference in our area (Manager, male, 26-30 years old).

Upcycling items or finding a dual purpose for items were mentioned by the employees as rewarding by finding innovative ways to repurpose items. An employee supports this notion by stating, "being able to upcycle things that would have otherwise been trash, being able to take it and turn it into something as beautiful as it is" (Manager, male, 26-30 years old). Another employee states that, "everything has more than one purpose, everything is repurposed" (Server, male, 31-35 years old).

Participants frequently revealed that they enjoyed the benefits of the sustainable initiatives. Saving the environment is important to the employees. For example, an employee expresses "I think it's very beneficial for the community and for the environment, because I know conservation is very important with the limited resources. So it makes me proud to be able to do that" (Cook, male, 31-35 years old). Employees describe that giving back to the community is another benefit that improved their satisfaction. An employee states "I've worked different companies down here and just seeing the massive

difference that it makes around you; the way that it brings people together towards one overall thought of doing something positive for your community" (Manager, male, 26-30 years old).

The benefits the business receives include higher profits, free marketing, and lower turnover of staff. The higher profits are possible through lower energy costs and an increased customer base. An employee supports this concept by stating "we use low-flow toilets that have a dual flush so it basically paid itself off within the first 3 months of us using it here at the restaurant" (Manager, male, 26-30 years old). Free marketing occurs through the publication of awards, newscasts of the store and its environmental achievements, and word of mouth recognition from the employees and customers. Many employees are loyal to the restaurant, which lowers the turnover rates in the restaurants. One employee supports this concept by declaring, "I choose to work here for one of those reasons… it's nice" (Bartender, male, 26-30 years old).

Learning the benefits of the practices, innovative ways to be green, and the ease of implementing green practices in the restaurants enlightened several participants to promote environmental sustainability initiatives. The promotion of environmentalism occurred through the employees taking their knowledge of green practices and carrying that over into their personal lives. Many employees state green practices have enriched their personal lives as well as their work lives by making them happier and healthier people. One employee supports this concept by stating:

> I have definitely become a healthier person by working here. I ride my bicycle to work. I think that it has encouraged me to not go eat fast foods and things like that and in the end of that it's helped me be a healthier person and a happier person . . . like its encouraged myself to become a better person as well (Manager, male, 31-35 years old).

Another employee states "It definitely makes me more motivated to do it outside of work because I see how easy it is to do here, with the volume and the number of people that we are serving" (Manager, female, 26-30 years old).

Boosterism is the active promotion of a program, practice, policy, organization, or region (McCann, 2013). The employees exhibit boosterism by telling all their friends about green practices and promoting the restaurant while not working. The employees reveal that they wish more restaurants would include these types of practices in their operation. Many employees found it rewarding to challenge themselves to create dual purposes for items and innovate new ways to upcycle products. For example, one employee declared "I have been working so long at a green restaurant; I have a mentality that I don't want to waste anything. I want to see how I can repurpose something and actually stretch that, its utility" (Server, male, 31-35 years old).

Explaining the process of green practices and training the employees are key elements to the success of green practices in restaurants. After the employees begin following green practices in their day-to-day work, it becomes second nature to them. For example, when an employee was asked if green practices were difficult to follow, an employee states:

> In the long run, no, it's not, we don't even notice it. . . but it's a little bit more work and maybe we don't notice it, that it's taking a little more time, but to me, it's still just as efficient as any corporate restaurant that I have ever worked at for sure (Manager, male, 26-30 years old).

The employees viewed green practices as easy to abide by, especially after they learned the process. An employee states, "once you get to know what they want out of their green practices and you know what they are recycling for and what we will be doing, then yeah, you could easily learn from that" (Server, male, 18-21 years old).

Satisfaction in Green Restaurants

The respondents describe psychological states and work outcomes throughout the interviews. For instance, one employee gives an example of the feedback from the management team by stating "it's more of a personal base, when I can actually interact with them and feel appreciated for the work that I have done with them" (Server, male, 18-21 years old). An employee explains that green practices in his work are recognized by stating, "what we do- I think that the customer can really see that. We really do care, it's not just a gimmick, we actually care" (Manager, male, 26-30 years old). The respondents frequently mention internal motivation, high job satisfaction, and a high quality of work.

The respondents exhibit high organizational commitment in their responses. The level of pride felt for the restaurant is generally high in the employees. For example, when asked if the employee felt a higher level of pride because of green practices, one employee answered, "I do, and everyone here is. I mean for the most part, that's why people work here. They like the practices; they are on board with the green movement" (Server, male, 26-30 years old). Another employee expresses their commitment by stating, "this is by far one of the best restaurants I have ever worked with, if not the best. Actually, I can tell you, it's the best restaurant I have ever worked for" (Server, male, 26-30 years old). Most respondents mentioned that they perceive the restaurant as unique compared to other restaurants. One employee explains, "I find it neat that I work at a place that does all this, goes through all this just to help the environment in some way. I don't know a lot of other restaurants like this" (Manager, female, 26-30 years old). Another employee stated, "it set us apart away from, apart from other restaurants. And it gives us a sense of pride actually, that we do things differently to sustain what we have, rather than wasting what we don't need to waste" (Server, male, 31-35 years old).

The participants indicate they have observed the existing customer base's reactions at the restaurants; these reactions include joy, understanding, and pride. One employee states, "I enjoy talking to the customers too and explaining to them, stuff that [the owner] has done to the restaurant. It's just cool to see their reactions" (Server, male, 18-21 years old). A large amount of the existing customer base chooses to patronize the restaurant because of green practices performed. Customers seem to appreciate the sustainability initiatives in the restaurants because it helps the environment, gives back to the community, and supports the local economy. One employee mentions, "we have a lot of regulars who come in, who know what we do for the environment and how we run our company and they really appreciate that" (Server, male, 22-25 years old).

The employees are pleased to introduce sustainability initiatives in the restaurants to new customers. It creates an opportunity for the employees to brag about the ways that the restaurants are saving the environment and giving back to their community. For example, one employee mentions:

> It's cool to be able to tell people about it and you kind of brag like this, you know we stand out having that. And then it's really nice to back it up with good quality food, you know it's one thing to just be an environmental restaurant and that's all fine and dandy, but you want to be able to have a good product that you are putting out. So, it's nice on both levels to be like yes, we are successful with the environmental part, but we are also very successful with the food and there is a reason we are doing it, it's not just to do it (Bartender, female, 26-30 years old).

The employees use green practices as a selling point to customers. Customers' reactions and appreciation of green practices usually entice the customers to return to the restaurants.

DISCUSSION

Attitudes and behaviors have a major difference between them, attitude is positioned around thoughts and inward feelings, whereas behavior is positioned around action and external ways the employee responds to their personal attitude (LaPiere, 1934). The results of this study indicate three attitudes: job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and self-efficacy and three behaviors: role performance, boosterism, and commitment to customer service.

Green Practices Impact on Attitude of Restaurant Employees

Job satisfaction, the first attitude, refers "to the expression of gratification and positive feelings about one's job" (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012, p. 343). The second attitude is organizational commitment defined as the psychological state binding an employee to an organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). The third attitude is self-efficacy, which is an individual's perception of his or her capabilities to control or succeed in events in life (Wood & Bandura, 1989). The employees in this study exhibit high job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and self-efficacy.

Under the Employee Satisfaction category, the Job Characteristics Theory sub-category emerged because the employees noted green practices contributing to different aspects of job satisfaction, internal work motivation, and quality of work. The restaurants' green practices were making employees happy and excited about their jobs. Many employees viewed green practices as interesting, unique, and cool which motivates the employees to learn more about environmentalism and ways to help the environment. It was mentioned that green practices were revered because they bring people together under a common good. The Benefits category was created because the employees explain their attitude of satisfaction and pride about the benefits of saving the environment and giving back to their community. This sample of employees chose to work in the restaurant because of the commitment to green practices and felt proud that they are trying to preserve the environment. These results indicate that these employees have a high level of job satisfaction, internal work motivation, and a perceived quality of work which predict behavior such as enhanced job performance, job engagement, and organizational citizenship.

Under the Employee Satisfaction category, the Organizational Commitment sub-category was created because the employees expressed a high level of affective commitment for green practices and the restaurants. Prior studies suggest that employee turnover has a negative impact on the profitability of organizations; therefore, organizational commitment is a vital asset to the success of a business (Koys, 2001). The employees in this study discussed their pride in the following areas: the green practices, the restaurant, and the practices they participate in to preserve the environment. The employees perceived the restaurant as unique because of the dedication to green practices which differentiate the restaurant from other restaurants. The results indicate that these employees do possess organizational commitment and exhibit commitment with regard to the mission of the restaurant. In particular, these employees expressed notions of affective commitment, which is a more emotional attachment to the restaurant. The emotional bonds that the employees have are likely because of the green practices which tie into the employees' personal values. This in turn lowers job turnover for these restaurants and enhances job performance. Organizational commitment can predict behavior such as enhanced job performance, job engagement, and organizational citizenship (Koys, 2001; Sirota, Mischkind, & Meltzer, 2005; Wood & Bandura, 1989).

In the Education category, the sub-category Following Practices was developed because employees explained their reactions to following green practices. Several employees stated that green practices did not hinder their job performance in any way. Some employees mentioned that once they understood the procedures for green practices, following the initiatives became second nature. These results indicate that the employees' self-efficacy in the restaurants, may be enhanced due to the participation in the green practices the environment. Self-efficacy in these restaurant employees indicates that they perceive the challenge of participating in green practices as something that can be mastered. Judge and Bono (2001) assert that self-efficacy is a good predictor of job satisfaction; the results in this study indicate that the employees of these green restaurants do possess self-efficacy; it is also likely that these employees satisfied in their jobs as well. The high self-efficacy in these employees in the restaurants indicates that they perceive the challenge of saving the environment as something that can be mastered.

Green Practices Impact on Behavior of Restaurant Employees

Role performance, the first behavior, is defined as meeting or surpassing the measurable and qualitative criteria of performance (Katz & Kahn, 1978). The second behavior is boosterism, referring to the act of promoting the mission, ideals, and the organization (McCann, 2013). The third behavior is commitment to customer service referring to the engagement of the employee to the customer experience. The employees demonstrate enhanced role performance, exhibit high levels of boosterism, and display high levels of commitment to customer service.

The Practices category was developed because the restaurant employees exhibited high awareness of the environmentalism practiced in the restaurants. The majority of employees mention local sourcing as the best green practice in the restaurant. Employees reveal that repurposing items or upcycling items is very rewarding because they are able to turn something that was going to be trash into something beautiful. These results indicate high role performance of these select employees through contribution to initiatives and innovation. The employees are willing to try new things, follow the policies and programs, and do whatever is needed to uphold the mission of the restaurant. These engaged employees are generally more enthusiastic, more involved, and will uphold the interests of the organization. The positive attitude felt towards green practices predict the behavior of high engagement and job performance of the employees.

Under the Education category, the Promoting Green sub-category was created because the employees explained how they perform green practices in the restaurants as well as outside the restaurants in their personal lives. Seeing the environmental sustainability initiatives successfully in practice on a large scale in the restaurants motivated many employees to carry their knowledge of green practices into their home lives. The employees mention recycling at home, riding their bikes to work, reducing energy and water use, and upcycling items that would have once been trash. Some employees state these green actions, which are the result of green practices in the restaurant, are making them happier, healthier, and better people. The employees also promote green practices and the restaurant outside of work by encouraging their friends and family to be more conscious of the environment. These results indicate these employees exhibit high boosterism of the restaurant. By allowing green practices to carry over into their personal lives and encouraging others to save the environment, these select restaurants gain motivated, highly committed employees. The employees are providing free word-of-mouth for the restaurant as well as upholding the mission of the restaurant.

The Customer Satisfaction category was developed because the employees mentioned with great frequency that they enjoyed explaining and telling the existing, as well as new customers about green practices in the restaurants. The employees are able to talk about the environmentalism shown in the restaurants and use the green practices as a selling point to the existing customer base and entice new or potential customers. These results indicate that because of green practices, the employees in these restaurants were able to connect easily with customers and create a relationship between customers and restaurant employees. Strong relationships between customers and employees are beneficial for the restaurants because it creates more satisfied and loyal customers who are more willing to spend more money in restaurants, tip the employees more, increase their positive word-of-mouth, and increase the frequency of their visits (Gremler & Gwinner, 2000). Connecting with customers indicates that these employees have a high commitment to customer service and aim to increase customer satisfaction in the restaurants. The positive attitude felt for green practices by these employees influence the behavior of commitment to customer service.

Significance of Findings

The current findings add to a growing body of literature on environmentalism and restaurant employees. The study adds to understanding the role of attitude and behavior on job satisfaction, loyalty, and pride of restaurant employees. These findings enhance our understanding of green restaurants' impact on their employees and identify potential practices that all restaurants could implement. This research also contributes additional evidence supporting that positive attitudes influence positive behaviors.

The findings of this study have a number of important implications for the restaurants. First, there are restaurants implementing green practices in their operations that help the environment despite cost, time, and the requirement of motivated, dedicated employees. Second, environmental sustainability initiatives in these restaurants are affecting employees and customers in a positive way. Third, the positive impact green practices have on this select group of employees is beneficial for these restaurants. However, not every restaurant will have motivated, dedicated employees who will teach and promote environmentalism making the implementation

successful. Not all restaurants will see the sustainability efforts as necessary or achievable. However, many restaurants can utilize the findings in this study to recognize the positive effects of sustainability efforts.

CONCLUSION

Restaurants in the United States generate waste, deplete natural resources, and use large amounts of energy through operations (Barclay, 2012; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2010). Restaurants are attempting to do their part in saving the environment by implementing environmental sustainability initiatives, but these initiatives are only successful if the restaurant employees are supportive (Sirota, Mischkind, & Meltzer, 2005). This study set out to explore the reaction of restaurant employees to the restaurant's sustainability initiative including green practices' impact on employee attitude and employee behavior.

The results of this research support the idea that environmental sustainability initiatives have a positive impact on these restaurant employees. Taken together, these results suggest that the impact of green practices on this select group of restaurant employees' attitude include employees who possess job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and self-efficacy. These results suggest that the impact of green practices on this select group of restaurant employees' behavior include employees who engage in job involvement, boosterism, and a commitment to customer service. The following conclusions can be drawn from the present study: 1) it is possible for restaurants to implement environmentally sustainable initiatives, 2) green practices in these restaurants influence employee attitude and behavior positively, and 3) the environment and many restaurants can benefit from the implementation of green practices.

Limitations

Generalization may be viewed as the largest limitation to this study however; the goal of this study is not to generalize the results to larger populations. The goal of the case study approach is to generalize and expand theories through analytic generalizations (Yin, 2003). It is reasonable to expect that the results of this study might be applicable to other similar environmentally friendly restaurants in the United States.

The findings in this report are subject to at least three types of bias; researcher bias, sampling bias, and measurement bias. The primary investigator was the principal collector of data and therefore, the researcher's own subjective feelings may influence the case study. To reduce researcher bias, this study utilized investigator triangulation and external audits to validate the data analysis process. The restaurants in this study were chosen because of the convenience of travel distance and therefore, selection bias is possible. The employees may have provided socially desirable responses, because they might want to be perceived as an environmentalist and give answers that reflect that perception.

Future Research

The case study method allows the generalization and explanation of theories that provide insight for further research. Replication of the study would assist in further validating the results of this study. It would be interesting to compare experiences of employees in green restaurants and employees in non-green restaurants. A more in-depth study is necessary to examine job satisfaction in environmentally friendly restaurants. Another possible area of research would be to develop a quantitative instrument to measure the constructs explored in this study.

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