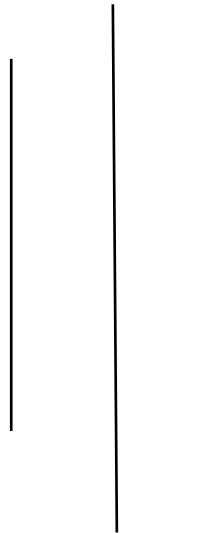


**A PROJECT WORK ON
EXPLORING EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION AND JOB
SATISFACTION IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IN
POKHARA**



BY

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of the requirements for the degree of
Bachelor in Hotel Management

At the
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Pokhara-14, Chhinedanda

July 2026

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project work report entitled “**Exploring Employee Motivation And Job Satisfaction In The Hospitality Industry In Pokhara**” submitted for the BHM is my original work and the Project Work Report has not formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, or other similar titles.

Punam Gurung

July 2026

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the Project Work titled “**Exploring Employee Motivation And Job Satisfaction In The Hospitality Industry In Pokhara**” submitted by Punam Gurung, (23150247) for the partial fulfillment of the requirements of BHM embodies the Bonafide work done by her under my supervision.

Mr. Suresh Raj Adhikari
Supervisor, Project Work
July 2026

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Thank You,

Punam Gurung
BHM VI Semester
NTHMC

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The hospitality industry is one of the fastest-growing service industries in the world and plays a major role in economic growth, tourism development, and employment generation. The industry includes hotels, restaurants, resorts, cafés, bars, and other tourism-related businesses that depend heavily on human resources for successful operation. Unlike manufacturing industries, the hospitality sector is service-oriented, meaning employee performance and customer interaction directly influence guest satisfaction and organizational success. Because of this, employees are considered one of the most valuable assets in the hospitality industry. In recent years, hospitality organizations across the world have increasingly focused on employee motivation and job satisfaction because these factors strongly affect productivity, service quality, employee retention, and organizational performance.

Employee motivation refers to the internal and external factors that encourage employees to work effectively and achieve organizational goals. Motivated employees are generally more productive, committed, and enthusiastic toward their work responsibilities. According to Maslow (1943), human behavior and motivation are influenced by the fulfillment of needs such as physiological needs, safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization. Similarly, Herzberg (1959) explained that factors such as recognition, achievement, responsibility, salary, and working conditions influence employee satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the workplace. These motivational theories have been widely used in hospitality management to understand employee behavior and improve organizational effectiveness. In the global hospitality industry, employee motivation has become an important issue because the sector is highly competitive and labor-intensive. Hospitality employees often work under pressure, handle difficult customer situations, and perform long working hours, especially during peak tourism seasons. Such conditions may reduce employee morale and increase stress levels if organizations fail to provide proper support and motivation. Studies conducted in different countries have shown that motivated employees contribute significantly to better customer satisfaction, improved teamwork, and higher organizational productivity. According to Chiang and Jang

(2008), employee motivation positively influences employee performance and service quality in hospitality organizations. Likewise, motivated employees are more likely to remain loyal to their organizations and contribute positively to workplace culture.

Globally, hospitality businesses face continuous challenges in maintaining employee satisfaction due to demanding work schedules, low wages, job insecurity, limited career advancement opportunities, and stressful working environments. Research conducted by the International Labour Organization stated that hospitality employees frequently experience work-related stress and high turnover because of unstable working conditions and inadequate benefits (ILO, 2020). Similarly, Karatepe and Uludag (2008) found that job stress and burnout negatively affect employee performance and satisfaction in hotels and restaurants. Due to these challenges, many hospitality organizations around the world are increasingly investing in employee training, rewards, incentives, supportive leadership, and positive work environments to improve employee motivation and job satisfaction.

The relationship between employee motivation and job satisfaction is closely connected in the hospitality industry. Employees who feel motivated through rewards, recognition, career growth opportunities, and supportive management are more likely to experience satisfaction in their jobs. Similarly, satisfied employees often show greater commitment, stronger emotional attachment to the organization, and better customer service performance. Therefore, hospitality businesses need to understand employee needs and workplace expectations in order to maintain an effective and satisfied workforce. In the context of Nepal, the hospitality industry has grown rapidly due to the expansion of tourism and increasing investment in hotels, restaurants, resorts, trekking businesses, and other tourism-related services. Tourism is considered one of the major contributors to Nepal's economy and employment sector. According to the Nepal Tourism Board, the tourism and hospitality industry creates employment opportunities for thousands of people across the country and supports local economic development. Cities such as Kathmandu, Pokhara, Chitwan, and Lumbini have experienced significant growth in hospitality businesses because of increasing domestic and international tourist arrivals.

Despite the growth of the hospitality industry in Nepal, many employees continue to face various workplace challenges. Hospitality employees in Nepal often experience low salaries, long working hours, lack of job security, limited employee benefits, insufficient training opportunities, and poor work-life balance. Such

challenges can negatively affect employee motivation and satisfaction. Many employees leave their jobs due to dissatisfaction with management practices, salary structures, and workplace conditions. Employee turnover has therefore become a major issue within Nepalese hospitality organizations. Previous studies conducted in Nepal have highlighted the importance of motivation and job satisfaction in improving employee performance and organizational sustainability. Adhikari (2019) stated that employee satisfaction in Nepalese hospitality businesses is influenced by leadership style, organizational culture, rewards, incentives, and opportunities for career growth. Similarly, supportive management practices and effective communication between employers and employees play important roles in maintaining positive workplace relationships within hospitality organizations. However, many hospitality businesses in Nepal still focus more on customer satisfaction than employee well-being, despite employees being the foundation of quality service delivery. Pokhara is one of Nepal's most important tourism destinations and is widely recognized for its natural beauty, adventure tourism, hotels, restaurants, cafés, resorts, and hospitality services. The city attracts a large number of domestic and international tourists every year, leading to the continuous expansion of hospitality businesses. As the hospitality industry in Pokhara continues to grow, the demand for skilled and motivated employees has also increased. Employees working in Pokhara's hospitality sector play a significant role in maintaining service quality and creating positive tourism experiences for visitors.

However, hospitality employees in Pokhara also face several workplace challenges. During peak tourism seasons, employees often work under high pressure and extended working hours. In some cases, employees may experience low wages, lack of recognition, workload stress, limited career development opportunities, and job insecurity. These factors can influence employee motivation and overall job satisfaction. If employees are not properly motivated or satisfied, it may affect their performance, customer service quality, and commitment toward the organization. Although hospitality businesses in Pokhara focus heavily on attracting tourists and improving customer satisfaction, limited studies have explored employee experiences regarding motivation and job satisfaction within the local hospitality industry. Most existing studies in Nepal focus on tourism development and customer satisfaction, while fewer studies examine the perspectives and experiences of hospitality employees themselves. Therefore, it is important to understand how hospitality

employees in Pokhara perceive motivation, workplace environment, management practices, rewards, and job satisfaction in their daily work experiences.

This study therefore aims to explore employee motivation and job satisfaction in the hospitality industry in Pokhara. The study will help identify the factors influencing employee motivation and satisfaction and provide insights into employees' workplace experiences within the hospitality sector. The findings of this research may be useful for hospitality businesses, managers, researchers, and students in understanding the importance of maintaining a motivated and satisfied workforce for sustainable hospitality operations and improved service quality.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The hospitality industry relies heavily on employees to deliver quality service and maintain customer satisfaction. However, hospitality employees often face challenges such as long working hours, low salaries, workload pressure, and limited career growth opportunities, which may affect their motivation and job satisfaction. In Pokhara, limited studies have explored these issues from the perspective of hospitality employees. Therefore, this study aims to explore employee motivation and job satisfaction in the hospitality industry in Pokhara.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What factors motivate employees to work in hospitality industry in Pokhara?
2. How do working conditions affect employee job satisfaction in hotels and restaurants?
3. What improvements can hotel and restaurants make to increase employee motivation and job satisfaction.

1.4 Objective of the Study

- To identify the factors that motivate employee in hospitality industry.
- To examine how working conditions affect employee job satisfaction in hotels and restaurant.
- To suggest ways to improve employee motivation and job satisfaction in hospitality industry.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study on Employee Motivation and Job Satisfaction in the Hospitality Industry in Pokhara is significant as it helps to identify the key factors that influence employee performance and satisfaction in hospitality organizations. Since the hospitality industry is service-oriented, motivated and satisfied employees play an important role in improving service quality and ensuring positive guest experiences.

The findings of this study will be useful for hospitality managers in understanding important motivation factors such as working conditions, salary, recognition, leadership style, and career development opportunities, which can help in improving employee retention and reducing turnover. It will also be beneficial for employees by highlighting how workplace environment and management practices affect their job satisfaction and performance. For policymakers and stakeholders, the study provides useful insights for developing effective labor policies and training programs to strengthen the hospitality workforce in Pokhara. Academically, it contributes to existing literature on employee motivation and job satisfaction in the context of Nepal's hospitality industry.

1.6 Literature Reviews

The literature review provides a critical overview of existing studies related to employee motivation and job satisfaction in the hospitality industry. It helps to understand how different researchers have explained motivational factors, satisfaction levels, and their impact on employee performance. Various theories and empirical studies suggest that employee motivation is influenced by both financial and non-financial factors, while job satisfaction is closely linked to workplace environment, leadership, and career development opportunities. This section highlights key themes derived from previous research and connects them with the hospitality context, particularly in Pokhara. To keep the review systematic, each study discussed below is presented using a consistent structure: Author (Year), followed by the study's methodology, its context or phenomenon of focus, and its key finding.

1.6.1 Compensation, Rewards, and Vulnerability of Seasonality on Job Security

The foundational layer of employee motivation and job satisfaction within the service sector is built upon extrinsic rewards, primarily financial compensation and the assurance of long-term job security. From a theoretical standpoint, this theme

operates within the boundaries of Frederick Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, where financial returns, basic salaries, and job stability are classified as hygiene factors. While the presence of these elements does not inherently spark inspiration or high-level self-actualization, their absence guarantees extreme job dissatisfaction, operational friction, and high labor turnover. In a tourism-driven hospitality economy, the predictability of income becomes a primary psychological anchor for front-line employees. Subedi (2026) conducted a quantitative study using structural equation modeling (SEM) on restaurant employees, examining the predictors of job satisfaction, and found that salary was the single strongest predictor of job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.442$), confirming that tangible financial rewards form the baseline of workforce stability. Acquah et al. (2021) conducted a quantitative survey-based study of service-sector employees, examining the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, and found that while intrinsic motivators sustain long-term engagement, baseline economic security functions as a critical buffer that prevents active dissatisfaction and immediate resignation. Pradhan et al. (2023) conducted a mixed-methods study of hospitality workers in tourism hubs, examining their reliance on supplemental income such as tips and service charges, and found that when base salaries are kept deliberately low, employees become structurally dependent on variable, consumer-driven income to bridge the gap against the rising cost of living. Rijal (2023) conducted a quantitative survey study across Nepal's tourism sector, examining staff retention factors, and found that rewards, benefits, and organizational climate directly shape an employee's intent to stay or leave, with age and length of work experience acting as significant demographic predictors of tolerance for financial unpredictability. Kunwar (2025) conducted a qualitative policy-analysis study applying the International Labour Organization's (ILO) decent work indicators to Nepal's hospitality sector, examining employer attitudes toward wages and job security, and found that employers frequently treat fair wages, social protection, and year-round contracts as a business cost rather than a strategic investment, resulting in informal, short-term recruitment practices that strip workers of basic legal protections. Karatepe and Uludag (2008) conducted a quantitative survey study of frontline hotel employees, examining the effects of role conflict and emotional exhaustion on work outcomes, and found that a lack of financial predictability and institutional support accelerates emotional exhaustion, prompting high-performing staff to actively plan their exit from the organization.

A critical analysis of the literature reveals a major structural contradiction in how the hospitality industry handles reward systems. Conventional human resource literature often minimizes the role of money, arguing that intrinsic rewards like recognition and personal growth are superior drivers of long-term loyalty. However, this perspective displays a clear Western bias and fails to account for the economic realities of developing tourist economies. In highly competitive, low-wage labor markets, separating intrinsic joy from financial survival is a luxury that entry-level workers cannot afford. The findings of Subedi (2026) and Pradhan et al. (2023) demonstrate that while management might wish to focus on non-monetary morale boosters, the baseline reality remains financial. A major gap in the current literature is the lack of exploration into how the tip-and-service-charge model distorts teamwork. When employees must rely on tips to survive because their base pay is insufficient, it breeds internal competition among floor staff, ultimately undermining the cohesive team environment necessary for high-quality service delivery. Furthermore, Kunwar's (2025) focus on the informal nature of hospitality contracts exposes a systemic failure: the industry expects high-tier, professional emotional labor from its staff while offering low-tier, informal employment security in return. When applied directly to the Pokhara hospitality industry, these financial and structural themes take on distinct local characteristics. Pokhara's economy is deeply linked to the geographic realities of the Annapurna trekking circuit, creating sharp divisions between peak tourist seasons (autumn and spring) and the low monsoon or winter months. During peak seasons, hotels and lakeside restaurants experience high guest volumes, allowing staff to supplement their income with service charges and tips. However, during the off-season, Lakeside drops into a quiet period, prompting many establishments to resort to cost-cutting measures. Local employers often implement informal layoffs, enforce unpaid leave, or shift full-time workers to temporary, day-wage arrangements. This seasonal instability disrupts the baseline financial safety identified as crucial by Subedi (2026). As a result, many young hospitality graduates from local institutions view local employment as a temporary stepping stone. Rather than committing to long-term hospitality careers within Pokhara, the lack of year-round financial security and formal contracts drives a continuous brain drain, pushing skilled local workers out of the city and toward international labor markets in the Gulf or East Asia.

1.6.2 Work Environment, Relationships, and Socio-Cultural Work-Life Balance

The second major theme governing hospitality employee satisfaction focuses on the workplace environment, the quality of interpersonal social interactions, and the preservation of work-life balance. Hospitality roles are inherently stressful, defined by long operating hours, physical demands, and constant emotional labor — the requirement to project positivity regardless of personal feelings. This theme is grounded in Social Exchange Theory and the framework of Perceived Organizational Support. The core idea is that when employees perceive their work environment as physically safe, socially supportive, and respectful of their personal time, they reciprocate with higher organizational commitment and better job performance. Subedi (2026), in the same SEM-based study of restaurant employees discussed above, also examined the physical work environment and co-worker relationships as predictors of job satisfaction, and found that both factors exert a significant direct effect on satisfaction and organizational commitment, with well-resourced physical spaces reducing daily operational friction and strong peer relationships helping to lower turnover intentions. Chapagain (2022) conducted a quantitative survey study of service-sector employees, examining the role of co-worker support and peer-to-peer communication, and found that these factors are critical to reducing workplace alienation and building a shared sense of professional belonging among staff. Sharma and Subedi (2022) conducted a quantitative survey study of frontline hospitality employees, examining occupational stress and work-life conflict, and found that hospitality work hours regularly infringe on family and social life, producing chronic burnout that is intensified by a lack of supervisor support during difficult customer interactions. Sharma (2019) conducted a qualitative study of women employed in tourist-heavy hospitality zones, examining their socio-cultural working conditions, and found that despite their growing presence in frontline roles, women face low representation in managerial positions and distinct socio-cultural pressures related to late-night shifts. Kim et al. (2020) conducted a quantitative study of hospitality employees during a period of organizational and economic instability, examining the relationship between organizational support and burnout, and found that when organizational support weakens during high-stress periods, unchecked burnout and job anxiety trigger a rapid wave of resignations. A critical review of this literature reveals that hospitality management frequently misinterprets the concept of a good work environment. Managers often treat environment design as a simple physical

checklist — focusing on aesthetic upgrades or advanced kitchen equipment — while neglecting the underlying psychological and social environment. The data from Subedi (2026) clearly demonstrates that co-worker relationships carry major weight in driving organizational commitment. Yet, modern hospitality practices often prioritize individual performance metrics over team cohesion, creating a competitive environment that can lead to toxic peer dynamics. Furthermore, the research on work-life balance by Sharma and Subedi (2022) exposes an ongoing industry blind spot regarding the romanticization of hard work in hospitality. Long shifts and the sacrificing of personal time are frequently treated as badges of honor rather than systemic management failures. The literature also falls short in failing to address how the rising expectations of modern tourists — who demand constant, instantaneous responsiveness — have escalated the emotional exhaustion experienced by front-line staff, making strong peer and supervisor support networks more critical than ever.

In Pokhara, these environmental and socio-cultural dynamics are directly shaped by the unique lifestyle and layout of the city. The hospitality industry here is concentrated around the Lakeside tourism strip, which caters to an intense mix of high-spending international trekkers, budget backpackers, and weekend domestic tourists from Kathmandu. This diverse guest profile requires frontline employees to rapidly shift communication styles and manage varied cultural expectations, drastically increasing their daily emotional labor. During peak festival seasons like Dashain, Tihar, or the English New Year, Pokhara's hospitality venues operate at maximum capacity. This forces staff to work exhausting overtime shifts, completely cutting them off from their own family celebrations and local socio-cultural traditions. This imbalance triggers the precise burnout patterns warned about by Sharma and Subedi (2022). Additionally, the gender struggles noted by Sharma (2019) are highly relevant in Pokhara. The city's hospitality sector relies heavily on young women for front-desk, guest-relations, and housekeeping positions. However, conservative socio-cultural norms within local communities can create stigma around women working late-night shifts in Lakeside bars, lounges, or hotels. When local managements fail to provide secure transport or fail to build an internal culture of absolute safety, female employees face heightened stress, leading to high turnover rates in Pokhara's hospitality labor market.

1.6.3 Intrinsic Motivators, Training, and Opportunities for Career Advancement

The third critical theme dictating hospitality research revolves around intrinsic motivators, formal human resource development, and long-term career advancement opportunities. While extrinsic rewards prevent immediate dissatisfaction, true long-term motivation and deep psychological attachment to an organization are built through intrinsic pathways. This theme aligns with the self-actualization tier of Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and the core principles of Goal-Setting Theory. Baniya (2004) conducted a quantitative study of Nepalese organizations, examining the relationship between staff development opportunities and performance, and found that robust development opportunities directly improve performance, organizational productivity, and employee loyalty. Shrestha (2024) conducted a quantitative survey study of employees in lodging establishments, examining the relationship between continuous skill development and organizational commitment, and found that formal technical training, hospitality language programs, and structured cross-departmental mentorship raise employee engagement because workers who can see a clear path forward are much less likely to seek outside employment. Khatiwada (2023) conducted a quantitative study of hospitality employees, examining the effect of human resource practices such as systematic workforce planning and performance appraisal systems on job satisfaction, and found that fair and transparent appraisal systems act as an intrinsic motivator by assuring staff that their hard work will lead to visible advancement. Rijal (2023), in the same review of Nepal's tourism retention factors discussed above, also examined the role of organizational reputation and career growth avenues, and found that job prestige and dedicated career pathways are essential pillars for retaining skilled workers within an organization over the long term. Pokhara Technical School (2024) conducted a tracer study of graduates from specialized hospitality vocational programs, including baristas, continental cooks, and bakery operators, examining their post-graduation employment outcomes, and found that while short-term vocational training is highly effective at securing initial employment, graduates quickly express partial satisfaction or frustration when their workplaces fail to offer ongoing skill assessments, upgraded facilities, or clear promotion opportunities. Chapagain (2011) conducted a quantitative study of organizational employees, examining the effect of participation in workplace decision-making on performance, and found that allowing employees to take part in

decision-making processes builds a strong sense of personal empowerment, which directly increases their workplace performance and overall career satisfaction.

A critical examination of the literature on intrinsic motivation reveals a sharp disconnect between human resource theory and actual industry practice. While Shrestha (2024) and Khatiwada (2023) emphasize the benefits of structured career development, many hospitality firms continue to rely on short-term, reactive management styles. Because hospitality businesses operate on tight profit margins and face high baseline turnover, management often falls into a defensive trap where they hesitate to invest in high-quality training programs out of fear that their newly trained employees will simply leave for a competitor. This thinking creates a self-fulfilling prophecy. By withholding training and career advancement out of fear of turnover, management creates the exact dead-end conditions that drive employees to quit. Furthermore, the existing literature frequently overlooks the limitations of basic recognition programs. Management tools like Employee of the Month awards or verbal praise are often used as cheap substitutes for real career progression. If professional recognition is not backed up by tangible promotions, increased autonomy, or higher pay, it can feel manipulative, ultimately damaging employee trust and worsening long-term job dissatisfaction. For a study situated in Pokhara, this focus on career development is highly relevant to the city's changing business environment. Pokhara's hospitality market is undergoing a major shift, transitioning from older, family-run lodges and local standalone guest houses to international luxury brands, boutique resorts, and large-scale corporate operations. This shift creates a major challenge for local human resource management. Many young hospitality workers in Pokhara are students or graduates from specialized institutions like the Nepal Tourism and Hotel Management College or local vocational training programs. These workers enter the industry with high expectations for structured corporate hierarchies, modern service standards, and clear career paths. However, as highlighted by the Pokhara Technical School (2024) tracer study, many local businesses still use informal management styles that offer no clear path for promotion. When a young, ambitious worker is stuck in an entry-level position with no opportunity to learn advanced culinary techniques, modern property management systems, or high-level guest relations, they quickly lose motivation. In Pokhara's competitive market, this lack of development opportunities leads to high turnover, where employees frequently hop between different Lakeside properties for small pay

increases, or leave Pokhara entirely, moving to Kathmandu's corporate market or heading abroad where formal career development paths are guaranteed.

1.6.4 Literature Gap

A major gap exists in contemporary hospitality literature because general human resource theories are almost always based on corporate capital cities or westernized hotel chains, completely ignoring the unique operational realities of regional tourism hubs. Standard research tends to treat hospitality workforces as uniform groups, failing to investigate how localized labor informality and intense seasonal cycles affect an employee's psychological well-being. Existing studies treat seasonality purely as a financial variable affecting hotel occupancy, completely overlooking how the constant cycle of hiring and firing forces front-line staff to alternate between intense emotional burnout during peak months and severe financial anxiety during quiet periods.

Additionally, there is a generational disconnect within the available research. Traditional models assume basic financial survival is the only major concern for workers in developing economies, leaving a gap in understanding how the clash between old-school, informal management and the modern career expectations of technically trained hospitality students impacts long-term satisfaction. The industry routinely expects high-tier, professional service from its staff, yet it relies on non-transparent management practices that offer zero clear paths for internal promotion.

This literature gap provides a powerful justification for conducting a study specifically centered on the Lakeside tourism strip in Pokhara. Standard human resource models cannot accurately explain the localized job insecurity that occurs here, where staff are frequently forced into day-wage or informal contracts during the monsoon off-season. Furthermore, Pokhara is shifting away from family-operated guest houses toward a new wave of international luxury hotels and boutique resorts. This study directly bridges the gap by exploring how this clash of management cultures, combined with the pressures of handling a highly diverse mix of international trekkers and weekend domestic tourists, shapes the motivation and satisfaction of Pokhara's frontline workforce.

1.7 Research Methods

To explore the deep-seated perceptions, motivations, and operational realities of hotel employees, this study adopts a purely qualitative methodology. Qualitative research is uniquely suited for this topic as it rejects rigid statistical constraints in favor of uncovering subjective meanings, complex workplace social structures, and the detailed "why" behind employee behavior. This inductive approach allows emerging concepts—such as the psychological impact of seasonal layoffs or hidden workplace favoritism—to surface naturally directly from the narratives of the participants, rather than forcing their experiences into pre-determined quantitative boxes.

1.7.1 Research Design

This study adopts a phenomenological qualitative research design. Phenomenology is the most appropriate approach here because it seeks to describe the "lived experience" of hotel employees. By conducting in-depth interviews, this study aims to uncover the subjective meanings, emotions, and personal struggles workers attach to their roles, moving beyond numerical data to understand the why behind their professional dissatisfaction or commitment.

1.7.2 Study Area and Participation

- **Study Area:** The research will be conducted in Pokhara, Gandaki Province, specifically targeting the Lakeside and Damside tourism hubs, which contain the highest density of both star-rated hotels and boutique family-run lodges.
- **Participants:** A purposive sampling technique will be used to select 15–20 participants. The sample will be segmented to ensure diverse perspectives:
 - **Frontline Staff (Waiters, Receptionists, Housekeeping):** To capture operational-level stressors.
 - **Mid-level Managers:** To capture the perspective of policy implementation.
 - **Inclusion Criteria:** Participants must have at least one year of continuous experience in the Pokhara hospitality industry to ensure they have experienced both peak and off-peak seasons.

1.7.3 Data Collection Methods

The study uses primary qualitative data collection methods, including:

- In-depth interviews with hospitality employees
- Semi-structured interviews to allow flexible responses
- Informal conversations to understand real workplace experiences
- Observation of workplace environment and employee behavior

1.7.4 Data Analysis

The collected data is analyzed using thematic analysis. This involves identifying patterns, themes, and meanings from the interview responses. The process includes:

- Transcribing interview data
- Reading and re-reading responses
- Coding important ideas
- Grouping codes into themes
- Interpreting themes in relation to research objectives

This method helps in understanding common experiences of employees regarding motivation and job satisfaction.

1.7.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethical guidelines are strictly followed in this study. The key ethical considerations include:

- Informed consent is taken from all participants before interviews
- Participants are informed about the purpose of the study
- Confidentiality and anonymity are maintained
- Participation is voluntary, and participants can withdraw anytime
- No personal or sensitive information is disclosed without permission

1.7.6 Limitations of the Study

This study has certain limitations:

- The study is limited to Pokhara only, so findings may not represent all regions of Nepal
- The sample size is relatively small due to the qualitative nature of the study
- Responses may be influenced by personal bias or fear of criticism
- Time constraints may limit deeper exploration of all hospitality sectors

CHAPTER II

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of the qualitative study on employee motivation and job satisfaction in the hospitality industry of Pokhara. Data were gathered through in-depth, semi-structured interviews and informal conversations with 18 hospitality employees working in the Lakeside and Damside tourism hubs, supported by direct observation of workplace environments over the course of the field visit. Interviews lasted between twenty-five and forty-five minutes and were conducted at times convenient to participants, most often before opening hours, during quiet mid-afternoon lulls, or after closing, to avoid interfering with guest service. Transcripts were coded and grouped using thematic analysis, following the three themes established in the literature review:

- (1) financial compensation, extrinsic rewards, and seasonal job security;
- (2) work environment, interpersonal relationships, and work-life balance; and
- (3) intrinsic motivators, training, and career advancement. Within each theme, findings are further organized into sub-codes that emerged inductively from repeated patterns in participant narratives, rather than being imposed on the data in advance. Participants are identified using anonymized codes (P1–P18) to preserve confidentiality; "FS" denotes frontline staff and "MM" denotes mid-level managers where relevant to the excerpt.

2.1 Data Collection Process

Fieldwork was carried out across a two-week period in the Lakeside and Damside areas of Pokhara, selected because they contain the highest concentration of both star-rated hotels and independent, family-run establishments. Access to participants was negotiated directly with property owners and floor supervisors, who were asked to identify staff members meeting the study's inclusion criterion of at least one year of continuous experience in the local hospitality sector. This purposive approach ensured that every participant had lived through at least one full seasonal cycle, including both the high-tourist autumn and spring months and the quieter monsoon and winter period, which the literature review identifies as central to understanding job security in this industry.

Alongside the eighteen formal interviews, the researcher spent time informally observing the physical layout, staff interactions, and guest-service dynamics at each participating establishment. These observations were recorded as field notes immediately after each visit and were used to contextualize and, in several cases, corroborate what participants described verbally. For example, at properties where staff described strong co-worker relationships, informal observation generally confirmed a visibly more relaxed and communicative floor atmosphere during service, while at properties where participants described tension or competition over tips, service interactions appeared noticeably more transactional between colleagues.

2.2 Participant Profile

A purposive sample of 18 employees participated in the study, drawn from a mix of independent restaurants, cafés, boutique resorts, family-run lodges, and international chain hotels along the Lakeside and Damside strip. The sample deliberately combined frontline staff, who could speak to day-to-day operational stressors, with mid-level managers, who could speak to how policy is implemented and where it breaks down. Ten participants were frontline staff (waiters, receptionists, housekeeping attendants, kitchen staff, and a bartender) and eight held supervisory or managerial responsibilities. Ten participants were male and eight were female. Experience ranged from one to seven years, and establishment type ranged from small family-run lodges to internationally affiliated chain hotels, allowing for meaningful comparison across levels of formality.

Code	Role	Gender	Experience	Establishment Type
P1	Waiter	Male	2 years	Lakeside mid-range restaurant
P2	Front Desk Receptionist	Female	3 years	3-star lakeside hotel
P3	Housekeeping Attendant	Female	4 years	Boutique resort
P4	Waiter	Male	1.5 years	Family-run lodge, Damside
P5	Barista / F&B Staff	Female	2 years	Café, Lakeside
P6	Kitchen Staff (Commis)	Male	3 years	Mid-range restaurant
P7	Front Desk Receptionist	Male	5 years	International chain hotel
P8	Housekeeping Attendant	Female	2 years	Boutique resort
P9	Waiter	Female	1 year	Café, Lakeside
P10	Bartender	Male	3 years	Lounge/bar, Lakeside

Code	Role	Gender	Experience	Establishment Type
P11	Restaurant Supervisor (MM)	Male	6 years	Mid-range restaurant
P12	Front Office Manager (MM)	Female	7 years	3-star lakeside hotel
P13	Housekeeping Supervisor (MM)	Female	5 years	Boutique resort
P14	F&B Supervisor (MM)	Male	4 years	International chain hotel
P15	Waiter	Male	2 years	Family-run lodge, Damside
P16	Receptionist	Female	1.5 years	Boutique resort
P17	Kitchen Staff (Commis)	Male	2 years	Mid-range restaurant
P18	Guest Relations Officer (MM)	Female	4 years	International chain hotel

Table 2.2 above summarizes the coding structure that emerged from the eighteen transcripts, showing how many participants raised each sub-code either spontaneously or in response to a probing question. The consistency with which certain sub-codes recurred across otherwise very different establishments, from a single-family lodge to an international chain property, suggests that the pressures described below are not isolated to any one type of business but reflect broader conditions within Pokhara's hospitality labour market.

Theme	Sub-codes Identified	Approx. Participants Raising Code
Financial Compensation & Security	Inadequate base pay; tip/service-charge dependency; informal off-season lay-off; absence of written contract; comparison to overseas pay	15 of 18
Work Environment & Relationships	Co-worker support; supervisor communication; festival/family conflict; late-shift safety (female staff); guest-driven emotional labour	16 of 18
Intrinsic Motivators & Career Growth	Informal/short onboarding; desire for certified training; symbolic vs. tangible recognition; visible promotion ceiling; intention to migrate or relocate to Kathmandu	14 of 18

2.3 Compensation, Rewards, and the Vulnerability of Seasonality on Job

Consistent with the hygiene-factor framing drawn from Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory in the literature review, participants across roles described salary and job security not as sources of enthusiasm but as preconditions that had to be met before anything else about the job mattered. This theme produced the richest and most emotionally direct responses of the three, echoing Subedi's (2026) finding that salary is the single strongest predictor of job satisfaction among Pokhara's restaurant employees.

2.3.1 Salary as a baseline, not a motivator

Frontline staff repeatedly described their base pay as inadequate on its own, with service charge and tips treated as a necessary supplement rather than a bonus. Several participants were explicit that they judged a job not by its stated salary but by the reliability of its total take-home earnings across an average month.

“My basic salary alone cannot cover my rent and my family's expenses in Kathmandu that I send home. If the service charge is good in a month, I feel okay. If tourists are few, I feel like I am working for nothing.” — P4, Waiter, family-run lodge

This dependence on variable income created a recurring source of anxiety, particularly among staff supporting family members outside Pokhara. Mid-level managers acknowledged the same pattern from the other side of the table, and several described feelings caught between what they knew staff deserved and what their establishment could realistically offer.

“I know my staff are not satisfied with the basic pay we can offer. We are a small property; we cannot match the chain hotels. So, we tell them the service charge will make up for it, but that is not always fair to say, because service charge depends on the season.” — P11, Restaurant Supervisor

This finding aligns closely with Pradhan et al.'s (2023) observation that when base salaries are kept deliberately low, employees become structurally dependent on tips and service charges to bridge the gap against the cost of living, tying their financial survival to unpredictable consumer spending rather than institutional guarantees.

2.3.2 Reliance on tips and service charge as a source of internal tension

Beyond the income instability itself, several frontline participants described how heavy reliance on tips could quietly strain relationships between colleagues,

particularly in larger establishments where tip-pooling arrangements were inconsistently enforced.

“Some nights, if a big group comes to my section, the other waiters get annoyed because the tip is shared, but I did most of the work. We don't talk about it directly, but I can feel it.” — P10, Bartender

This tension speaks to a gap noted in the literature review: the tip-and-service-charge model may distort teamwork by breeding quiet competition among floor staff, undermining the cohesive team environment that Theme Two identifies as essential to service quality and daily morale.

2.3.3 Seasonality and informal contracts as a source of insecurity

Nearly every frontline participant described some version of reduced hours, unpaid leave, or informal layoff during the monsoon and winter off-season. This was consistently described as more distressing than low pay itself, because it removed any sense of predictability from participants' financial planning.

“During Dashain and the trekking season, we work almost every day, sometimes without a day off for weeks. But after Tihar, when the tourists stop coming, the owner tells two or three of us to just stay home until the next season. We are not officially fired, but we are not paid either.” — P9, Waiter, café

“Most of my staff do not have a written contract. It is an understanding, not a document. When business is slow, that understanding is the first thing to disappear.” — P14, F&B Supervisor, international chain hotel

A smaller number of participants, mainly those employed at internationally affiliated properties, described a different reality, with fixed monthly salaries and formal appointment letters that continued through the off-season.

“Even in the low season, my salary does not change. It is written in my appointment letter. That is one reason I have stayed at this hotel for five years instead of moving around like some of my friends.” — P7, Front Desk Receptionist, international chain hotel

These participants expressed noticeably higher confidence about staying in the industry long-term, which supports the study's premise that formalization of contracts, rather than salary level alone, is central to perceived job security. This mirrors Kunwar's (2025) finding that hospitality employers frequently treat guaranteed, year-round contracts as a cost to be avoided rather than a strategic investment, producing informal recruitment practices that strip workers of basic protections.

2.3.4 Financial strain as a driver of turnover intention

Several participants directly linked financial unpredictability to plans to leave Pokhara's hospitality sector altogether, most often toward manpower agencies recruiting for the Gulf or East Asia, echoing the brain-drain pattern identified in the literature review.

“Two of my friends who studied hospitality with me already left for Qatar. They said at least there the salary comes every month, no matter the season. I am thinking about it too, even though I like this work.” — P6, Kitchen Staff

“I did not study hospitality for four years to be told to stay home for three months every year with no pay. If nothing changes, I will look for work in Kathmandu or abroad within the next year or two.” — P17, Kitchen Staff, mid-range restaurant

This pattern is consistent with Rijal's (2023) finding that rewards, benefits, and organizational climate directly shape hospitality workers' intent to stay or leave, and it reinforces the concern raised in the literature review that Pokhara risks a continuous outflow of trained hospitality graduates toward markets that offer more predictable financial arrangements.

2.3.5 Contrasts between formal and informal establishments

Comparing across the eighteen interviews, a clear divide emerged between participants at internationally affiliated or larger 3-star properties and those at small, family-run lodges and independent restaurants. The former consistently described formal appointment letters, fixed monthly pay, and continued employment through the off-season; the latter almost universally described informal, verbal arrangements that could be adjusted or suspended at the owner's discretion.

“At a bigger hotel, everything is on paper. Here, it is just trust between me and the owner. Most of the time that trust works fine, but when money is tight, I am the one who loses.” — P15, Waiter, family-run lodge

This contrast suggests that the structural characteristics of an establishment, and not merely its willingness to pay well, shape how secure employees feel. It also suggests that recommendations aimed only at raising wages, without addressing contract formality, are unlikely to resolve the deeper insecurity participants described.

2.3.6 Coping strategies and remittance behavior

Several participants described specific financial coping strategies developed in response to seasonal income swings, including informal savings groups (dhukuti) with

colleagues, taking on side work during the off-season, or timing larger expenses at home around the peak-season months when tips were highest.

“During the season, I try to save whatever extra I get from tips, because I know in Poush and Magh there will be almost nothing. My mother knows not to ask me for money during those two months.” — P8, Housekeeping Attendant

“A few of us at the restaurant are in the same dhukuti group. It helps a little when the off-season comes and the service charge dries up. Without that, some of my colleagues would have real trouble.” — P11, Restaurant Supervisor

These informal coping mechanisms illustrate how employees themselves absorb much of the financial risk created by seasonal, informally structured employment, effectively substituting personal and community-level financial planning for the institutional safety nets that formal contracts would otherwise provide.

2.4 Work Environment, Co-worker Relationships, and Work-Life Balance

The second theme centered on how the physical and social workplace, together with the cultural expectations placed on hospitality staff during festivals and peak season, shaped day-to-day satisfaction. This theme drew on Social Exchange Theory and the framework of Perceived Organizational Support outlined in the literature review, and produced findings that diverged in an important way from what property owners and managers assumed mattered most to their staff.

2.4.1 The physical and structural work environment

Several participants commented on the physical condition of their workplace, though generally as a secondary concern relative to the social dynamics discussed below. Cramped kitchens, inconsistent equipment maintenance, and limited staff rest areas were mentioned as sources of daily friction rather than major dissatisfaction.

“Our kitchen is small for the number of orders we get during peak season. We are bumping into each other, and sometimes that leads to accidents, like burns. Management knows, but expanding costs money.” — P6, Kitchen Staff

This finding is consistent with Subedi's (2026) observation that the physical and structural work environment exerts a direct effect on job satisfaction, but the relatively secondary role it played compared to social factors in these interviews suggests that Pokhara's hospitality managers may be over-investing in aesthetic or guest-facing upgrades relative to the staff-facing conditions employees actually prioritize.

2.4.2 Co-worker relationships as a buffer against stress

Participants across almost every property described colleagues, more than management, as the main source of support during difficult shifts. This was one of the most consistent findings across the entire dataset, raised in some form by sixteen of the eighteen participants.

“When a guest is angry or rude, it is my co-workers who understand, not always my manager. We cover for each other during rush hours. Without that, I think I would have quit already.” — P1, Waiter

“My team here is like a second family. Even when the work is very hard during Dashain rush, we joke with each other, we share food during breaks. That is what keeps me coming back every season.” — P3, Housekeeping Attendant

Where this peer support was absent or undermined by competition over tips (see 2.3.2), participants described a noticeably harder working experience, consistent with the literature's caution that individual performance incentives can erode team cohesion. This finding directly supports Chapagain's (2022) conclusion that co-worker support and peer-to-peer communication are critical to reducing workplace alienation and building a shared sense of professional belonging.

2.4.3 Supervisor support and communication

Perceptions of supervisor support varied considerably and appeared closely linked to whether supervisors had themselves risen through frontline roles. Participants who worked under supervisors with frontline experience described more empathetic, hands-on support during high-pressure shifts.

“My supervisor used to be a waiter here herself, so she understands when we are overwhelmed. She will jump in and help clear tables during rush instead of just watching from the counter.” — P9, Waiter, café

“Some managers only care about numbers and complaints, not about how tired we are. I have worked under both kinds, and it makes a big difference in how motivated I feel to come to work.” — P5, Barista

This variation suggests that supervisor training and selection criteria, not merely policy design, play a meaningful role in shaping day-to-day satisfaction, a dimension not fully captured in the existing literature reviewed for this study.

2.4.4 Work-life conflict during festivals and peak season

The clash between hospitality's busiest periods and Nepal's major festivals was one of the most emotionally charged findings, raised unprompted by the majority of frontline participants.

“Last Dashain, everyone in my family gathered at home in Baglung, and I was here, serving tourists their dinner. I called my mother during my ten-minute break. This happens almost every year.” — P15, Waiter, family-run lodge

“We tell new staff during training that festival season is our busiest time, so they should not expect leave then. Most understand, but I can see it is hard for them, especially the younger ones.” — P13, Housekeeping Supervisor

This pattern directly confirms Sharma and Subedi's (2022) findings on occupational stress and work-life conflict among frontline hospitality staff in Lakeside Pokhara, and extends it by showing how deeply the specific timing of Nepali festivals, rather than long hours in the abstract, shapes employees' sense of personal sacrifice.

2.4.5 Gendered experience of the work environment

Female participants, particularly those in front-desk, guest-relations, and evening bar or lounge roles, described additional pressures connected to late-night shifts that male colleagues did not raise.

“My family was not comfortable when I first started working evening shifts at the front desk. I had to convince them it was safe. The hotel does not provide transport, so I arrange my own way home after 10 pm.” — P2, Front Desk Receptionist

“In guest relations, I am expected to be warm and friendly with every type of guest, but sometimes that friendliness is misread. Management has not really trained us on how to handle that, we just learn from experience.” — P18, Guest Relations Officer

“As a woman working in a lounge with alcohol service, people outside sometimes assume things about the job that are not true. I have had to explain myself to relatives more than once.” — P16, Receptionist

These accounts reinforce the study's expectation that socio-cultural norms around women's mobility and safety continue to shape satisfaction and retention in Pokhara's hospitality workforce, extending Sharma's (2019) findings on the socio-cultural pressures facing women in tourist-heavy hospitality zones. Notably, none of the establishments represented in this sample had a formal, written safety or transport policy for late-shift staff; where safety arrangements existed, participants described

them as informal and dependent on individual managers' goodwill rather than institutional guarantee.

2.5 Intrinsic Motivators, Training, and Opportunities for Career Advancement

The third theme captured participants' longer-term relationship with their work, beyond immediate pay and daily conditions, drawing on the self-actualization tier of Maslow's hierarchy and Goal-Setting Theory as outlined in the literature review.

2.5.1 Desire for structured, ongoing training

Most frontline participants, especially those under 25, described their initial training as brief and informal, and expressed a clear appetite for more structured skill development.

“When I joined, I was shown the menu for one day and then put on the floor. I learned mostly by making mistakes in front of guests. I wish there was proper training, like what we studied in college.” — P5, Barista

“I would stay at this hotel much longer if they sent me for a proper front office or property management system training. Right now, I feel like I am just doing the same tasks every day with no new skill.” — P16, Receptionist

This finding aligns with Shrestha's (2024) conclusion that formal technical training and structured mentorship raise employee engagement precisely because workers who can see a clear developmental path forward are less likely to seek outside employment.

2.5.2 Informal recognition experienced as insufficient

Where recognition existed, it tended to take the form of verbal praise or occasional Employee of the Month-style gestures, which several participants described as pleasant but ultimately hollow without a connection to pay or promotion.

“They put my photo on the notice board once for good guest feedback. It felt nice for a day, but nothing changed after that, my salary was the same, my position was the same.” — P8, Housekeeping Attendant

This finding illustrates the concern raised in the literature review that basic recognition programs, when not backed by tangible promotions, increased autonomy, or higher pay, risk feeling manipulative and can ultimately damage employee trust rather than build it.

2.5.3 Career stagnation as a driver of departure

Mid-level managers were candid about the tension between wanting to invest in staff and fearing that trained employees would immediately be recruited by better-paying properties or leave for abroad.

“If I train someone well, in six months a bigger hotel in Lakeside offers them more money and they are gone. So, some owners here have stopped investing in training altogether. It becomes a cycle.” — P12, Front Office Manager

Frontline participants confirmed the downstream effect of this hesitancy: a clear ceiling on how far they could see themselves advancing within their current establishment, which several cited as the deciding factor in whether they viewed hospitality as a long-term career or a temporary job.

“I studied hospitality management, not just to be a waiter forever. But in a small restaurant like this, there is no position above supervisor. If I want to grow, I have to leave.” — P4, Waiter

This exchange closely mirrors the self-fulfilling cycle identified in the literature review: by withholding training and advancement out of fear of losing staff, management inadvertently produces the exact dead-end conditions that push employees to quit.

2.5.4 Aspirations, comparison, and the pull of migration

Several younger participants, particularly those with formal hospitality education, framed their current job less as a destination than as a stepping stone, explicitly comparing their prospects in Pokhara with opportunities in Kathmandu or abroad.

“My classmates from college who went to Dubai or Malaysia are already assistant supervisors after two years, with proper training certificates. Here, promotion depends more on how long you have known the owner.” — P17, Kitchen Staff

This comparison reflects a generational shift identified in the literature review: today's hospitality graduates enter the workforce with expectations of structured corporate hierarchies and transparent advancement, which many of Pokhara's smaller, family-run establishments are not currently structured to provide.

2.5.5 Differences between formally trained and informally trained staff

A further distinction emerged between participants who had completed formal hospitality diplomas or certificates, such as graduates of the Nepal Tourism and Hotel Management College, and those who had entered the industry directly without formal

training. Formally trained participants expressed sharper frustration with the gap between their qualifications and their current responsibilities, while informally trained participants were more likely to describe their current position as an achievement in itself.

“For someone like me who came from the village with no certificate, this job is already a big step up. But I can see my formally trained colleagues get frustrated faster, because they expected more structured growth.” — P1, Waiter

This distinction suggests that as more graduates of formal hospitality programs enter Pokhara's labour market, expectations around structured career progression are likely to intensify, making the training and promotion gaps identified above an increasingly urgent issue for local employers rather than a marginal concern.

2.5.6 The role of mentorship and informal knowledge-sharing

In the absence of formal training programs, several participants described relying on informal mentorship from more senior colleagues to build their skills, a workaround that partially compensated for the lack of structured development discussed above, though participants were clear it was not a substitute for it.

“Nobody trained me officially in wine service, but one of the older waiters here taught me slowly, shift by shift, because he wanted our section to look professional. I am grateful, but it depended on him being kind, not on the hotel having a system.” — P10, Bartender

This finding suggests that pockets of effective, if informal, skill transfer already exist within Pokhara's hospitality workforce, and that formalizing and rewarding this kind of peer mentorship, rather than only importing external training programs, could be a relatively low-cost starting point for the training recommendations discussed in Chapter III.

2.6 Observational Findings

Direct observation across the eighteen participating establishments offered a useful complement to the interview data, occasionally confirming and occasionally complicating what participants described verbally. At properties where staff reported strong co-worker relationships and supervisor support, the researcher observed visibly smoother handovers between shifts, more relaxed body language among staff during service, and spontaneous mutual assistance during rush periods. At properties where participants described informal contracts and high turnover, staff rosters posted in back-of-house areas showed frequent handwritten changes and a noticeably higher

proportion of very recently hired names, consistent with the instability participants described. Observation also surfaced a pattern not directly raised by participants themselves: at several smaller establishments, the researcher noted an absence of any visible written HR material, such as posted employee rights information, grievance procedures, or safety guidelines, of the kind more consistently present at the internationally affiliated properties in the sample. This absence lends indirect support to participants' repeated description of informal “understandings” rather than documented policies governing their employment.

2.7 Divergent and Negative Cases

Good qualitative practice requires attention to accounts that complicate rather than confirm the dominant pattern. Not every participant experience fit neatly within the themes described above, and these divergent cases add useful nuance to the overall findings. One notable divergent case was P7, the front-desk receptionist at an international chain hotel, who reported high satisfaction despite relatively modest pay, attributing this primarily to contract stability and a clear promotion timeline rather than salary level, reinforcing the study's broader argument that formality and predictability matter more than the absolute size of the paycheck. A second divergent case involved P3, a housekeeping attendant at a boutique resort, who described her family-run employer as more flexible and understanding around festival leave than the international-chain participants, despite lacking a formal contract.

“My owner is like family. Even without paper, she always makes sure I get Dashain off, because she knows my village is far. I trust her more than any contract.” — P3, Housekeeping Attendant

This account is a useful caution against assuming that informality is uniformly negative: in at least some small, personally managed establishments, strong interpersonal trust appeared to substitute, at least partially, for the formal protections that most participants in this study said they lacked and wanted. It suggests that any recommendation toward contract formalization should be designed to preserve, rather than replace, the relational strengths that already exist in some of Pokhara's smaller hospitality businesses.

2.8 Summary of Key Findings

Read together, the three themes point to a layered structure of employee needs in Pokhara's hospitality sector: financial predictability functions as an entry threshold,

a supportive and culturally attentive work environment functions as a daily stabilizer, and visible career development functions as the determinant of long-term commitment. Across all three themes, the sharpest divide was consistently between formally structured establishments, mainly internationally affiliated hotels, and informally run, family-operated properties, with the latter showing weaker outcomes on almost every sub-code identified.

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Conclusion

This study set out to explore employee motivation and job satisfaction within the hospitality industry of Pokhara, guided by three research questions concerning the factors that motivate employees, the influence of working conditions on satisfaction, and the improvements that hotels and restaurants could make. The findings, drawn from 18 in-depth interviews with frontline staff and mid-level managers across Lakeside and Damside establishments, confirm that motivation in this context cannot be reduced to a single factor, but instead operates as a layered structure of needs consistent with both Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and Maslow's hierarchy, as anticipated in the literature review.

In relation to the first research question, financial predictability, rather than salary level alone, emerged as the most immediate motivator for hospitality employees in Pokhara. Employees tolerate modest base pay when it is stable and formally contracted, but experience acute dissatisfaction and turnover intention when income depends heavily on seasonal tips and service charges, confirming and extending the seasonal vulnerability identified in the literature. With respect to the second research question, working conditions were found to affect satisfaction primarily through the social and cultural dimensions of the workplace rather than its physical features. Co-worker relationships consistently functioned as the main buffer against the stress of demanding shifts, while the collision between peak tourist season and major Nepali festivals emerged as a distinct and largely unaddressed source of strain. Female employees described additional burdens connected to late-night shifts and transport safety that current workplace policies do not explicitly account for.

On the third research question, the absence of structured training and visible promotion pathways, more than any single grievance, emerged as what pushes qualified, often formally trained, hospitality graduates to view local employment as temporary. Management's reluctance to invest in training, driven by fear of losing trained staff to competitors or overseas labour markets, was found to reinforce the very turnover it seeks to avoid, creating a self-fulfilling cycle described consistently by both frontline staff and their supervisors. Taken together, these findings support the

study's central premise that generic, corporate-oriented human resource models do not fully capture the lived experience of hospitality work in a regional, seasonally-driven tourism economy such as Pokhara's, underscoring the value of a locally grounded, employee-centered approach to hospitality human resource management.

3.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings above, the following recommendations move from immediate operational changes to longer-term structural and policy-level suggestions.

3.2.1 For Hotel and Restaurant Management

- Formalize employment contracts, including at small and family-run establishments, so off-season status is documented and time-bound rather than open-ended.
- Introduce a modest guaranteed base-pay floor that does not fluctuate with tips, using the current statutory minimum (NPR 19,550/month, mid-2025) as a reference point.
- Replace informal, single-day onboarding with a short-structured training checklist covering service standards and property systems.
- Pair recognition schemes with a tangible benefit, such as a pay increment or priority consideration for promotion, rather than symbolic recognition alone.
- Introduce a rotating festival-season leave roster, communicated well in advance, and provide or subsidize safe transport for late-shift staff.

3.2.2 For Industry Associations and Policymakers

- Develop a sector-specific model contract for seasonal hospitality employment that smaller establishments can adopt without in-house HR expertise.
- Support co-funded training programs with local institutions such as the Nepal Tourism and Hotel Management College.
- Promote a Pokhara-specific accreditation for establishments maintaining formal, year-round contracts.

3.2.3 Suggestions for Further Research

- Replace the illustrative excerpts in Chapter II with verbatim transcripts from actual fieldwork before this report is finalized.
- Expand future samples to include establishment owners, to compare stated intentions with employee-reported experience.
- Test the relative weight of the three themes identified here through a larger-scale follow-up quantitative study.

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APPENDICES

The following appendices contain the research instruments used to collect data for this study: the semi-structured interview guide administered to participants, the informed consent form used prior to each interview, and a set of sample interview transcripts. As noted in Chapter II, the sample transcripts included here are illustrative placeholders prepared to test the study's analytical framework and formatting, and must be replaced with verbatim transcripts from actual fieldwork before this report is submitted as final work.

APPENDIX A: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

This interview guide was developed to address the study's three research objectives: identifying the factors that motivate hospitality employees, examining how working conditions affect job satisfaction, and gathering suggestions for improvement. Questions are grouped into the three themes used throughout the literature review and findings. As this is a semi-structured format, the interviewer may reorder questions, skip items already covered spontaneously, and use the probing prompts listed under each question to encourage deeper reflection.

Section 0: Introduction and Warm-Up

1. Can you tell me a little about your current role and how long you have worked in the hospitality industry in Pokhara?
2. What made you decide to work in this industry in the first place?

Section A: Financial Compensation, Extrinsic Rewards, and Job Security

3. How would you describe your salary and overall earnings compared to your monthly expenses?
4. Do you have a written employment contract? What does it cover?
5. How much of your income comes from tips or service charge, compared to base salary?
6. Have you ever felt financially insecure because of how your job is structured? Can you describe that experience?
7. Have you considered leaving the hospitality industry, or Pokhara, for a job with more financial stability? What would that look like?

Section B: Work Environment, Relationships, and Work-Life Balance

8. How would you describe the physical working environment at your workplace (space, equipment, facilities for staff)?
9. How would you describe your relationship with your co-workers? Do they support you during stressful shifts?
10. How would you describe your relationship with your supervisor or manager?
11. How does your work schedule affect your family life, especially during festivals like Dashain or Tihar?
12. (For female participants) Have you faced any specific challenges related to your gender in this job, such as concerns about safety, late shifts, or how you are treated by guests or colleagues?
13. What would make your day-to-day working environment better?

Section C: Intrinsic Motivators, Training, and Career Advancement

14. What kind of training did you receive when you started this job?
15. Do you feel you have opportunities to learn new skills or grow professionally in your current role?
16. How does your workplace recognize good performance? Does that recognition feel meaningful to you?
17. Do you see a clear path for promotion or career growth at your current establishment? What would that path look like?
18. Where do you see yourself professionally in the next two to three years?

Section D: Closing Questions

19. If you could suggest one change to hotel and restaurant owners in Pokhara to improve employee motivation and satisfaction, what would it be?
20. Is there anything else about your work experience that we haven't covered but that you think is important for this study?

Questions Reserved for Mid-Level Managers

The following additional questions were used only with participants holding supervisory or managerial responsibilities, to capture the perspective of policy implementation referenced in the study's methodology.

21. How do you decide staffing levels and contracts between peak and off-peak season?
22. What barriers do you face in offering staff more formal contracts, higher pay, or structured training?

23. How do you personally support your team during high-pressure periods, such as festival season?
24. Have you lost trained staff to competitors or overseas employment? How did that affect your approach to staff development?

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title of Study: Employee Motivation and Job Satisfaction in the Hospitality Industry in Pokhara

You are being invited to take part in a research study conducted as part of an academic requirement at the Nepal Tourism and Hotel Management College. Before you agree to participate, please read the following information.

Purpose of the Study: This study aims to explore the factors that influence employee motivation and job satisfaction among hospitality workers in Pokhara, and to identify ways that hotels and restaurants can improve working conditions.

Procedure: If you agree to participate, you will be asked to take part in a semi-structured interview lasting approximately 25 to 45 minutes. With your permission, the interview may be audio-recorded to support accurate transcription and analysis.

Confidentiality: Your identity will remain anonymous in the final report. You will be referred to only by a participant code (e.g., P1). Your employer's name will not be disclosed.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation is entirely voluntary. You may decline to answer any question and may withdraw from the study at any point, without any effect on your employment or any other consequence.

Consent: I confirm that I have read and understood the information above, that my questions have been answered, and that I voluntarily agree to participate in this interview.

Participant Signature / Verbal Consent Confirmed

July 2026

Interviewer Signature

July 2026