INTERNATIONAL HELLENIC UNIVERSITY

NON-FINANCIAL REWARDS AND MOTIVATION

(A CASE OF THE FRONT OFFICE RECEPTIONISTS OF

SELECTED 5-STAR HOTELS IN NORTHERN GREECE)

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A thesis submitted for the degree of
Master of Science (MSc) in Hospitality and Tourism Management

December 2018
Thessaloniki – Greece

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December 2018

Thessaloniki - Greece

ABSTRACT

This dissertation was written as part of the MSc in Hospitality and Tourism Management at the International Hellenic University. This study focuses on the non-financial rewards and motivation among the front office receptionists working in the 5-star hotels in Thessaloniki, Northern Greece. The specific objectives of this research were as they follow: to identify whether and to what extent the front office receptionists working in the 5-star hotels in Thessaloniki, Northern Greece receive non-financial rewards by their organizations, to identify how they evaluate the non-financial rewards provided by their hotels, to identify their current level of motivation at work, to identify, based on their perception, both the general impact of non-financial rewards, as well as the impact of specific non-financial rewards (work-life balance policies, feedback, promotion, training and development, recognition, conducive physical work environment, job autonomy) on employee motivation. The quantitative descriptive design was adopted in this study and the purposive sampling technique was used by the researcher to select the sample comprised of the total number (92) of the Front office receptionists from the 12 five-star hotels located in Thessaloniki, Northern Greece. The researcher designed and used a structured Likert-scale questionnaire to collect the data from the respondents. The data obtained through the questionnaires were analyzed quantitatively using descriptive statistics. The major findings of the study revealed that the receptionists of the selected 5-star hotels are moderately motivated, the conducive physical workplace is the mostly provided non-financial reward, while job autonomy is the less provided non-financial reward. Receptionists perceive that the non-financial rewards provided by their hotels are inadequate, do not match their efforts and they are neutral if the non-financial rewards are fairly distributed. Based on their perception the non-financial rewards have a strong impact on employee motivation, as well as they believe that job autonomy has a significant impact on employee motivation. Further discussion of the results and recommendations for future research are also highlighted in this study.

Keywords: *Non-financial rewards, motivation, Front office receptionists, 5-star hotels, Greece*

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30/12/2018

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a dynamic contributor to the Greek economy through its tremendous positive impact on both national GDP and employment. Greece has been considered among the most visited tourist destination not only in Europe but also worldwide, holding in 2016 rankings the 8th and the 14th place respectively. In 2017, the inbound tourism in the country increased by 9.7% compared to 2016, reaching a new record level of 27.2 million tourists, contributing 18% to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (SETE, 2017).

However, since 2009 and the outburst of the global economic crisis, the hospitality and tourism industry in Greece started facing numerous challenges. In recent years, despite the increased occupancy rates, the Greek hotels have experienced a significant decline in sales and profitability, as both national taxes and hotel operating costs have been increased disproportionally over to the average daily price and revenue per available room. Moreover, the limited lending opportunities offered by Greek banks, due to the unstable political environment, have led to a lack of liquidity among the hotels and to restrictions on further infrastructure investments. Consequently, all these factors have dramatically affected the human resources of the Greek hotel industry. Nowadays, hotel employees face serious problems, such as the problem of seasonality, long working hours, employment insecurity, reduced earnings compared to previous years, as well as the deregulation and manipulation of labour relations (Kapiki, 2012; Staikou & Stergiou, 2015). As a result, the level of motivation among hotel staff is dramatically decreasing, resulting in excessive labour turnover. Specifically, a high percentage of turnover appears to be more common among front office employees than employees working in the back office or managerial positions (Chalkiti & Sigala, 2010).

Due to the labour-intensive nature of hospitality industry and the increasing pressure on hospitality companies to manage their operating costs, especially during difficult economic times, they tend to motivate their workforce not only by offering them financial rewards such as wages or bonuses, but also by providing them non-financial motivational rewards such as meaningful work tasks, job autonomy, recognition and feedback from the manager (Chiang & Birtch, 2008). However, the design and implementation of motivational reward systems has always been an issue in human resources management as the perceptions, needs, and desires vary among individuals (Armstrong, 2012). This study attempts to further enlighten the field of research related

to non-financial rewards and motivation, especially in the Greek hotel industry. This study focuses on the Front office receptionists working in the 5-star hotels of Thessaloniki, Northern Greece, and guided by the following objectives:

1. To identify whether and to what extent the Front office receptionists working in the 5-star hotels of Thessaloniki, Northern Greece receive non-financial rewards by their organizations.

2. To identify how the Front office receptionists working in the 5-star hotels of Thessaloniki, Northern Greece evaluate the non-financial rewards provided by their organizations.

3. To identify the current level of motivation among the Front office receptionists working in the 5-star hotels of Thessaloniki, Northern Greece.

4. To identify, the general impact of non-financial rewards on employee motivation, based on the perception of the Front office receptionists working in the 5-star hotels of Thessaloniki, Northern Greece.

5. To identify the impact of specific non-financial rewards (work-life balance policies, feedback from manager, promotion, training and development programs, recognition by manager, conducive physical work environment, Job autonomy and control) on employee motivation, based on the perception of the Front office receptionists working in the 5-star hotels of Thessaloniki, northern Greece

The findings of this study will be beneficial to the Front Office managers of the selected 5-star hotels to gain an in-depth understanding of the current level of motivation among Front office receptionists. In addition, they will have a clear overview of the Front Office receptionist's perception towards the value of the existing non-monetary rewards applied by the hotels located in Thessaloniki, as well as of their perception towards the overall impact and effectiveness of non-financial rewards on employee motivation. The results from this study will help HR managers to develop better human resources policies and practices that will increase the motivation of front office receptionists and therefore their performance, which is always a major concern for the HR executives. Last but not least, this study will try to fill gaps from previous research papers and to provide conclusions and recommendations that would be useful for researchers who will attempt to study the same topic in the future.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

2.1.1 The concept of Human Resources Management

According to Armstrong and Taylor (2014) as Human Resource Management (HRM) can be described a strategic, coherent and integrated approach focused on the employment, development, and well-being of an organization's workforce. Boxall and Purcell (2003) stated that HRM refers to all activities related to the management of employment relationships within a firm.

More specifically, Human Resource Management refers to all the HR strategies, policies, and practices that should be designed and implemented within an organization and be integrated with its business strategy in order this organization to achieve its objectives and gain a competitive advantage in the business environment. The main goals of HRM are to help an organization to recruit, retain and develop the talented, skilled and highly engaged workforce, to develop a culture of high-performance among employees, as well as to create a positive employment relationship based on mutual trust and respect between management and employees (Armstrong and Taylor, 2014).

According to Storey (1995), HRM should not be considered by HR specialists as a simple process for carrying out human resources activities just in a professional way but as a distinctive approach related to employment management that aims to a firm's competitive edge through the development of a highly dedicated and competent workforce, using an integrated array of cultural, structural and personnel methods and techniques.

2.1.2 HRM in hospitality and tourism industry

Although hospitality organizations tend to be labor-intensive, meaning that their success and failure are highly dependent on the service quality delivered by their workforce (Hayes & Ninemeier, 2009), until the 1960s HRM was almost non-existent in the lodging and catering industry (Boella, 2000). Earlier studies have shown that over these years, HRM had a simple form of personnel management, focusing mainly on basic procedures of hiring, training and firing employees (Kelliher & Johnson, 1987;

Wood, 1997). From the 1970s to the 1990s, there was a significant progress about the quality and strategic outcomes of HRM in the hospitality industry. HR specialists started adopting a more holistic HRM approach, known as the *Japanese approach* (Davidson et al., 2011). Human resources within the organizations started being treated as a whole and not as individuals. This approach helped both HR executives and employees to better understand the value of work climate and culture within the organizations. At the beginning of the new millennium, HRM in hospitality industry focused mainly on high-performance workplaces, where the human capital and knowledge management, as well as talent management, became key topics for organizations. As a result, the contingency management theory emerged, as HR executives realized that one-fits-all HRM approach was inappropriate and that the effectiveness of HR practices depends on every single context and situation in which they are applied (Davidson et al., 2011).

In recent years, the demanding customer expectations, the competitive business environment, as well as the emergence of peer-to-peer platforms, widely known as the *sharing economy*, have increased more than ever the belief among the HR specialists that the quality of service provided by their employees is the key asset that hospitality organizations own to operate smoothly and gain advantage over their competitors in the market (Zervas et al., 2014; Kusluvan et al. 2010). For that reason, over the last two decades, most of the leading hospitality companies started providing various positions with different job titles for HR specialists such as Talent Acquisition manager, Junior Personnel Manager, Assistant HR Manager, Director of People or HR Manager (Boella, 2000). The results obtained from a survey of over 200 hotels conducted by Hoque (2000), indicated that the hospitality sector employed more HR specialists with formal qualifications than other industries.

However, the implementation of innovative HR practices for the recruitment, retention, and development of employees remains still an exception to the majority of hospitality enterprises, as they are mainly adopted by large-scale multinational hospitality establishments (Kusluvan et al., 2010). Most hospitality organizations are still focused on *hard* version of HRM approaches. In addition, most hotel employees are treated in many cases by their organizations more as a cost and less as the company's valuable asset, making the lines between HR departments and financial departments to seem blurred. Unfortunately, hospitality jobs are often considered by people as undesirable with low status, income, and job security, as well as with poor working

conditions, limited career advancement and training opportunities. All these employment issues in the sector often lead to a decreased level of motivation, satisfaction, and performance among employees. Consequently, the major concern of the HR executives in the industry is the high rate of labor turnover (Nickson, 2007). It is generally accepted by most researchers that under these circumstances, the recruitment, retention, and development of talented, qualified and committed personnel remain still a difficult task for hospitality HR managers (Kusluvan et al., 2010; Baum, 2007, 2015; Riley, 2014). Especially, the entry-level positions in hospitality firms are often covered by *marginal* unskilled and seasonal workers who are mainly students, migrants, and part-timers (Nickson, 2007).

In summary, the overview of the common employment characteristics combined with the poor HRM practices currently used in the hospitality industry show a pessimistic future scenario, where this sector will be considered as the last employment option among people. Fortunately, the progress made over the years in managing human recourses, especially in large-scale multinational establishments, is a positive exception that would attempt to gradually reshape the overall negative image of the sector in the future (Davidson et al, 2011; Baum, 2015).

2.1.3 HRM in the Greek hotel sector

Despite the significant contribution of the hospitality and tourism industry to the Greek economy, the research on HRM in Greek hotel sector has received limited attention (Giousmpasoglou, 2012). It can be partly explained, as according to the Greek and international HRM literature, until the 1980s and early 1990s, most Greek businesses were administrated by a paternalistic family-oriented management style, where the power and control were concentrated in the hands of the owner, meaning that there was a significant lack of modern management methods to support strategic decisions, as well as the HRM practices were almost non-existent and were they existed were extremely poor (Kanelopoulos, 1990; Bourantas & Papadakis, 1996).

At the beginning of the new millennium, HRM started to receive attention by the Greek firms, especially by the large-scale companies, which begun to hire HR specialists and to establish the first HR departments (Papalexandris & Panayotopoulou, 2005). In recent years, the core HRM functions applied in most Greek luxury hotels tend to meet more or less the international high standards of HRM in the sector and

seem to be similar to those HRM methods that are mainly used by the leading multinational hospitality companies. However, what actually differs in the function of HRM among the Greek luxury hotels, is the level of formality exercised in HRM practices, since both the ownership status and organizational functions vary from hotel to hotel.

A research conducted by Giousmpasoglou (2011) indicated that the Greek luxury hotels can be divided into three categories. Family/local hotel chain represents the first category and the vast majority of the 5-star hotels that operate in Greece. Specifically, this type of 5-star hotel chain is a small-medium sized tourism enterprise (SMTE) co-managed by a mixture of the owner and leader of the family surrounded by family members or relatives in various managerial positions, a phenomenon knows as ''In-Group collectivism''. The second category is represented by the National Greek hotel chain, an ex-family enterprise, which gradually expanded its subsidiaries all over the country, adopting in a certain level the operational standards and the organization structure of a multinational hotel chain, while the involvement of the owner to the hotel management is quite moderate. Multinational hotel chain represents the last category, which is operated under the brand of a successful foreign multinational hotel chain. This type of hotel chain is franchised in most cases by a Greek entrepreneur who has limited or no involvement to the hotel chain management, as this responsibility belongs exclusively to the parent company. The hotel operations and the organizational structure of this 5-star hotel type are strictly both based on the international standards and policies dictated by the parent company. Although, in a few cases, occur some differentiations based on the Greek economic and socio-cultural context.

Although Greek luxury hotels have different perspectives related to HRM approaches, since they have different forms of ownership and management style, they share one common characteristic which is that they have realized to some extent the significance of HRM to their hotel operations, as well as that the hotel workforce plays a pivotal role in each hotel firm's success in the competitive business environment (Giousmpasoglou, 2011; Aspridis & Kyriakou, 2012; Stavrinoudis & El Chanoun, 2013). However, the uncertainty of socio-economic external environment caused by the economic recession often forces the HR executives to be less focused on *soft* HRM and more budget-minded, making staff reductions or offering to their existent workforce low salaries, inadequate both monetary and non-financial rewards, as well as limited career advancement opportunities (Belias et al., 2016). All these issues combined with

the high-seasonality that defines the nature of the tourism and hospitality industry in Greece has dramatically affected the HR strategies applied to all the different types of Greek 5-star hotels. Today, one of the major challenges of HR executives in the sector is the recruitment and selection of young and talented employees (Belias et al., 2016).

This issue has been proven by the study conducted by Vellisariou and Amiradis (2014). According to their study, although the number of people employed in the Greek hotel industry is quite high, the educational level of hotel staff in most hotel establishments is dramatically low, with about 60% of hotel employees holding only a high-school or equivalent degree, while only 16-20% hold a Bachelor's or Master's degree. In addition, it is worth noting that seasonal employees working in Greek luxury hotels located in insular regions seem to have a lower level of education than those working in hotels located in the mainland. In particular, workers with a lack of scientific or technical education account for 67.4% of the total workforce in seasonally operating hotels in Greece.

2.2 NON-FINACIAL REWARDS

2.2.1 The concept of non-financial rewards

Reward management refers to all policies, processes, and strategies designed and implemented by organizations to recognize and appreciate the value of their workforce's contribution to business operations. Reward systems are considered as a key management tool that aims to increase employees' motivation, job satisfaction, and commitment, so as they to be able to maintain high levels of performance and meet corporate objectives, leading to firm's effectiveness and profitability (Armstrong, 2010).

Financial rewards such as basic salary, performance-based bonuses, and profit gain sharing are commonly used by organizations as major drivers of employees' motivation. However, employees, nowadays, seek an alternative return in exchange for their efforts, which is more valuable and meaningful to them, rather than being just given money. As a result, non-financial rewards are being adopted increasingly by today's organizations as an effective tool for rewarding employees' efforts. One main characteristic of this kind of rewards is that they have no monetary value, as they do not include any direct payment to employees. Non-financial rewards can be extrinsic such as praise and

recognition or intrinsic arising from the work itself such as meaningful and interesting job-related tasks.

While this reward type can have a tangible form such as a renovated fully equipped luxurious office provided by a company as an incentive to an employee for his remarkable performance, the vast majority of non-monetary rewards are mainly intangible in the form of employee's promotion, feedback or participation in the decision-making. Last but not least, they incorporate a relational notion that focuses on employees' intrinsic motivation, trying to satisfy their psychological needs, while promoting the quality of their working life (Armstrong, 2010).

2.2 Major benefits of non-financial rewards

Non-financial rewards are considered as alternative cost-effective means of compensating employees, as they do not have any monetary value, thus enabling companies to boost employees' motivation by reducing labor costs, while increasing organization's productivity. In contrast to financial rewards that tend to encourage workers' extrinsically, non-monetary rewards have a significant impact on the intrinsic employees' motivation (Thomson, 2002).

Otherwise speaking, non-monetary rewards attempt to reinforce the inner-self and psychological needs of workers, contributing to the whole employee experience at work, and not focusing mainly such as money or bonuses on the satisfaction of materialistic employees' needs related to their daily life outside of the workplace. In addition, intrinsic non-financial rewards in the form of meaningful and interesting job-related tasks tend to have a deeper and longer-lasting impact on employee's motivation than financial rewards, which are typically narrow-focused, sustaining motivation among employees for short-term (Whitaker, 2010; Dewhurst et al., 2009)). As a result, the companies that use non-financial rewards tend to attract highly qualified and committed workforce, creating a strong psychological bond between them, which can be beneficial for the achievement of organizational objectives (Kathure, 2014).

2.3 Drawbacks of non-financial rewards

Although non-financial rewards are considered as one of the most effective means of compensating employee's performance, leading to employee's motivation, satisfaction,

and retention towards their workplace, there are numerous drawbacks associated with the design and implementation of this type of rewards.

More specifically, due to their intangible form and relational notion, the outcomes of implemented non-monetary rewards cannot be easily measured by HR executives, as well as, successful practices regarding non-financial rewards cannot be copied from competitors (Silverman, 2004). In addition, the workforce within an organization does not consist of people that share each other homogeneous characteristics, as employees' gender, educational and cultural background, as well as the needs and demands vary among individuals (Bagraim et al, 2007). Therefore, the process of designing the appropriate non-monetary reward system is often seen by human resources managers as a difficult task, since they need to take all these factors into account before applying the right mixture of non-monetary rewards tailored to meet the unique characteristics of each, and at the same time aligned with the organizational strategies and objectives of the company (Armstrong, 2002).

In addition, the external economic environment can affect dramatically the effectiveness of non-financial rewards in motivating employees for greater performance. For example, during times of economic recession non-financial reward schemes provided by an organization can be perceived by employees as empty attempts that focus only on reducing labor costs (Tahmincioglu, 2004).

In contrast to financial rewards such as monthly salaries or annual bonuses that are planned-based, non-financial rewards cannot be provided to employees periodically, since they are based on the psychological contract between employees and employer, which is a constantly changing relationship. HR executives should rethink and restructure the implemented non-financial reward scheme systematically, in order to keep up with employees' needs, which is a demanding and time-consuming process that distracts them from other important duties related to their job. Last but not least, due to their relational nature, if non-financial rewards are not provided to employees in an equitable, fair and transparent way, can lead to the opposite negative results regarding employees' motivation and performance (Silverman, 2004)

2.4 Types of non-financial rewards

According to Armstrong (2015), non-financial rewards can be classified into four categories known as individual extrinsic non-financial rewards, individual intrinsic non-

financial rewards, collective extrinsic non-financial rewards, and collective intrinsic non-financial rewards. Individual extrinsic rewards are intangible such as recognition, feedback and promotion usually offered by the employee's immediate manager who decides upon them in order to recognize his/her employee's individual achievements. Individual intrinsic non-monetary rewards are relational incentives provided to employees individually after a decision of their immediate manager, focusing on the improvement of employee's intrinsic motivation aroused by their work itself. Collective extrinsic non-financial rewards are provided by an organization to all employees customized to their individual unique characteristics, having the form of services, programs, procedures, and policies such as work-life balance policies, employee-wellbeing services or learning and development programs. Collective intrinsic non-financial rewards are provided to all employees mainly through the work environment and they are aligned with the quality of work life provided within an organization, as well as a firm's core values (Armstrong, 2015).

Work-life balance is used as general term to describe the right balance achieved by employees between their work duties and other aspects of their private life. Work-life balance policies refer to family-friendly arrangements and practices voluntary provided by organizations, aiming at meeting both employees' needs and those of their employers. Such initiatives can be offered to employees in the form of flexible working hours such as flextime which is a non-traditional work scheduling practice that allows employees to choose, according to their personal needs but within certain limits, the starting and finishing times about their defined core work hours. Other family-friendly arrangements can involve but not limited job-sharing in which two employees can reduce their working hours in order to save time for their personal life by sharing voluntary between them the responsibilities, work schedule and benefits of one full-time job, as well as other special leave schemes such as parental leave policy that provides flexibility to employees that are parents to take a career break in order to take care of their infant or newly placed child, without risking to lose their job position. According to literature and HRM scholars work-life balance polices are beneficial management tools with positive impact on several important workplace issues such as employees' turnover, stress, motivation, job satisfaction and productivity (Armstrong, 2014).

Feedback is one of the key performance management processes, providing beneficial information to employees about the quality of their current performance and behavior, aiming at their further development and improvement that will reinforce the adoption of

better attitude and actions in the future. Feedback can be *positive* when it mentions employee's exceptional performance and behavior, *constructive* when it includes advice for employee's further development and improvement, and *negative* when it mentions employee's service failures. It can be provided to employees by their line manager either informally in a written or verbal way or formally at a performance review meeting. Apart from line managers, feedback can be given by a wide range of people such as subordinates, colleagues or even customers, creating a multisource feedback known as *360-degree feedback* (Aswathappa, 2007).

Promotion refers to an employee's advancement from his current position within an organization to a higher one in terms of responsibilities, skills, and prestige. This type of non-cash reward is usually used by organizations to recognize and reward the outstanding performance of a highly qualified employee, increasing his/her sense of belongingness and security towards the employer, resulting in enhanced employee's morale, productivity, and effectiveness in meeting corporate goals (Gupta, 2012).

Training and development are considered as major HRM functions and refers to an organization's systematic application of planned efforts to enhance learning and development among employees by helping them to acquire the necessary knowledge, abilities, skills, and behaviors required to perform their job-related duties effectively in order to meet corporate goals (Armstrong, 2010; Noe et al., 2016). Training programs employed by organizations can involve different training methods aimed at different outcomes, depending on the organization's strategy, goals, the needs of the available workforce, the target group which may include individual workers, groups, teams, department or an entire organization. Employees are able to develop a variety of different skills, ranging from hard skills such as software utilization to interpersonal communication skills widely known as soft skills. Training and development programs commonly used by organizations are broadly based on two different methods. On the one hand, employee's on-the-job training takes place within the venues of their workplace, while they are conducting their daily routine job-related tasks in the form of job rotations and transfers. On the other hand, off-the-job training refers to employee's training that takes place away from employees' usual working environment such as conferences, seminars, and role-playing. No matter what its form and its objectives, an effective training program can be beneficial to both employees and organizations either for short-term or long-term with results in high employees' morale and job satisfaction,

leading to better employee's performance, reduced labor turnover and absenteeism and business effectiveness. (Cole, 2002).

Employee recognition is one of the most effective motivational tools of the overall total reward package aimed at rewarding employee's performance, showing that their special achievements within the organization are highly appreciated. On the one hand, recognition schemes can be provided to employees informally on a day-to-day basis by their line managers using just simple verbal expressions such as *Thank you*, *Well done*, *Congratulations* or indirectly by brief notes of appreciation. On the other hand, this type of relational rewards can be delivered to employees through formal recognition arrangements, focusing on the public applause and appreciation such as an *employee of the month* scheme or some announcement on the company's website or periodicals (Nickson, 2007).

A conducive physical work environment can be viewed as a non-financial reward that contributes to employees' well-being and quality of their work life, as it covers a range of organizational efforts to optimize the safety and health conditions among employees, while they carry out their regular work activities. The physical work environment refers to all material objects and intangible stimuli that employees encounter and interact with in their working life (Elsbach & Pratt, 2007). The main components of physical workplace environment include interior design elements related to workplace layout such as ergonomic furniture and equipment, interior plants and other aesthetic objects, as well as ambient conditions such as the indoor air quality, temperature, lighting, noise, colour and workspace (Rahman & Badayai, 2012). Numerous studies have consistently demonstrated that a pleasant, safe and comfortable physical workplace is a remarkable multi-lever driver of employees' morale, leading to a reduced level of occupational stress among employees while increasing their job satisfaction, performance, and effectiveness which are crucial elements for the overall business success.

Job autonomy can be defined as a set of management practices and procedures employed by managers to provide their employees with increased decision-making authority, as well as a sense of greater freedom and flexibility over their work tasks (Thompson, 2002). The concept of job autonomy has been formulated and validated from the 1970s and today include a great variety of different forms and aspects. As examples of job autonomy could be considered employee's discretion in scheduling work tasks (*scheduling autonomy*), participating in decision-making about primary or peripheral job-related tasks (*planning autonomy*), selecting work procedures and

methods (*work methods autonomy*) (Breaugh, 1985; Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006). According to the Job Characteristics Model designed by Hackman & Oldman (1976), employee's job autonomy is viewed as a core element among the overall five job design characteristics (*task variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback*). Several empirical studies indicated that job autonomy has a significant impact on employee's intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000), job satisfaction, quality of performance (Dysvik and Kuvaas, 2013; Langfred, 2013), job commitment (Tastan, 2013), employees' well-being (Thompson & Prottas, 2006).

2.3 MOTIVATION

2.3.1 The concept of motivation

The meaning of the term *motivation* is derived from the Latin verb *movere*, which basically means *to move* (Greenberg and Baron, 2003). According to Ryan & Deci (1985), a motive refers to a reason that someone has to do something or to the incitement of someone to perform a task. Motivation describes a goal-oriented human behavior triggered by various different factors that enable people to behave in certain ways in order to achieve a specific goal or to gain a valued reward that meets their wants, needs and desires. According to Armstrong (2010), motivation refers variously to the personal goals that individuals have, the ways in which individuals choose their goals, as well as the ways in which others influence their behavior. In addition, Latham and Locke (2004) stated that motivation refers to both intrinsic and extrinsic human factors that force every individual to take an action.

2.3.2 Types of motivation

Motivation can be distinguished into two main types known as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as originally identified by Herzberg et al (1957). Intrinsic motivation can arise from individuals' internal desire to do something for their own sake triggered by self-generated factors that influence them to behave in a certain decision or to move in a particular direction that satisfy their needs. This type of motivation cannot be aroused among individuals by external incentives but can be enhanced by the work itself when they have the feeling that their work is interesting, meaningful, challenging and

important, providing them with a reasonable sense of achievement, autonomy and control over their tasks and opportunities for personal growth through the development of their skills and abilities (Armstrong, 2006). It can be seen as an internal driving force that energize people doing activities without external incentive. Deci and Ryan (1985) suggested that intrinsic motivation is based on individual's needs to be competent and self-determined, meaning to be convenient to have a choice. In other words, intrinsic motivation can be enhanced by job or role design which includes, according to the job characteristics model by Hackman & Oldman (1975), five important core job dimensions as motivators such as skill variety, task significance, task identity, feedback and autonomy.

Whereas intrinsic motivation is derived intrinsically to individuals from their work itself by doing an activity for the enjoyment of the activity itself, without considering its instrumental value, extrinsic motivation is imposed to individuals from the external environment, aiming to encourage them to perform a task in order to attain a separable outcome and obtain a good or reward that a person wouldn't get from intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Extrinsic motivation can be aroused among individuals by external tangible rewards with monetary value such as increased pay or external intangible non-financial rewards such as praise and recognition, feedback and promotion (Herzberg, 2003).

Although, Intrinsic motivators are inherent to individuals and concerned with the quality of their work life, making their impact to be deeper and longer-lasting on employees than the impact of extrinsic motivators which is powerful but immediate and last in short-term, the one type of motivation does not undermine the value of other (Armstrong, 2006). Motivation is a complicated subject as it deals with people whose attitudes, emotions and needs vary among individuals and as a result they are motivated by different things. Employees cannot only differ each other in level of motivation (how much motivation) but also in the orientation of that motivation (which type of motivation) (Ryan & Deci, 1985, 2000). Furthermore, employee motivation can be defined as a psychological feature that drives people to accomplish both personal and organizational goals (Lindner, 1998). In other words, employees at workplace cannot be intrinsically motivated in order to satisfy only their own psychological needs but also to be extrinsically motivated in order to perform better for specific organizational outcomes. Both types of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are important at the workplace and should be combined synergistically, especially when initial levels of

intrinsic motivation are high. This motivational combination enhances the level of employees' morale, job satisfaction and performance on meeting organizational goals, leading consequently to business success and profitability (Amabile, 1993).

2.3.3 Content theories of motivation

Motivational theories can be classified broadly into two categories known as the *content* and *process* theories of motivation. *Content or needs* theories deal with *what* activates internally individuals to be motivated and are concerned with identifying people's needs and their relative strengths, as well as their goals they pursue in order to satisfy these personal needs, while process theories provide a helpful insight on *how* motivation arises among employees. The major *content theories* of motivation include Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Alderfer's ERG theory, McClelland's theory of needs or three-needs theory, and Herzberg's two-factor theory, while the most common *process theories* of motivation include Vroom's expectancy theory, Adam's equity theory, Locke's goal setting theory, and Skinner's reinforcement theory (Shields, 2007).

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is one of the first proposed and known motivation theories developed by Abraham Maslow (Viorel et al, 2009). According to Maslow (1946, 1954), every person, without exception, has various intrinsic needs that can be ranked hierarchically in five different categories and be depicted in the form of a pyramid. At the base of the pyramid, there are the *physiological or basic human needs* such as sleep, water, food, oxygen, and shelter. At the next higher level, there are the *safety human needs* referred to the human need for protection and security against every kind of threat from external environmental factors, ensuring the stability in every person's life. The third level of the pyramid includes the *social human needs* that are related to the need of every human being to be integrated into a social group, where he/she will engage with other people and experience strong emotions such as love, friendship, and affection. The next level of hierarchy includes the *esteem human needs* derived from a great sense of responsibility and achievement, as well as from the praise and recognition by others. At the top of the pyramid, there is the human need for *self-actualization* that contains the desire of every person for continuous personal development and self-fulfilment. All these different types of human needs must be strictly satisfied one after another, starting first from the lowest levels of the pyramid, reaching the top of the pyramid, thus leading to motivation among individuals.

Clayton Alderfer (1969) further developed and reclassified the five levels of Maslow's needs theory into three broader classifications of human needs represented by the abbreviation *ERG*. Specifically, the letters ERG refers to the human needs of *Existence, Relatedness, and Growth* respectively. *Existence needs* category combines Maslow's physiological and safety needs, as it basically includes essential human needs for safety and survival such as food, clothing and/or safe working environment. *Relatedness needs* category is equivalent to social needs level of Maslow's needs theory, as they refer to human needs for interpersonal relationships which include the sense of security, belonging, as well as the mutual trust and respect among individuals. *Growth needs* category contains esteem needs and self-actualization of Maslow's theory. In contrast to Maslow, Alderfer suggests that all human needs can be accessed and satisfied simultaneously, rather than from the bottom up. He stated that an individual can be motivated by two or three need categories at the same time. According to Alderfer's ''regression-frustration'' theory, if the needs in a higher category remain unfulfilled, then the person may regress to lower needs category that is easier to satisfy.

David McClelland (1961) formulated his own motivation theory, known as the *McClelland's theory of needs* or as the *Three Needs Theory*. As the name of this theory itself suggests, each person has the same three intrinsic needs regardless of age, gender and origin, widely known as the human needs for *affiliation, achievement,* and *power.* According to McClelland, although motivation among people derives from these three types of human needs, only one of them determines the behavior of each person and can be considered as its personal dominant driver of motivation, as this one derives in a higher level than the others from every person's different life experiences and cultural background.

Frederick Herzberg (1959) proposed another theory of motivation, known as the *motivation-hygiene* or *dual-factor* theory. According to this theory, there are two sets of several factors in the workplace that one of these sets leads to employee's job satisfaction, while the other group of factors causes dissatisfaction among employees. Herzberg stated that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction cannot be considered each other as opposites, meaning that while one of them is increasing, at the same time the other is decreasing, but he mentioned that both job satisfaction and dissatisfaction act independently from each other. According to Herzberg (1959), the opposite of satisfaction is no satisfaction, while, the opposite of dissatisfaction is no dissatisfaction. Specifically, the group of factors that lead to employee's job satisfaction is known as

motivators or *satisfiers* that involve elements related to the job context such as the employee's participation in the decision-making, meaningful and challenging job tasks, as well as employee recognition for achievements. As the name of these factors indicates, their presence leads to employee motivation for long-term, as well as to job satisfaction among employees, without meaning that their absence causes dissatisfaction among employees. Employee dissatisfaction can be caused by the other set of factors called as *hygiene* and *maintenance* factors or *dissatisfiers* which are related not to the job itself but to the external work environment such as the company policies, salary and/or interpersonal relationships and supervision. Failure to meet the hygiene factors lead to dissatisfaction at work, but their fulfillment does not lead to job satisfaction among employees.

2.3.4 Process theories of motivation

Vroom's expectancy theory or *VIE theory* focuses on human behavior and explains why people choose a particular behavior against another, in order to increase their pleasure and minimize the sense of pain. According to Vroom (1964), effort, performance, and outcome are three elements that are not related to each other, but that they are independent processes from one another. This theory states that employee performance is based on individual factors such as skills, abilities, knowledge, experience, and personality. In addition, according to this theory, each person's personal goals are different from person to person and that everyone can respond to them and be motivated only if he or she feels that their efforts are correlated with their performance (*expectancy*), where the result of a favorable performance will lead to the desired reward (*instrumentality*) that will satisfy an individual's needs, making him feel that the desire to meet his needs is strong enough to make the effort worthwhile (*valence*).

Adam's equity theory focuses on employee motivation derived from the equity in the workplace. According to this theory, equity in the workplace is determined by factors that affect the social relationship exchange between the worker and the employer. In other words, workers are looking to find a balance between their effort to carry out their duties (*inputs*) and what they receive in return from their employer for their contribution to the business (*outputs*). The most common forms of *inputs* are employees' knowledge, skills, effort, time, loyalty, and work experience. *Outputs* can generally be categorized into financial rewards such as salary, bonuses and profit sharing, as well as into non-

monetary rewards such as recognition, responsibility, meaningful and challenging job tasks etc. According to Adams (1965), equity is based on the fair and equal treatment of employees by their employer and can be achieved when there is a balance between an employee's inputs and outputs, which leads to employee motivation. Every employee perceives the principle of equity at work, comparing his/her own personal ratio between inputs and outputs to the ratio provided by the organization to their colleagues. If all the employees perceive that their ratio between inputs and outputs is similar to those of their colleagues, they tend to feel motivated towards their organization. In a different case, employees consider that they are not treated fairly and feel frustrated with their employer, leading to reduced employees' job performance and in many cases even to high labor turnover.

According to *Locke's goal setting theory* (1968), employee motivation derives from the positive relationship between job-related goals and employee performance. In particular, this theory assumes that job-related goals are perceived by employees as a powerful driver of motivation that leads to increased performance at work. Specifically, the more difficult and challenging the job-related goals are, the more motivated the employees feel to put greater effort into their performance. Locke (1968) stated that the goal-setting that would be beneficial for employees should be based on five basic principles such as *clarity, challenge, commitment, feedback, task complexity*. In other words, job-related goals should not be general but clear and specific to be fully understood by employees, as well as to be challenging for employees to be motivated as much as possible. In addition, job-related goals can only be effective if they are tailored to the skills and needs of every employee. Employees should be involved in the decision-making process related to the goal-setting that affect their work and agree with them before these goals are implemented. Moreover, job-related goals should include undoubtedly the provision of a constructive and appropriate feedback by the manager, who should recognize the effort made by employees. Because the more demanding the job-related goals are, the higher the motivation and the effort of the employees, the workers must practice and be thoroughly informed about the goals before and during their implementation within an organization.

Skinner's reinforcement theory (1956) is another theory of motivation, which proposed that the motivation among people is correlated to human behavior, which is influenced and determined by the consequences caused by this behavior itself. The Reinforcement theory focuses on the process of shaping a specific human behavior

resulting from the control of the consequences of this specific behavior. In his theory, Skinner (1956) stated that human behavior can be changed and determined through the procedures of *reinforcement, punishment* or *extinction*, which are briefly described as operant conditioning. Specifically, the Reinforcement can be categorized as positive Reinforcement and negative Reinforcement. The *positive Reinforcement* refers to the fact that when an employee has a positive and required attitude, the response to them must be positive by providing them rewards so that they will continue to repeat the same positive behavior that will lead to increased work performance. The negative *Reinforcement* arises when various negative factors and stimuli are removed, and that, after their removal, the desired behavior and motivation of employees for better job performance continue to grow. *Punishment* refers to imposing negative consequences or not imposing positive consequences in order to discourage a possible employees' unwanted behavior. However, according to Skinner, punishment should often be used as a last option to reform an employee's behavior, because it can lead to bad consequences and create more stress and anxiety among employees. Finally, *Extinction* refers to extinguishing an employee's learned behavior by avoiding a positive reinforcement or reward that would encourage worker's behavior.

2.4 NON-FINANCIAL REWARDS AND MOTIVATION

2.4.1 Non-financial rewards and motivation among Front office receptionists working in luxury hotels

As luxury or upper-scale properties can be considered all the 4- and 5-star hotels that provide a wide range of top-quality amenities in both guest's private areas such as a spacious, elegant bedroom equipped with the state-of-art technology and hotel's public spaces such as cosy lounges with modern architectural style, extraordinary full-service restaurants and bars, as well as, spas and comprehensive conference and meeting rooms of all sizes. However, apart from the sophisticated in- and outdoor facilities, what actually defines a first-class hotel is the quality of the highest level of professional and personalized service, tailored to meet the needs and demands of today's multitasking high-end traveller who view the hotel more than a place to stay (Beech and Chadwick, 2006). Aim of luxury hotels is to create a memorable stay to the guest by offering genuine care through the delivery of unique and meaningful guest experiences (Chu,

2014). Service excellence differentiates upper-scale hotels from other hotel categories and is the key for success in the demanding and competitive luxury hotel sector. (Briggs et al., 2007).

Services are difficult to be measured, due to their nature defined by intangibility, heterogeneity, inseparability and perishability (IHIP) and as a result the quality of service delivery is dependent on the interaction between the consumer and the service-provider (Wolak et al., 1998). In the luxury hotel industry, the quality of service delivery relies highly on the efficiency of the Front office, known as the *nerve centre* of the lodging establishment. Due to their boundary-spanning role, Front desk receptionists are the most critical linkage between hotel property and guests, while their actions determine guests' perceived service quality and satisfaction (Bardi, 2010). They are expected to deal with a great number of guests with high demanding requests and complaints whose interests and preferences differ from individual to individual. (Karatepe & Kilic, 2007). As a result, well-executed direct face-to-face or voice-to-voice interactions, between Front office receptionists and hotel guests, play a pivotal role in building long-term customer relationships, leading to an increased level of guest loyalty towards the organization, which is one of the major objectives of the lodging properties in today's competitive luxury hotel sector (Karatepe & Sokmen, 2006).

A loyal customer base relies highly on the effective distribution and communication of five-star hotels' brand, having a significant impact on their profitability. Front Office is the most visible point and communication channel within a hotel property and its representatives are the most active hotel's brand ambassadors. Front office receptionists' actions and attitudes reflect the overall image of hotel operations to the guests. For that reason, they must have excellent communication and interpersonal skills combined with feelings of warmth, caring, security and efficiency to each guest, an in-depth overview of hotel's organizational goals, as well as, a developed profitable and advertising point-of-sale strategy. In a different case, the front office staff fails to communicate hotel's brand to the guest properly, affecting negatively company's viability (Bardi, 2010).

Although, managers in luxury hotel industry, especially those working in large-scale multinational hotel chains, have realized the significance of front office receptionists in delivering hotels' brand strategy combined with superior customer service, hospitality management literature indicates that front office agents often receive inadequate pay, while being overworked with limited weekend off, as their work schedules are typically

irregular and inflexible. Therefore, they are usually inclined to show signs of emotional exhaustion, resulting in low level of motivation and satisfaction regarding their job, leading to excessive turnover rates (Karatepe & Uludag, 2007). Emotional exhaustion among front desk receptionists is one the critical issues in hotel industry caused by the combination of two factors.

On the one hand, the nature of work itself is considered as stressful and multitasking, involving accuracy at every contact. Front line employees are expected to be always well-groomed with a non-stop positive attitude in order to deliver superior customer service by proving information about the hotel, receiving a great variety of complaints from guests with subjective unique needs and expectations, apologizing for service failure when it occurs, while promoting, at the same time, hotel's brand strategies in a highly professional customer-oriented way. In addition, they try to perform the job-related tasks in a working environment with limited family friendly policies. Consequently, Front office receptionists often experience work-family conflict or vice versa (Karatepe & Kilic, 2007; Zhao & Mattila, 2013). On the other hand, they face interorganizational challenges such as the ineffective collaboration with co-workers, or the receiving of incompatible demands from managers coupled with inadequate job resources including low levels of training, supervisory support and lack of rewards and empowerment (Singh, 2000). According to a survey conducted by Marinakou and Giousmpasoglou (2013) attempting to investigate the level of students' satisfaction from hospitality internship programs in Greek luxury hotel units, it was confirmed that the working conditions were negatively viewed by the students, as well as, the low pay, lack-of decision making, long working hours and routinized tasks were considered as the most demotivating factors among the students.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research purpose, questions and objectives

This research focused on non-financial rewards and employee motivation in the luxury hotel industry. The purpose of this study was to further enlighten the research field related to non-financial rewards and motivation among the Front office receptionists working in the Greek 5-star hotels and more specifically those located in the city of Thessaloniki, Northern Greece. Based on the perception of the Front office receptionists, the researcher attempted to identify the qualitative value of the non-financial rewards provided by the 5-star hotels of Thessaloniki, as well as the impact of non-financial rewards on employee motivation.

1. Whether and to what extent do the Front office receptionists working in the 5-star hotels of Thessaloniki, Northern Greece receive non-financial rewards by their organizations?

2. How do the Front office receptionists working in the 5-star hotels of Thessaloniki, Northern Greece evaluate the non-financial rewards provided by their organizations?

3. What is the current level of motivation among Front office receptionists working in the 5-star hotels of Thessaloniki, Northern Greece?

4. What is the general impact of the non-financial rewards on employee motivation, based on the perception of the Front office receptionists working in the 5-star hotels of Thessaloniki, Northern Greece?

5. What is the impact of specific non-financial rewards (work-life balance policies, feedback from manager, promotion, training and development programs, recognition by manager, conducive physical work environment, Job autonomy and control) on employee motivation, based on the perception of the Front office receptionists working in the 5-star hotels of Thessaloniki, Northern Greece?

These research questions were guided by the following objectives:

1. To identify whether and to what extent the Front office receptionists working in the 5-star hotels of Thessaloniki, Northern Greece receive non-financial rewards by their organizations.

2. To identify how the Front office receptionists working in the 5-star hotels of Thessaloniki, Northern Greece evaluate the non-financial rewards provided by their organizations.

3. To identify what is the current level of motivation among the Front office receptionists working in the 5-star hotels of Thessaloniki, northern Greece.

4. To identify, what is the general impact of non-financial rewards on employee motivation, based on the perception of the Front office receptionists working in the 5-star hotels of Thessaloniki, northern Greece.

5. To identify what is the impact of specific non-financial rewards (work-life balance policies, feedback from manager, promotion, training and development programs, recognition by manager, conducive physical work environment, Job autonomy and control) on employee motivation, based on the perception of the Front office receptionists working in the 5-star hotels of Thessaloniki, northern Greece?

3.2 Sampling Population

The study population consisted of 92 Front office receptionists working in the 5-star hotels in the city of Thessaloniki, Northern Greece. The number of the respondents represents the total number of the Front office receptionists from the twelve 5-star hotels located both in the inner city and the surrounding area, which are as they follow: *Holiday Inn Thessaloniki, Hyatt Regency Thessaloniki, Electra Palace Thessaloniki, Makedonia Palace, Lazart Hotel, The Excelsior, Daios Luxury Living, Grand Hotel Palace, Hotel Nikopolis, The Met Hotel, Mediterranean Hotel, Antigon Urban Chic Hotel-The Leading Hotels of the World.*

3.3 Data collection tools and methods

The researcher formulated a self-designed Likert-scale structured questionnaire (see Appendix 1) to collect data from the respondents that would be necessary and useful to conduct the survey. This structured questionnaire included initially an introductory information note with the researcher's personal details, a brief presentation of the research purpose, the name of the university to which the researcher belongs, and some general guidelines that would be useful for the survey participants to fill in the questionnaire correctly, underlining that their participation would be voluntary and that their answers would be anonymous and strictly confidential.

The first part of the questionnaire focused on the demographic profile of the sampling population (Section A), including questions related to their gender, age, educational level, as well as the years of their employment at their current hotel. The section B of the questionnaire included seven statements, each of them related to one specific non-financial reward. Front office receptionists had to answer all these seven statements by choosing one option from the Likert-scale ranged from 1 to 5, *where 1= Never, 2= Rarely, 3= Sometimes, 4= Frequently, 5= Always.* Aim of the research question included in this section was to be identified, based on the perception of the respondents whether and to what extent they receive non-monetary rewards from their 5-star hotels. In addition, there was one question that included three other statements related to the quantitative value of the non-financial rewards provided to the Front office receptionists, where they had to answer to every statement by choosing one option from Likert=scale ranged from 1 to 5, where *1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree.*

The section C focused on employee motivation, including one specific question related to the current level of motivation among the sampling population at work. The respondents were asked to answer by choosing one option from the Likert-scale ranged from 1 to 5, where 1= *Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree.* The last part of the questionnaire focused on the relation between non-financial rewards and employee motivation. Specifically, the section D included two questions, where in the first question, the Front office receptionists were asked to answer what the general impact of non-financial rewards on employee motivation is,

while in the second question, they had to answer what the impact of seven specific non-financial rewards on employee motivation is. Their answers were based on a Likert scale ranged from 1 to 4, where *1= No impact, 2= Slight impact, 3= Moderate impact, 4= Strong impact, 5= Significant impact.*

The researcher, in order to test and verify that the research questionnaire was valid and reliable, initially distributed it unofficially to a small number of his colleagues comprised of 10 seasonal Front office receptionists working at a Greek 5-star resort located on a Greek island in order to complete it. The results obtained from these 10 questionnaires showed that this structured questionnaire was structurally valid and reliable tool for recording respondents' answers related to the research questions of this study. Also, the reliability of this questionnaire was also confirmed by using the internal consistency reliability in the form of Cronbach's alpha, which had a significant high score of 0.919, where *a* must be ideally above ≥ 0,700 (Hair et al., 2010).

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0,919	19

Table 1: Cronbach alpha Reliability statistics

3.4 Research approach

This survey adopted a quantitative research design and was conducted in August 2018. The results of this study were based on the data collected from the answers given by the Front office receptionists of the 5-star hotels located in the city of Thessaloniki, Northern Greece, using a self-structured Likert-scale questionnaire, which included an adequate number of questions, aiming to achieve as much as possible the research objectives of this survey. The researcher decided to conduct this survey by collecting data from all the Front office receptionists working in the twelve 5-star hotels of Thessaloniki, Northern Greece, as this location was easily approachable and the access to the sampling population could be direct.

The researcher preferred to distribute by himself the questionnaires, which were printed in a hard copy, to the sampling population to have the opportunity to get in touch with them and provide constructive instructions for the completion of the questionnaire. Participants did not encounter any particular problems when filling in the

questionnaire. Although there was no personal contact with all the respondents, due to their different shifts, the data were collected quickly and without any loss. It was achieved, because all hotel receptionists showed interest and willingness to participate in this research process.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

When the questionnaires were fully completed by the Front Office receptionists, they were collected by the researcher, who encoded the research questions and then analyzed the respondents' answers with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. The results obtained from the survey were analyzed by the researcher, using descriptive statistics such as mean value, standard deviation and frequencies, which were presented in the form of chart bars, chart pies and tables. In addition, a (Cronbach's α) indicator was used to measure the reliability of the answers given by the survey sample.

4.1 Demographic profile of the respondents
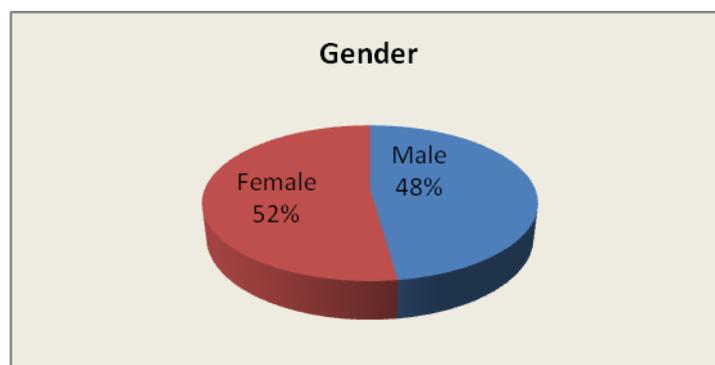
Figure 1: Gender of respondents

Based on the answers given by the respondents to the demographic question related to their gender, it was found that the Front office receptionists in the 5-star hotels of Thessaloniki, Northern Greece consists of 44 men (47.8%) and 48 women (52.2%).
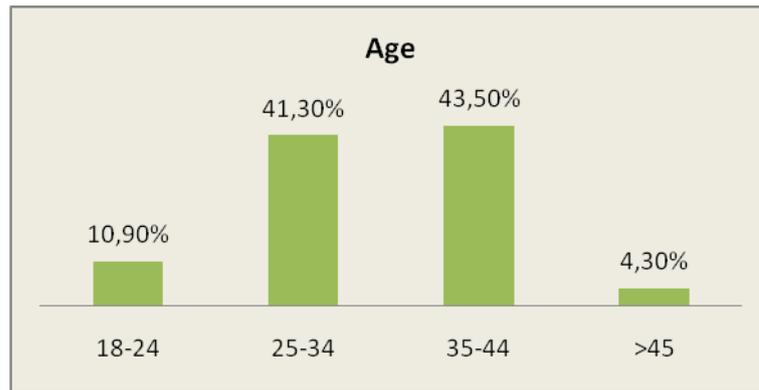
Figure 2: Age Bracket of respondents

The survey data indicated that the majority of the Front office receptionists working in the 5-star hotels in Thessaloniki are aged between 35 and 44 years old, representing with 43.5% (40 persons) the largest part of the sampling population. Furthermore, 41.3% (38 persons) of the respondents are aged between 25 and 34 years old. The Front office receptionists aged between 18-24 years old, represent the 10,90% of the total number of the survey participants, while the minority of the respondents with a mere 4.3% are older than 45 years old.
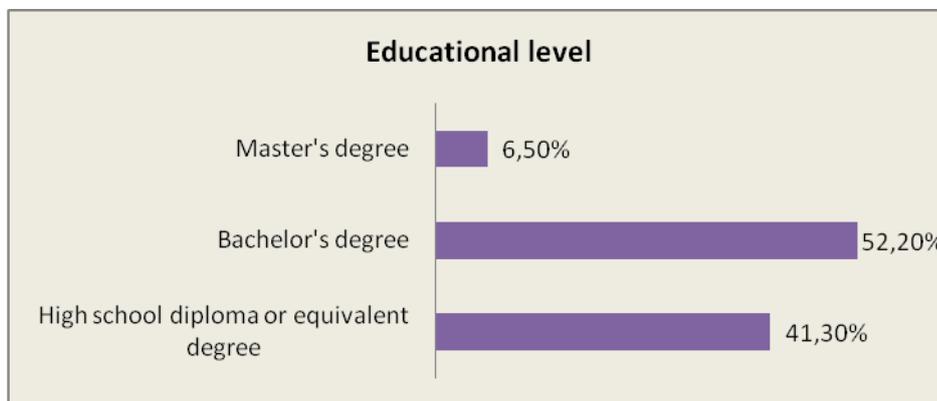
Figure 3: Educational level of respondents

The demographic question about the educational background of the Front office receptionists showed that just over half of the respondents with 52.2% (48 persons) hold a Bachelor's degree, while almost the rest with 41.3% (38 people) have a high school diploma or equivalent degree. An exception, with 6.5% (6 persons), is the holders of a postgrduate degree.
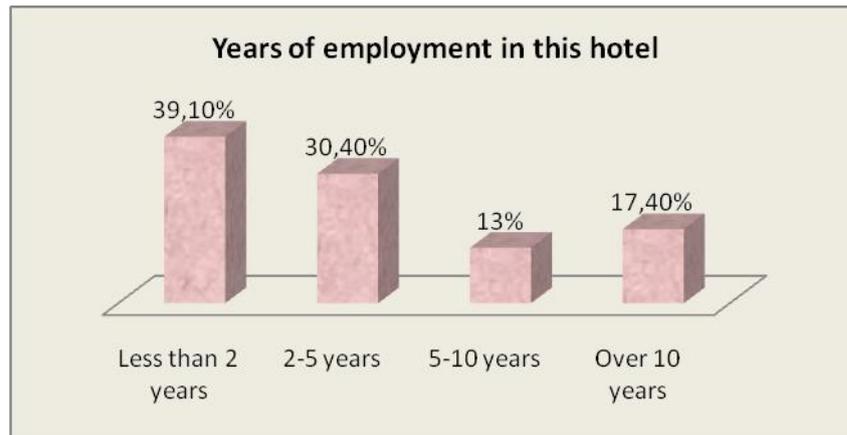
Figure 4: Years of employment in the current hotel

The results obtained from the demographic question about the years of employment of the Front office receptionists at their current hotel indicate that most respondents work less than 2 years or from 2 to 5 years at their current hotel, with 39.1% (36 people) and 30.4% (28 people) respectively. Moreover, the Front office receptionists with over 10 years of employment at the same hotel, represent the 17.4% (16 persons) of the total number of the respondents, while those working at their current 5-star hotel between 5-10 years represent 13% (12 persons) of the sampling population.

4.2 Front office receptionists' perception towards to what extent they receive non-financial rewards by their hotels

For question B1 related to whether and to what extent Front office receptionists receive non-monetary rewards from their 5-star hotel, the results are presented in the form of both mean value and standard deviation. According to the measurement scale, the answers range from 1-5 (1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Frequently, 5 = Always).

B1 Question	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
F. I work in a conducive physical work environment where the interior design and the ambient conditions such as the indoor air quality, temperature, lighting, noise, color and workspace optimize my well-being, allowing me to perform my duties properly.	92	4,54	0,74
E. My efforts at work are recognized by a personal "thank you" or a note of appreciation from my manager.	92	3,45	1,18

-28-

B. I get constructive feedback from my manager about how I perform my tasks.	92	3,34	1,31
A. The work-life policies (e.g. parental leave scheme, flexibility over the work schedule) allow me to find the right balance between my work and private life.	92	3,19	1,25
C. The hotel offers career advancement opportunities such as promotion.	92	3,06	1,17
D. The hotel provides job-related training and development programs to improve my job-related skills and knowledge.	92	2,71	1,40
G. I am granted autonomy and control over my duties at work, as my manager gives me many responsibilities, and involves me in goal-setting and decisions that affect my work.	92	2,52	1,32

Table 2: Front office receptionists' perception towards to what extent they receive non-financial rewards by their 5-star hotels

The answers given by the Front office receptionists of the 5-star hotels in Thessaloniki indicate that they *Always* work in a conducive physical work environment where the existent ambient conditions such as the indoor air quality, temperature, lighting, noise, color and workspace, optimize their well-being, allowing them to perform their duties properly (M=4,54, SD=0,74). In addition, the respondents stated that *Sometimes* their efforts at work are being recognized by their manager in the form of a personal *thank you* or a note of appreciation (M=3,45, SD=1,18). Also it was shown that *Sometimes* they get constructive feedback from their manager about how they perform their tasks (M=3.34,SD =1,31), as well as that *Sometimes* their hotels provide them work-life policies (e.g. parental leave scheme, flexibility over the work schedule) allowing them to find the right balance between their work and private life (M=3,19 SD=1,25). Moreover, the Front office receptionists stated that *Sometimes* their hotels offers career advancement opportunities such as promotion (M=3,06 ,SD =1,17), Similarly, based on survey participants perception, *Sometimes* their hotels provide job-related training and development programs that helps them to improve their job-related skills and knowledge (M=2,71 ,SD =1,40) and *Rarely* they are granted autonomy and

control over their duties at work, by having greater responsibilities and involvement in goal-setting and decisions that affect their work (M=2,52 SD=1,32).

4.3 Front office receptionists' perception towards the value of the non-financial rewards currently provided by their 5-star hotels

In this section of the questionnaire the researcher attempted to identify how Front office receptionists evaluate the non-finacial rewards provided by their hotels, by the use of three statements. The survey participants were asked to declare if the the non-financial rewards provided by their hotels are adequate and fairly distributed to all Front office receptionists, as well as if these non-financial rewards match their efforts. According to the measurement scale, the answers range from 1-5 (1 =Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree).

The non financial rewards provided by my hotel match efforts

Strongly agree	15,20%
	13%
Neutral	15,20%
	28,30%
Strongly disagree	28,30%

Figure 5: The non-financial rewards provided by my hotel match my efforts

According to the statement *The non-financial rewards provided by my hotel match my efforts*, it was found that the respondents that strongly disagree and those who disagree shared an equal percentage of 28.3% (26 persons) respectively. Similarly, both those who were neutral and those who strongly disagree had an equal percentage of 15.2% (14 individuals) respectively, while the rest Front office receptionists with 13% (12 people) declared that agree with this specific statement.

Figure 6: The non-financial rewards provided are fairly distributed

According to the statement *The non-financial rewards provided by my hotel are fairly distributed to all Front office receptionists* the results indicated that the vast majority of the study population were neutral, while the minority of the respondents with 8,7% (8 persons) strongly disagreed. The second most chosen answer among the Front office receptionists with 19,6% (18 persons) was that they disagreed with this specific statement, while both those who agreed and those who strongly disagreed shared an equal percentage of 15,2% (14 persons) respectively.

Figure 7: The non-financial rewards provided are adequate

According to the statement *The non-financial rewards provided by my hotel are adequate* it was shown that 34,8% (32 persons) of the respondents were neutral, while 21,7% (20 persons) of them disagreed. Moreover, both those who strongly disagreed and those that strongly agreed shared an equal percentage of 15,2% (14 persons) respectively, while only 13% (12 persons) of the participants agreed with this specific statement.

4.4 Front office receptionists' perception towards their current level of motivation at work
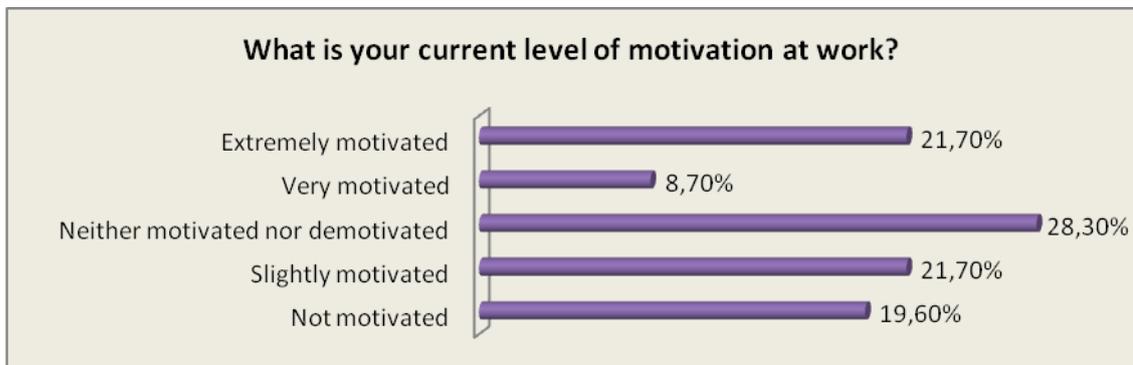
Figure 8: Front office receptionists' current level of motivation at work

From the question *What is your current level of motivation at work?* it was indicated that most Front office receptionists with 28.3% (26 people) are neither motivated nor demotivated at their current hotel. The second and third largest part of the study population declared that they are slightly motivated and highly motivated, sharing both an equal percentage of 21,7% (20 persons) respectively. In addition, the respondents who are not motivated represent 19,6% (18 persons) of the total study population, while only 8.7% (8 people) feel very motivated at their workplace.

4.5 Front office receptionists' perception towards the generall impact of non-financial rewards on employee motivation

In the question D1 *Do non-financial rewards have an impact on employee motivation at work?,* the respondents had to choose only one option among the answers ranged from 1-5 (1 = No impact, 2 = Slight impact, 3 = Moderate impact, 4 = Strong impact, 5 = Significant impact).

Figure 9: Front office receptionists' perception towards the general impact of non-financial rewards on employee motivation

The results obtained from this question showed that 34.8% (32 people) of the participants believe that non-financial rewards have a strong impact on employee motivation, while 30.4% (28 people) of them that non-financial rewards have a moderate imp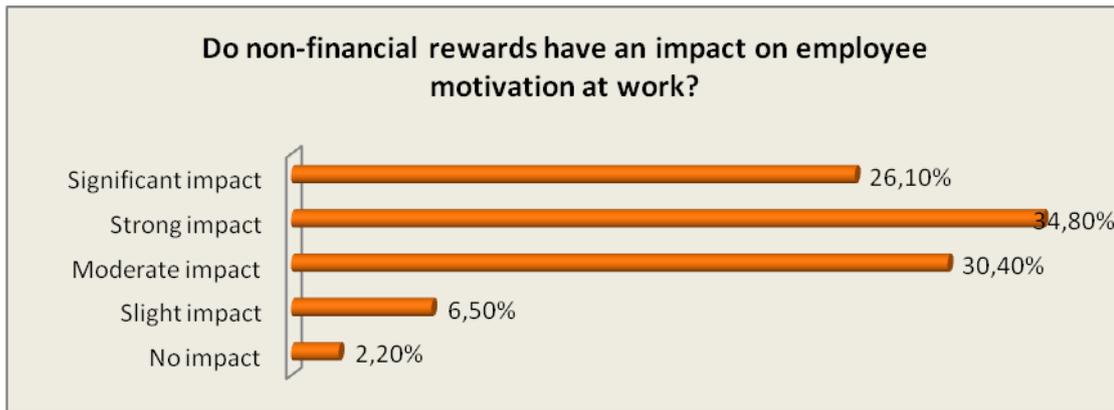act on employee motivation. Furthermore, 26.1% (24 people) of the Front office receptionists believe that non-financial rewards have a significant impact on employee motivation, while only 6.5% (6 people) of the respondents believe that the overall impact of non-financial rewards on employee motivation is slight. The minority of the sampling population with only 2.2% (2 people) believe that there is no impact of non-financial rewards on employee motivation.

4.6 Front office receptionists' perception towards the impact of specific non-financial rewards on employee motivation

In your opinion, what is the impact of the following non-financial rewards on employee motivation?"	N	Mean	Standard deviation
F. Conducive physical work environment (e.g. indoor air quality, temperature, lighting, noise, color and workspace).	92	4,30	0,93
E. Being recognized by my manager (e.g. formal recognition such as "employee of the month" or informal recognition such as verbal "thank you".	92	4,28	1,01
D. Training and development programs (e.g. on-the-job and off- the job training, seminars, conferences).	92	4,13	0,90
G. Autonomy and control over my job-related tasks.	92	4	0,93

B. Feedback from manager.	92	3,97	0,87
A. Work-life balance polices (e.g. Parental leave scheme, Flexibility over the work schedule).	92	3,91	1
C. Career advancement opportunities such as promotion.	92	3,91	1,08

Table 3: Front office receptionists' perception towards the impact of specific non-financial rewards on employee motivation

In the question D2 *In your opinion, what are the impact of the following non-financial rewards on employee motivation?* the respondents had to choose one option among the answers ranged from 1-5 (1 = No impact, 2 = Slight impact, 3 = Moderate impact, 4 = Strong impact, 5 = Significant impact).

From their responses, it was found that the majority of the sampling population believe that the following non-monetary rewards, according to the rating order, have a strong impact on employee motivation: *Conducive physical work environment* (M = 4, 30, SD = 0.93) *Being recognized by my manager* (formal recognition like employee of the month scheme or informal recognition such as a verbal thank you (M=4,28, SD=1,01), *Training and development programs* (e.g. on-the-job and off-the-job training, seminars, conferences", M = 4.13, SD = 0.90), *Autonomy and control over my job-related tasks* (M = 4, SD = 0.93), *Feedback from manager* (M = 3.97, SD = 0.87), *Work-life balance policies* (e.g. Parental leave scheme, M = 3.91, SD = 1) and *Career advancement opportunities such as promotion* (M = 3.91, SD = 1.08).

5. CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

5.1 Conclusions

This dissertation aimed to highlight whether and to what extent non-monetary rewards are being adopted by the human resource managers of the 5-star hotels in Thessaloniki as a way of motivating their Front office receptionists. Furthermore, other

research objectives were to identify, based on the perception of the Front office receptionists, both the qualitative value of the non-cash rewards provided by the selected 5-star hotels, as well as their impact on the increase of employee motivation.

This survey carried out with the help of MS Excel and the SPSS v23 statistical program and the exclusive source of data was a questionnaire that was fully completed by the ninety-two (92) Front office receptionists working in 5-star hotels in Thessaloniki. The results obtained from the distributed questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics in the form of mean value and standard deviation, as well as they were presented by bar charts, chart pies and tables.

Based on the survey data, it was indicated that the 5-star hotels in Thessaloniki do not hire Front office receptionists, based on their gender, since they employ more or less the same number of both male (n = 44) and female (n = 48) receptionists. The research data related to the age and the educational background of the Front office receptionists working in the 5-star hotels of Thessaloniki, provided useful and interesting results. Most of the survey participants (n = 40) are between 25-35 and 35-40 years old, representing 41,30% and 43,50% of the total sampling population respectively, while the number of both young receptionists aged 18-24 (n=10) and those over the age of 40 (n = 4) is low.

In other words, the 5-star hotels in Thessaloniki tend to choose the reception staff when they are in a productive age and have enough work experience in the hospitality industry. However, it is noted that despite the years of experience, the educational background of most hotel receptionists is not particularly high. With a quick preview of the research data, it could be shown that the majority of the respondents (n = 48) hold a Bachelor's degree, which could be considered as a relatively good qualification for an entry level job as this of a hotel receptionist. However, this percentage is followed by a particularly high rate of respondents (n = 38) who have only a high school diploma or an equivalent degree. These data confirm the global literature related to the hospitality and tourism industry, which is often referred to the reduced educational level of employees in the sector, especially those having an entry level position within a company. On the one hand, this result can be considered worryingly negative, since today a Bachelor's degree is a quite necessary qualification for almost every employee in the competitive business environment.

This can be partly explained by the fact that for the majority of the Front office receptionists aged between 35-45 years old, when they started their career in the hotel

sector in a youth age, the undergraduate degree, was not considered as much necessary qualification as today to find a job in the hotel industry. The exception of the receptionists who hold a Master's degree (n = 6) shows that the job of a receptionist in a 5-star hotel becomes gradually even more demanding over the years, as well as that is still a difficult task for HR managers to find highly qualified employees to cover entry level positions in the sector.

The results obtained from the demographic question about the years of employment of the Front office receptionists in their current 5-star hotels, indicated that most of the respondents work at their current hotel less than 2 years (n=36), followed by those (n=28) working between 2-5 years. On the one hand, these data could be partly explained by the fact that the 5-star hotels in Thessaloniki tend to refresh their front office staff regularly, due to the increased rise of hotel operational costs and the continuous alterations to the Greek hotel collective agreements. On the other hand, this phenomenon can be caused by the tension of Front office receptionists to quit from one hotel in favor of another hotel that provides them better both financial and non-financial incentives. The hypothesis based on the fact that the hotels replace their existent personnel with other more talented, high skilled and motivated employees is rejected as it can be shown further in this study that the current level of motivation among the existent Front office receptionists in the 5-star hotels in Thessaloniki is moderate.

In addition, the results of this survey also showed that in general receptionists *sometimes* receive non-monetary rewards from their hotels. It is worth noting that the non-cash reward provided *always* to them is a conducive physical work environment with ambient conditions that allow them to feel convenient during their job performance. This is reasonable, as every 5-star hotel is defined by high-standard and state-of-art facilities that help employees to provide superior service quality to hotel guests. The rest non-financial rewards with *mean* 3 are *sometimes* provided to the respondents, showing that non-cash rewards are not considered as priority among HR managers to motivate their front-line employees. This can be confirmed based on the answers given by the Front office receptionists regarding the three statements related to the value of the non-financial rewards provided in the 5-star hotels. Specifically, over the half of the study participants (n = 52) believe that the non-monetary rewards provided by their hotels do not match the effort they put into their daily job performance. Additionally, many of them (n = 38) are neutral regarding the statement that non-monetary rewards are fairly distributed to all the Front office receptionists,

while 1/3 of the respondents (n = 32) are also neutral if the non-financial rewards they receive are adequate. In other words, the results obtained from the first statement indicate the poor HR practices are being adopted by the 5-star hotels in Thessaloniki, as well as the data collected from the other two statements confirm that the non-financial rewards are not well communicated to the Front office receptionists.

Furthermore, the fact that the current level of motivation among most respondents is ranged from low to moderate, as many of them (N=26) feel neither motivated nor demotivated at work, while a significant number of them (n=38) tend to be slightly motivated or not motivated at all, proves that most of the 5-star hotels in Thessaloniki provide low quality non-financial rewards to their Front office receptionists, since a great number of the survey participants believe that the generall impact of non-financial rewards on employee motivation is ranged from moderate to strong, followed by a percentage of 26,10% who perceive that non financial rewards have a significant impact on motivation. It is positive that the minority of the respondents (8,70 %) believe that non-cash rewards have no or slight impact on employee motivation.

Finally, Front Office receptionists from 5-star hotels in Thessaloniki perceive that all these types of specific non-monetary rewards examined in this study have a strong impact on employee motivation, with most effective to be the conducive physical work environment and less effective to be the career advancement opportunities such as promotion. These answers given by the respondents showed that they understand and recognize the value of non-financial rewards and their impact on employee motivation. However, the fact that they do not believe that non-monetary rewards have a significant impact on employee motivation, confirms the poor HR practices adopted by the selected 5-star hotels, which are not well communicated to Front office employees, as well as that due to their reduced financial earnings over the last years, they might consider the non-financial rewards not as much significant motivators as the financial rewards.

The results of the survey, therefore, draw conclusions that would be valuable to both hotel and HR managers to have a clear overview of their Front Office receptionists' perception towards the application of the existing non-monetary rewards, as well as their impact on employee motivation. It would be beneficial for them to find the possible errors related to their current HR practices in order to improve them, aiming at a more motivated and engaged front-line workforce. Undoubtedly, the research data demonstrate that the skills of the Front office staff should be upgraded to achieve excellent customer service. The provision of non-financial rewards to all hotel staff and

especially for receptionists who have daily and direct contact with hotel customers should be considered by HR executives as a top priority. These non-monetary rewards should be well-communicated to the Front office staff and be aligned with their personal goals, as well as with hotel's strategic objectives. Undoubtedly, the efforts of receptionists should be recognized more frequently by their superiors, giving them more opportunities both to improve their skills, knowledge and career prospects. In addition, Front office managers should provide more meaningful tasks to their subordinates, involving them to the decision-making process that affects their work. Finally, further attention should be paid to the working conditions and work-life balance of the hotel receptionists, especially during the summer season, when the number of tourists increases significantly and the job becomes even more demanding, resulting in restricted time for rest and recovery that leads to decreased level of performance and in many cases even to emotional exhaustion among front-line employees.

For all the above reasons, it is necessary to ensure that all the necessary conditions are in place for the hotels in Greece to make the most of their potential in their efforts to compete and attract more customers, contributing to the development of the reputation for our country as a tourist paradise.

5.2 Limitations

During the planning and execution of this survey, every effort was made by the researcher to obtain reliable and valid results. The basic weakness derives from the method of data collection, the use of self-administrated questionnaires, to which the respondents were asked to complete them subjectively, without any intervention of the researcher. There is a possibility that the survey participants may filled in the questionnaires quickly, without showing the appropriate attention, just being focused on completing the process. Because, therefore, the quantitative method adopted to collect the data does not allow the researcher to verify whether the respondents' answers were sincere or not, the questions were formulated in such a way that they would be understandable and clear.

Furthermore, all the Front office receptionists were informed during the distribution of the research questionnaires for the confidentiality of their answers to obtain as reliable data as possible. A further research limitation could be considered that this survey conducted at the end of August, when receptionists had already experienced the

exhausting tourist summer season and not during the regular season, where there may be a reduced workload. Also, another question can be considered that only quantitative methods have been used for this research. Although particular attention was paid to the detailed investigation of the research questions and the thorough study of both the theoretical framework and the bibliographic review in order to formulate in advance the questionnaire related to this research topic, it is finally concluded that both quantitative and qualitative methods could be used in this study. As the findings of this research have emerged under specific research process choices and involve a particular sample at a certain time, it is clear that they can provide some answers to the research questions but cannot be used as generalized findings.

5.3 Recommendations for further research

Although this research attempted to cover some gaps from previous researches, it could not entirely cover the research topic related to the relationship between non-monetary rewards and the work motivation of the Front office receptionists working in 5-star hotels. It could, however, be the beginning of reflection and further research.

In a future research, it would be useful to broaden the research sample, including both urban and suburban areas, so that the results would be more valid and reliable. This research topic could be adopted by another future researcher who would attempt to identify similar research objectives based on other countries apart from Greece. It could possibly enlighten more this research area, providing a more clear and global view of the relationship between nonfinancial rewards and motivation among the Front office receptionists in the luxury hotel sector. It would be beneficial for HR managers to improve their HR practices related to reward management in order to have more talented, skilled and motivated Front office representatives. It would be interesting to explore the views of hotel managers on the extent to which non-monetary rewards are being offered to their employees and their views on the level of motivation of their employees. It would be useful in future research efforts to conduct a qualitative research, including interviews from receptionists that would justify the reasons why they feel or do not feel motivated in their workplace, in order to draw more generalized conclusions.

Finally, it is proposed for future research to highlight the best practices of hotel managers in managing non-cash rewards for hotel front-line employees in order to

highlight the excellent results regarding the development of non-monetary incentives. From the above, undoubtedly, it is necessary to carry out more surveys in Greece, as the research efforts that have already been made based on the non-financial rewards and employee motivation in the hotel sector are limited.

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7. APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Participant,

My name is Michael Neochoritis and I am a postgraduate student in MSc Hospitality and Tourism Management at the International Hellenic University. I am currently in the writing process of my thesis entitled: NON-FINANCIAL REWARDS AND MOTIVATION (A CASE OF THE FRONT OFFICE RECEPTIONISTS OF SELECTED 5-STAR HOTELS IN NORTHERN GREECE).

The following questionnaire is an integral part of my research as it is the tool for collecting the necessary data needed to successfully complete this survey. Completing the questionnaire is a simple and not time-consuming process, since the time required for a participant to complete it does not exceed 5-10 minutes. Each participant is asked to answer the questionnaire questions anonymously and with as much precision as possible. You must know that your answers will be handled by the researcher with confidentiality and will be used exclusively for academic purposes.

I would like to thank you in advance for your participation in this study.

QUESTIONS

A. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE QUESTIONS

A1. What is your gender?

Male ☐   Female ☐

A2. What is your age?

18-24 ☐   25-34 ☐   35-44 ☐   45+ ☐

A3. What is your level of education?

Less than high school diploma ☐

High school diploma or equivalent degree ☐

Bachelor's degree ☐

Master's degree ☐

A4. How long have you been working at this hotel?

Less than 2 years ☐

2-5 years ☐

5-10 years ☐

Over 10 years ☐

B. NON-FINACIAL REWARDS

1) Below there are listed statements related to non-financial rewards. Please indicate how often your hotel provides you with the following non-financial rewards, by ticking the number that specify your choice from the options that range from ''Never'' to ''Always''. Each choice is identified by numbers ranged from 1 to 5.

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
1	2	3	4	5

A	My hotel has various policies such as parental leave, Flexibility over the work schedule that allows its employees to deal with private matters when needed and find the right balance between their work and private life.	1	2	3	4	5
B	I get constructive feedback from my manager about how I perform my tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
C	My hotel offers career advancement opportunities such as promotion.	1	2	3	4	5

D	My hotel gives me the opportunity to improve my job-related skills and knowledge through job related training and development programs	1	2	3	4	5
E	My efforts at work are recognized by a personal ''thank you'' or note from my manager or colleague.	1	2	3	4	5
F	I work in a conducive physical work environment where the ambient conditions such as the indoor air quality, temperature, lighting, noise, color and workspace optimize my well-being, as well as allow me to perform my duties properly.	1	2	3	4	5
G	I am granted autonomy at work and my manager involves me in goal setting and decisions that affect my work	1	2	3	4	5

2) Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements by circling the number that best represents your opinion. Please use the following scale:

Strongly disagree	disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

A	The non-financial rewards provided by my hotel match my efforts	1	2	3	4	5
B	The non-financial rewards provided by my hotel are fairly distributed	1	2	3	4	5
C	The non-financial rewards provided by my hotel are adequate	1	2	3	4	5

C. **MOTIVATION**

1) What is your current level of motivation at work?

Not at all motivated
not very motivated
Neither motivated nor demotivated
Very motivated
Extremely motivated

D. **NON-FINANCIAL REWARDS AND MOTIVATION**

1) Do non-financial rewards have an impact on employee motivation at work?

No impact
Slight impact
Moderate Impact
strong Impact
significant impact

2) In your opinion, what is the impact of the following non-financial rewards on employee motivation?

No impact	Slight impact	Moderate impact	Strong impact	Significant impact
1	2	3	4	5

A	Work-life balance policies (e.g. Parental leave, Flexibility over the work schedule)	1	2	3	4	5
B	Feedback from manager	1	2	3	4	5
C	Promotion	1	2	3	4	5
D	Training and development programs (e.g. on-the job and of-the job training, seminars, conferences)	1	2	3	4	5

E	Being recognized by both manager and colleagues (e.g. formal recognition such as ''employee of the month'' and informal recognition such as verbal ''thank you'')	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
F	Conducive physical work environment (e.g. ambient conditions such as the indoor air quality, temperature, lighting, noise, color and workspace)	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
G	Job Autonomy (e.g. Participation in the decision-making, responsibility with authority)	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**