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Examining the "Dark Side" – The Importance of the Back of House

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Abstract

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This study presents the research of the "Dark Side", the back of house in the hospitality industry. The primary aim of this research is to examine the importance and relevance of a well-designed back of house, in this thesis referred to as break rooms for employees. It clarifies elements which need to be considered when designing a break room and identifies the influence on employees and employers.

Little research has been conducted on the creation and impact of a well-designed back of house in the hotel industry. Particular attention is paid to the break room as a long-term benefit for the employees probably contributing to a better work attitude, work climate and well-being. The framework is drawn based on the relationship and interaction between the employer, employee and guest in the context of a break room. The overall situation and how hotels consider and could take advantage of a well-designed break room are analysed.

In this exploratory study a qualitative research method in the form of semi-structured interviews and observations is used to collect primary data from employers/managers, employees and hotels. This method provides a deeper understanding of the situation also focussing on feelings, attitudes and perceptions of the interviewees.

The primary outcome of the findings clearly showed that a well-designed back of house could have a great influence on employee's work attitude, work climate and well-being leading to a higher satisfaction and appreciation through their employer. This might drive a higher guest satisfaction and profit significantly. However, a significant number of employers still neglect the importance and benefit of a break room even though all interviewees would welcome an implementation.

This first-time study provides a vital insight into the current situations and conditions of break rooms. The research gives a starting point for the industry to rethink the situation and act upon them accordingly with the help of the researcher's final framework. Nevertheless, further research is necessary to get an even deeper comprehension into the topic and to increase the comparability to the results as most of them are still assumptions instead of real facts.

Keywords
Back of House, Influence on Stakeholders, Room Design, Service Design, Work Environment, Beneficial Effects

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1 Introduction

This chapter will provide a general overview of the thesis topic starting with important background information followed by the research problem and the corresponding research objectives on which the literature review and empirical part is based on. Then, a justification of the study will highlight the importance, relevance and practical implication for academics and practicioners in the hotel industry.

1.1 Research Rationale

The hotel industry belongs to the world's major employers and provides jobs for millions of people. It is nowadays a booming market and rising standards of guests lead to higher employers' expectations on employees. The hospitality industry involves the relationship between the employer, employee and guest. The important fact within this interaction is to guarantee satisfaction of everyone to ensure a smooth and successful running business.

Jayne (2005) made a clear statement, believing that "the concept of happy employees leading to happy customers leading to a better company performance" is the way that every employer in the hospitality industry should think about. Obviously, employers have to deal with issues such as staff motivation, employee and guest satisfaction, retention as well as financial issues whereas employees are confronted every day with high pressure, stress, long working hours, unbalanced work-life, low motivation and so forth. The chain starts from the employer offering benefits to employees, making them happy and motivating them so that they strive for a high guest satisfaction. Nowadays, every employer tries to differentiate itself from others, but basically everyone offers the same benefits to each employee to keep them at the company because they know that they are the key factor of success.

The aim of this research is to examine the back of house, in this thesis referred to as the break room for employees. It deals with the imagination and creation of a well-designed back of house (Back of House 2.0) which might be a chance for the employer to appreciate the work of the employees by providing a room where they can really relax and refresh. This could motivate them to work with full attention to constantly offer a 100% service excellence to the guests.

1.2 Research Problem

The term "Dark Side" used in the research "Examining the "Dark Side" – The Importance of the Back of House" is in dependence of the Sleepover Conference in London in November 2012. The problem identified in this research is the small amount of attention given to a well-designed break room for employees in the hospitality industry which might have a substantial and positive influence on both employees and employers.

The purpose of this research is to answer the following research question:

What is the significance of a well-designed back of house and how does it influence employees and employers?

The corresponding research objectives are as follows:

– To analyse the overall situation and find out how a well-designed back of house is considered.
– To determine the aspects which form a well-designed back of house.
– To identify how and to what extent a well-designed back of house influences employees.
– To understand the impact of a well-designed back of house on employers.

The aim of this thesis is to examine how common a well-designed break room is in reality, to look at its different influential factors, and how it impacts employees and employers. It will also briefly point out how guests are involved within the employee-management relationship. With the support of the literature review and the findings of the interviews and observations, a framework will be created that summarises the topic and offers possibilities and suggestions for further research.

1.3 Justification of the Study

With an increasing competition in the hospitality industry, new ways of retaining and motivating employees to ensure complete guest satisfaction, and consequently to maintain a successful business, has to be identified. Based on experience the creation of a well-designed break room for employees has been a key factor over the last few years. Unfortunately, only few hotels adapt the hotel industry to other industries by also using these rooms strategically to gain a competitive advantage. However, the implementation is very limited and most hotels are not aware of the possible positive influence of such a room. Therefore, this thesis will provide a thorough insight and will introduce new information for academics and the hotel industry.

The topic of this thesis was chosen based on a recommendation by the supervisors and the researcher's personal interest. The topic includes the three stakeholders employer, employee and guest. From the academic point of view, there is no research focused explicit on the break rooms in the hotel industry and their influence. It is of high relevance nowadays due to the fact that the requirements on employees are constantly increasing. Many hotels set their priority by being guest-oriented, however, it is also essential to focus on the most important assets in a hotel, the employees. Therefore, hotels also need to attach a high importance by being staff-centric. They are creating the guest experience and in order to feel valued by the employer, a more appealing and inviting well-designed back of house might enhance their feeling of appreciation by the employer. Consequently, by an increase in staff satisfaction, guest satisfaction will also increase.

The researcher believes that the topic is new, innovative and interesting as it fills a gap in knowledge and will be beneficial to the work life since it has practical relevance which piques academic's and professional's curiosity in the field. The research topic is manageable and realistic in scope to examine and set in context all the aspects of the back of house and their influence on employees and employers. With the help of own graphics and pictures compared to the existing ones, the researcher shows his own imaginations and the ability to develop the aim of a well-designed break room.

The research approach within this thesis is abductive, a combination of deductive and inductive (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2012, 144-148). The literature review provides the deductive background and the interviews and observations as part of a qualitative study will lead to an inductive empirical part. This introduces a new perspective on a well-designed back of house.

1.4   Outline of the Thesis

The thesis will commence with an extensive literature review which presents a detailed overview of the situation of the back of house including the development over the years, the perception from the employee's and employer's point of view as well as the Human Resource Management responsibilities for the future of the staff management. The situation of the back of house will be followed by a holistic analysis summarizing the main issues which need to be tackled when designing such a room. To conclude the literature review, the impact of a well-designed back of house on employees and employers will be explained.

The methodology chapter will defend the research methods chosen for this thesis. This chapter will describe the research problem in more detail and justifies the qualitative research in the form of observations and semi-structured interviews, which are fundamental for the following empirical part.

The fourth chapter, research findings, solely introduces the results received from the observations and semi-structured interviews. These results will be compared and evaluated with the literature and subsequently further analysed and interpreted. The analysis chapter will conclude with a service design tool and a framework created by the researcher which summarises the thesis and provides new insights for further research.

A final conclusion will be drawn with the contribution and implication of the work before recommendations and suggestions for further research will be indicated.

2 Literature Review

This chapter details the literature review examining the back of house for employees in a holistic way by taking the impact on both the employees and the employers into consideration. At first, a definition of the term back of house related to the title "Dark Side" will be provided in order to understand the aim of this thesis and its future relevance in the hospitality industry. The holistic analysis will discuss several issues related to room design such as function and facilities as well as ambient conditions. The purpose of the following two subchapters is to identify the impact of a well-designed back of house on employees and employers. Important topics in that will be well-being, work climate and work attitude on the employee's side as well as use of space, costs and benefits on the employer's side. In order to highlight the necessity for a well-designed back of house, the last point, service design, will contribute to the development of an 'Employee Journey Map' and the final framework.

2.1 Clarification of the Term "Dark Side"

The term "Dark Side" used in the topic of this thesis is in dependence on the Sleepover Conference in London in November 2012. Dark Side is a metaphor to highlight the relation between the similarity of the verbally mentioned and the figurative meaning (Oxford Dictionaries 2013a). Certainly, dark is frequently related to darkness and consequently associated with something negative, invisible and mysterious, like a nightmare. In many cases it awakens uncomfortable and bad feelings, linked to fear, emptiness, fatigue and blindness. (Oxford Dictionaries 2013b.)

Regarding the hospitality industry, in most instances the dark side is the back of house or more specifically in this thesis the break room for the employees. Due to the fact that only few researches are conducted about the impact of a new and changed back of house on the employees, the terms back of house and break room will be used in the same way within this thesis.

2.1.1   Definition Back of House

In general, the back of house, also referred to as "heart of house", are support and service areas usually unseen by the public or in the hospitality industry by guests (Prifti 2013; Rahe 2011; Travel-Industry-Dictionary 2013). The opposite is the front of house, an area which interacts directly with guests. The entire back of house in a hotel can count approximately up to one third of the whole area including storage rooms, corridors, kitchen, staff rooms and stairwells, to mention only a few. The back of house is an essential part of the hotel. On the one hand, people who work there are responsible that the operation works smoothly and effectively to offer the required service. On the other hand, the back of house offers space to get a break besides the work. Therefore, it can be said that the back of house is both a functional and non-functional space.

A break room as a significant element of the back of house is meant to be used by the employees. According to McLeish (2005) this room is not apart from the working place, but in fact it is part of the employee's workplace and used for a break before, during or after work to get new energy through relaxation, food and/or refreshments. Further research also refers to it as a certain room in an organisation possibly used for games, dancing or other kind of recreation, relaxation and activities, in brief, for entertainment and social gathering. (Rahe 2011; TheFreeDictionary 2013.)

In addition to this, break rooms are probably the most important parts of the back of house nowadays from the employee's point of view since the pressure and expectations on employees are constantly rising (Gibson 2003; Lewis & Mottier 2012, 1). The researcher turns the attention to the break room as a dark side due to the fact that this area is often neglected by the management or owners (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 3-4; Lisman 2011) and also widely spread in bad conditions and odd shape generating some of the feelings detailed in Chapter 2.1 (Bjorkman 2007; Druce 2007, 7; Lisman 2011).

Many research deals with changes in the physical surrounding with its tangible and intangible aspects as well as the impact on guests and employees (Bitner 1992, 57-58). In the words of Bitner (1992, 58) the physical setting is reliant on the nature of the job which signifies how the service is done within the so called servicescape.

The hospitality industry, for example, belongs to an interpersonal service organisation with a high interaction between guests, employees and employers (Figure 1). They influence each other in several ways, both negative and positive which will get clearer in the course of this study.
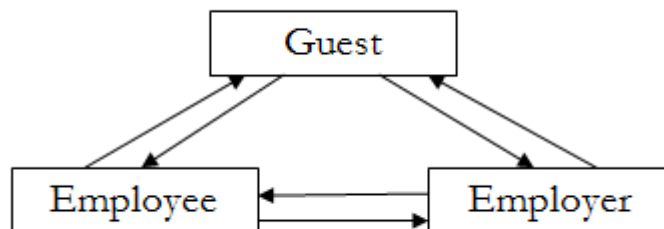
Figure 1. Employer-Employee-Guest Interaction (Self)

Thus, previous studies are widely focused on the integration of service within the physical setting and the influence on the guest's behaviour. (Bitner 1992.) Within those researches the physical surrounding can be interpreted as the front of house because of the interaction between guests and employees. Since there are only little research about the influence on employees and employers, the physical surrounding is seen from the perspective of the back of house.

In order to better understand the metaphor of the dark side, the following sections will clearly describe the conditions both negative and positive over the time.

2.1.2 History and Development of the Back of House

By taking a look into the past, it is important to note that the back of house has always played a vital role within the hospitality industry and still does. As mentioned previously, it is the heart of the house (Prifti 2013; Rahe 2011; Travel-Industry-Dictionary 2013) for most employees when referring to offices, kitchens or laundries. From the prospect of the break room, this room had no substantial significance in the past because during the build-up of a hotel, it was in many cases not planned (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 6) and there was also no need for it. As the requirements on employees rose over the years from a more or less monotonous and simple work to a more demanding and flexible one, hotels considered to provide a room for employees to take a break during their shifts. However, it was only possible if there was space left that could be used.

Herzberg, Maunser and Snyderman (1959, in Chitiris 1988, 67) are one of the first academics who explore in the Herzeberg's two-factor theory the impact of motivators and hygiene factors on job satisfaction. Motivators in this case are recognition for achievement, advancement, growth, responsibility and the work itself whereas hygiene factors comprise supervision, interpersonal relation, salary, status and working conditions. Even if working conditions for employees are only one specific factor, it is still one that has to be taken into account because it is able to influence the motivators positively. The balance between hygiene factors and motivators are important as they go hand in hand. The creation of a newly designed break room (hygiene factor) for example can be seen as an appreciation (motivator) from the employer to the employees.

Another theory, already briefly brought up above, that deals with the physical setting in service organisations and the influence on guests and employees is Bitner's Framework for Understanding Environment-User Relationships (Bitner 1992, 60). This framework looks into different, objective environmental factors and how they are experienced by guests and employees. These environmental dimensions are seen in a holistic way influencing the guests and employees in a cognitively, emotionally and physiologically way. (Bitner 1992, 59.)

In pursuance of Bitner (1992, 60) as well as Mehrabian and Russell (1974, in Bitner 1992, 60) this affects the behaviour and the social interaction alike regarding approach or avoidance. Figure 2 clearly summarises the whole framework with its certain touchpoints. The environmental dimensions of this framework will be used in more details within the holistic analysis in Chapter 2.2, the others in Chapter 2.3 and Chapter 5.
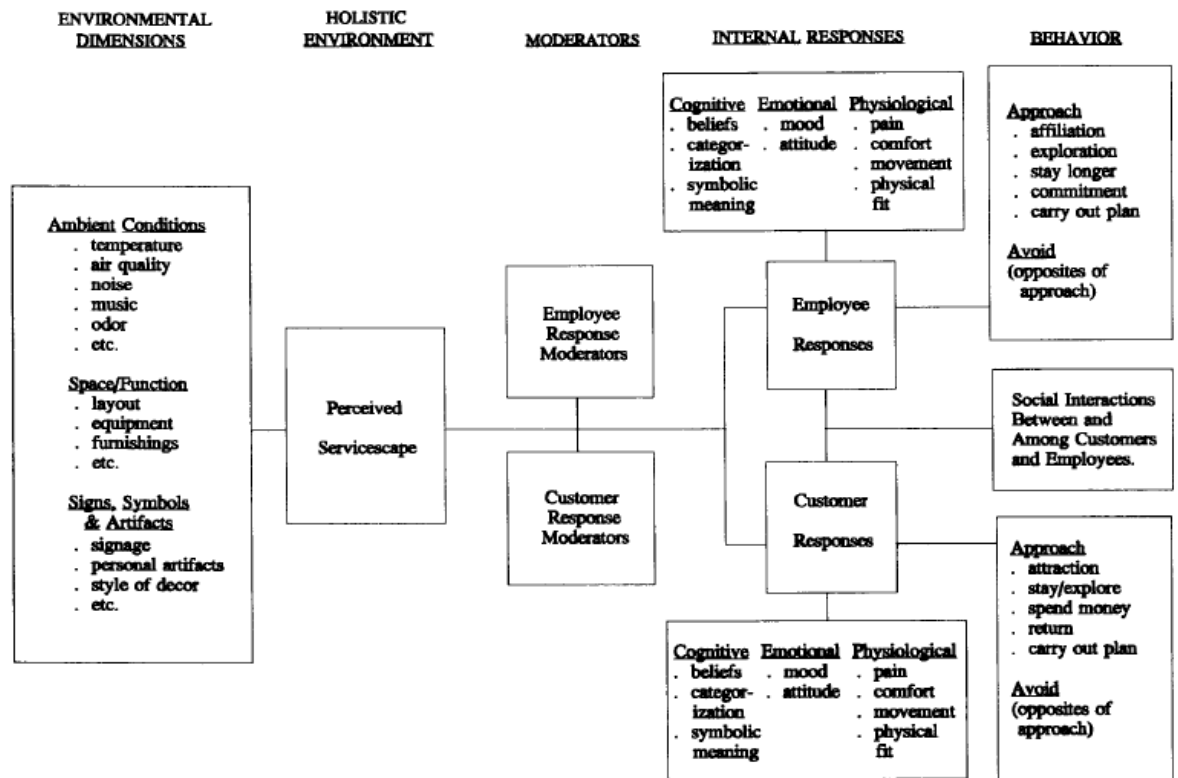
Figure 2. Framework for Understanding Environment-User Relationships in Service Organizations (Bitner 1992, 60)

Certainly, the environment within an organisation should stimulate the needs and preferences of both employees and guests (Varoglu & Eser 2006, 30; Bitner 1992, 58) but according to Lisman (2011) the environment as well as the needs and wants of the employees are overlooked today. Almost no break room in the hospitaliy industry fulfils the expectations of employees completely. Employees and guests perceive the hotels' facilities (Bitner 1992, 57-58), but with the addition that employees perceive it in two ways, the front of house and back of house. The back of house is still the immense contrast to the actual workplace, the front of house presentation.

Nowadays, a lot of money is spent for the design and presentation of the front of house whereas the investment for a better appearance of the back of house is ignored (Bjorkman 2007). The employees truly have the chance to work for exclusive and luxury hotels in the world with an extraordinary outside, but going to the back of house reveals a nightmare which Bjorkman (2007) is referring to as a back of house with "no heart." Working in the hospitality industry is a demanding and challenging job with a lot of pressure and a certain requirement for flexibility (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 1; Gibson 2003, 12). This is the reason why Lewis and Mottier (2012, 12) promote "to bring back the glamour of working in a luxury hotel" with new break rooms.

In the near future, it is important that hotels refocus on employees' needs and wants when designing the work environment (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 8; Varoglu & Eser 2006, 30; Bitner 1992; 58) and see break rooms as planned or added parts of the building (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 6; Davidson, McPhail & Barry 2010; Earle 2003). While Lewis and Mottier (2012, 12) argue about returning the glamour of the hotel industry, Prifti (2013) goes even further by indicating that the back of house should be as nice as the guest amenities. If employees should be more flexible, motivated and productive (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 1; Gibson 2003, 12) break rooms have to be improved. For the researcher it is essential that the break rooms for employees are also seen as supporting areas on stage for the front of house because a more respected employee is able to create a better service quality for guests.

There are hotels that have already considered the need for break rooms for their employees in their strategy, but nonetheless, the amount is still realtively low. Lewis and Mottier (2012) analyse in their article "A "hotel within a hotel" in Bangkok" a best practice concerning a well-designed back of house for their employees. The Mandarin Oriental Bangkok integrates their employees in the guide principles as many hotels do but with the introduction of the so called O-Zone (Oriental-Zone), an establishment of a physical space, they point out the commitment for their employees by being a forerunner. Jan Goessing, General Manager, emphasises that it is crucial to reflect "on how employees' working conditions could be intergrated into their well-being at the hotel." (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 3.)

The O-Zone is a place to relax and take part in diverse activities. The aim behind the this concept, it is based on the three pillars transparency, health and environment. (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 4.) Moreover, the entire O-Zone consists of several more subzones such as the Relax Zone, Talent Zone or Dream Zone to mention only a few.

This implementation of a best practice in the hospitality industry is important for the future. Different research talk about higher salary, chances for advancement or less overtime work trying to keep track with their business and the employees (Earle 2003, 248). So far, it is a new area to talk about improving the back of house for the employees in order to increase employees' well-being, decrease staff turnover, employ and retain talents and enhance the work attitude. The focus at this juncture is on a creation of a Back of House 2.0 (BOH 2.0), a future of a well-designed break room for a better balance of employees at work in the hospitality industry (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Back of House 2.0 (Self)

2.1.3 Employees' and Employers' Perception of the Back of House

Chapter 2.1 clearly described the term "Dark Side" as a metaphor for the conditions of the break rooms in the hospitality industry. The previous chapter identified the development and indirectly shows the need for change and action. It is a well-known fact that the perceptions of the employees and employers also play a vital role with respect to the break rooms. In order to get a deeper understanding of the necessity for a change at the back of house, these perceptions will back up the above specified facts in more details.

Concerning the perception of the employees, findings of a survey of more than 1,000 UK employees engaged in the hospitality and service industry show that 38% are of the opinion that the working environment is gloomy and depressing (Druce 2007, 7) which already illustrates the connection to the "Dark Side." This depressed feeling is due to the miserable conditions (Druce 2007, 7) leading to negativism and uncomfortableness. As Bjorkman (2007) says this is because of the grave difference between the back of house and front of house. In addition, Bitner (1992, 65) explains that each person enters an environment in a specific state of mood for example happy, depressed or excited. Predictably, this is affected by the physical surrounding (Bjorkman 2007; Druce 2007, 7; Bitner 1992, 65). It is interesting to note that 77% state that the environment has an important impact on happiness (Druce 2007, 7). Employees in the hotel industry also have certain expectations on their environment. The more negative expectations the higher is the dislike to this place and vice versa. However, it seems that the expectations differ depending on past experience, word of mouth as well as the written news. (Bitner 1992, 65; Stickdorn & Schneider 2012)

Experts report that the miserable and horrible conditions at the back of house are still a common problem at many hotels (Lewis & Mottier 2012; Bjorkman 2007; Lisman 2011; Dela Cruz 2006). The metaphor of the "Dark Side" and the back of house as a nightmare highlights Bjorkman (2007) with his statement "Walking through the "staff only" door was like walking back in time." Lisman (2011) on the other hand talks about a "pitiful impression" and "a whole lot of bad." There is often a smell of mildew, old paint and grime grown up over the years. It is not surprising that employees feel uncomfortable having a dirty, cluttered and disrepair room with no or only poorly maintained equipment to relax. (Bjorkman 2007.) There is no real stimulation visible. The study conducted by Druce (2007, 7) states that only 31% of hotel and service workers find the place stimulating. However, it needs to be distinguished carefully that only approximately one third (31%) is satisfied with the workplace in general talking about the front of house and back of house together. Another way of interpreting the results is that 69% are not satisfied. This supports the fact that 87% believe that employers have the responsibility to improve the conditions (Druce 2007, 7).

The break room is used by the most valuable assets in the hospitality industry, namely the employees. Although it seems that the room is only for the minions. (Lisman 2011; Bolton & Houlihan 2007, 1.) Consequently, under the current circumstances, it might be that these conditions inhibit an employee to do his or her work properly and detract him or her from the aim of being in the servicescape (Bitner 1992, 61). (See Figure 1 on page 9)

The perception of many employers written in the literature is different because as Lisman (2011) emphasises, employers argue that sales are down, profits are at the bottom and budget is tight. Therefore, some employers still see areas that are equiped with plastic chairs and wobbly tables as good enough (Lisman 2011) because money has to be invested in more urgent areas. Moreover, employees want their values to be viewed by their employer (Druce 2007, 7), but they do not realise that a back of house provides an immediate impression of the business and how employees might be treated (Lisman 2011). Lisman (2011) explains this phenomenon with the reason that it is difficult to identify when persons in charge of the management saw, entered, ate or relaxed in this space the last time.

Despite everything, there is also the possibility trying to change things step by step (Lisman 2011; Bjorkman 2007) so that this neglected area is recognized by the management. The implementation of the O-Zone by the management of the Mandarin Oriental Bangkok increases the positive perception of the employees to be accepted and acknowledged. Figure 4 represents the findings from a randomly taken survey of 164 employees at the hotel about the opinion of the employee facilities before the creation of the O-Zone.

The majority of the survey respondents said that the facilities have no impact whereas there is also a solid amount of people who said that it is positive. On the other hand, a certain number answered to have a very positive and very negative opinion about the facilities. (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 7.)
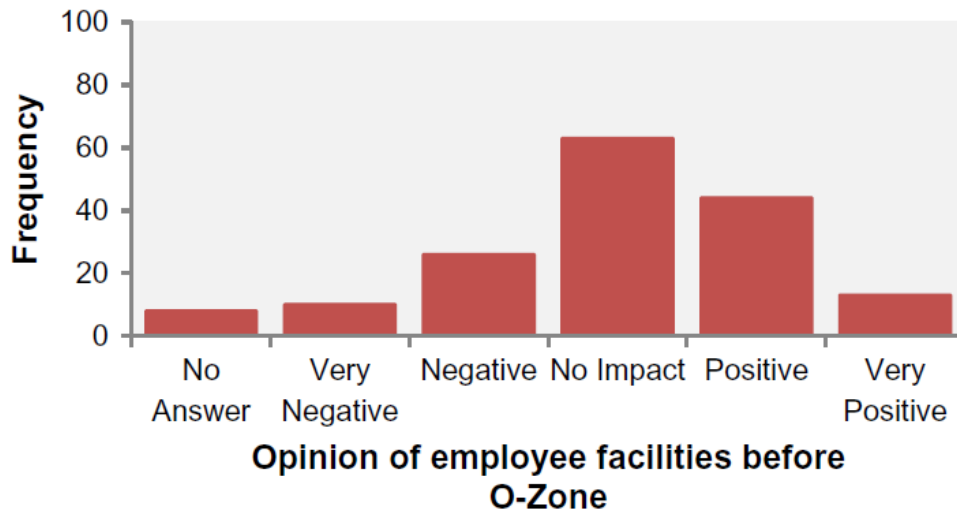
Figure 4. Opinions of employee facilities before the creation of the O-Zone (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 7)

A significant finding of the investigation after the creation of the break room (O-Zone) for the employees is that more than 150 out of 164 respondents at the hotel have a positive and very positive perception about the place. The negative or no impact side has dropped to a very small amount. (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 7.)
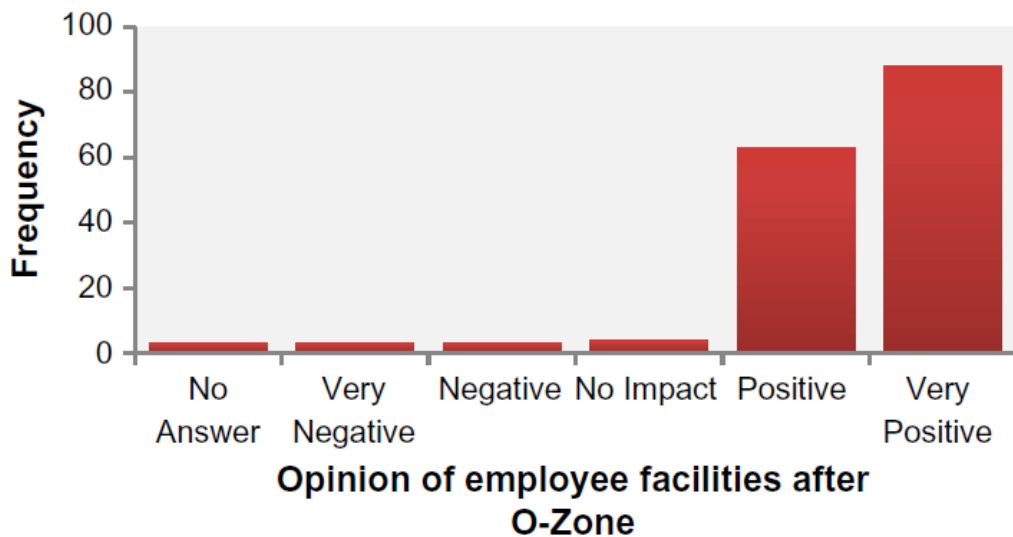

Figure 5. Opinions of employee facilities after the creation of the O-Zone (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 7)

Bitner (1992, 65) argues that employees respond holistically to the environment and therefore, many back of houses in the hotel industry have to undergo a dramatic change (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 5). With the example of the break room at the Mandarin Oriental Bangkok, employees now have a better work-life balance which has been limited due to the work obligations. Furthermore, with the previous conditions in mind the perception has changed completely. "When I walked in the O-Zone the first day I was blown away. Every aspect of it was an improvement." (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 3-5.) Beyond that, the Hilton Group also starts initiatives for a neat, clean and stress-free environment for their employees with dining facilities and a television room for relaxation (Dela Cruz 2006). In general, Petrillo points out that the hospitality industry nowadays puts a high emphasis on excellent guest service and therefore, they should also provide the same service to employees (Dela Cruz 2006).

2.1.4 Human Resource Management Responsibilities

The hospitality and tourism industry belongs to one of the biggest industries in the world with an immense market size and a high employment (Davidson et al. 2010, 498; Varoglu & Eser 2006, 30; EMCC 2005, 2, 4). It is nowadays a booming market and rising standards of guests lead to higher employers' expectations on hotel employees (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 1; Lisman 2011; Gibson 2003, 12). As the challenges and pressure on employees at work are constantly increasing, the human resource management department is responsible for the assessment of an accurate work-life balance and the well-being of employees.

Human resource management (HRM) is about the people, an organisation's most valuable assets (Lisman 2011; Bolton & Houlihan 2007; 1), as they have a great stake in the success of the hospitality industry. Carey (1999, in Davidson et al. 2010, 499) states that HRM within the industry started around 1940 with the purpose of the welfare of employees. Between 1970 and 1990 the focus changed to qualitative and strategic outcomes by creating a harmonious work culture and climate whereas today, high performance workplaces and talent management play the most important role (Davidson et al. 2010, 499).

The assistance and possible implementation of a well-designed back of house for the employees is a responsibility of the HRM because it affects the welfare of employees, it is about the creation of an efficient and harmonious work climate and a high performance workplace. It is a common fact that business managers and human resource managers are exposed to these three challenges (Varoglu & Eser 2006, 30; Earle 2003, 244-245) as employees also demand more (Earle 2003, 245). To avoid these challenges, Jayne (2005, 2) suggests employers to evolve an employment brand which allures and retains skilled employees.

There is no doubt that HRM aims for a reciprocal relationship between employees and their employer (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 7; Davidson et al. 2010, 502), all on a give-and-take basis to achieve a high guest satisfaction. Previous studies have shown that employees in the hotel industry do not only demand higher salaries (Earle 2003, 248) but also according to Namasivayam, Miao and Zhao (2007, in Davidson et al. 2010, 503) a better and wider choice of other benefits. Subsequently, Earle (2003, 248) clarifies the fact that a better or improved back of house might also be extremely effective for attraction and retention. From the researcher's perspective the environment seems to be a key issue since it combines work-life balance and chances for recognition and appreciation alike.

Furthermore, prior studies of Fortune's 100 Best Companies to Work For evaluated that a fun work environment is an essential element that differs one from another (Karl & Peluchette 2006, 2). Ford, McLaughlin and Newstorm (2003, 20) wonder whether employees have as much fun at work as managers believe they should have. The findings say no. Of 572 respondents, three forth of managers think that employees have less fun than they should. Surprisingly, more than 75% actually expect employees to have fun (Ford et al. 2003, 20). Owler, Morrison and Plester (2010, 344) approve these findings that fun at work is good for both, the employees and the business in whole. Particularly in the hospitality industry, fun is sometimes missing because of the high requirements which strain the employees. Worth noting is that HR managers are more aware than other members of the feelings of the employees about the work environment being a fun place affecting their behaviour and attitude (Ford et al. 2003, 19).

Another problem that appears is that managers and HR managers have to recognise the needs of the future generations (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 2; Davidson et al. 2010, 504; Earle 2003, 245-246) and invest in them (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 3). There is a necessity for a workplace by generations. Today's workforce is more mobile, and accordingly, the competition for talents is stronger than ever, both on a national and international level (Earle 2003, 244). However, HR managers still have to take the three major generations into consideration: Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 8; Davidson et al. 2010, 505; Chen & Choi 2008, 600-603; Earle 2003, 247-248).

Certainly, all of them have particular characteristics. Baby Boomers (1946 – 1964) for instance attach importance on a stable and calm environment and look for recognition and respect (Davidson et al. 2010, 504; Earle 2003, 246). Generation X (1965 – 1979) is interested in stimuli-rich environments, long-term relationships and works hard if they are valued and respected (Davidson et al. 2010, 504; Earle 2003, 247). Lastly, Generation Y (1980 – 1994) is the one who entered or is entering the hospitality industry in the near future and expects a lot from the work environment to be alive and active. They also value recognition, social contact as well as energetic and innovative companies. (Davidson et al. 2010, 504; Earle 2003, 248.) Nevertheless, it is important to provide a well-designed back of house is the common interest of all generations to work in an environment that is nurtured and fun and also supports a work-life balance and increases the team spirit (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 8; Davidson et al. 2010, 504-505; Earle 2003, 247-248; Chen & Choi 2008, 600-603).

On the whole, employees should be treated as internal customers (Varoglu & Eser 2006, 30; Karl & Peluchette 2006) and put on the first place (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 2). Weinstein (1996, in Karl & Peluchette 2006, 2) clearly highlights the way to go by stating

> If you want your company to provide excellent customer service, you first have to provide that same kind of attention and appreciation to your internal customers – your employees. You can't expect your employees to provide "service with a smile" if you don't give them something to smile about!

Taking everything into consideration, offering a break room for hotel employees of any generation that combines fun at work and relaxation at the same time in order to achieve a better work-life balance and service is an important issue. Enz (2009, in Davidson et al. 2010, 504) points out the managers' major concerns for the future: attraction, retention and morale of the employees. A well-designed back of house might have a great impact on these concerns because it has become a common phenomenon and is possible to implement (Owler et al. 2010, 342). HR managers favour the implementation of a fun work environment because it offers substantial benefits for both employees and employers (Curtis & Upchurch 2008, 131; Druce 2007, 7; Ford et al. 2003, 18; Yerkes 2003, 47-48).

2.2 Holistic Analysis in Room Design

The previous chapter has clearly substantiated on the one hand, the overall situation and problem with the back of house for the employees in the hospitality industry and on the other hand, the HRM responsibilities in the future. In order to better understand the content of the research question "What is the significance of a well-designed back of house and how does it influence employees and employers", this chapter analyses the different aspects that form a well-designed back of house. Since it is a holistic analysis tangible and intangible factors will be investigated.

As Bitner (1992, 62) indicates, the first step to design the environment is to be aware of the desirable employees behaviour as well as the aimed strategic goal of the company with the creation of a well-designed back of house. The desirable employee behaviour is to have the feeling to be valued by the employer and be more relaxed by having fun, being more motivated and productive to increase the guest service. The strategic goal is basically to enhance the job satisfaction, retention and guest satisfaction by aiming for more profit. The purpose is to provide a productive, dynamic, creative, developing and stimulating (Earle 2003, 245) break room for the employees. This room has to be different from work, a place to relax and participate in various activities (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 5) with humor, playfulness and joyfulness (Jayne 2005). The aim is to go for a break and not to take a nap. Employees should refresh and not "hang out" the whole day. (Lisman 2011.) It is also essential that the break room satifies all five senses of employees.

Kotler (1974, in Edwards & Gustafsson 2008, 23) defines the five senses as follows:

- Aural stimuli (hear)
- Olfactory stimuli (smell)
- Oral stimuli (taste)
- Tactile stimuli (feel)
- Visual stimuli (see)

Figure 1 on page 9, Bitner's (1992) Framework for Understanding Environment-User Relationships in Service Organizations, covers all senses within the environmental dimensions and these will be included indirectly within this holistic analysis. It is important to look at every single aspect within the environment because employees respond holistically to the environment (Mattila & Wirtz 2001, 274-275).

Function and facilities, ambient conditions concerning temperature, odour, lightning, noise, music as well as colours will be described in this subchapter, all aspects that create an overall atmosphere.

There is an endless list of possibilities (Bitner 1992, 65) to create a well-designed back of house, but the final implementation and extent is up to the employer. Actually, it is important to intergrate the employees in the whole process (Lewis & Mottier 2012; Johansson, Fröst & Brandt 2002, 163) because at the end they do or do not enjoy to stay in this room (Bitner 1992, 63).

2.2.1 Function and Facilities

The space and shape - also known as spatial layout - (Bitner 1992, 66) is universally seen as the way how the available space is used (Bitner 1992, 66; Johansson et al. 2002, 162). This is a significant element in the planning of the arragements of furniture, equipment and facilities because the room has to be used in the most reasonable way. Certainly, the room needs a generously, open space (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 4; Gibson 2003, 18) that, however, involves private and social space alike (Gibson 2003, 18).

Regarding the furniture and equipment (facilities), it widely depends on the use of colour(s). In general, Bitner (1992, 63) mentions the size, shape, material and style as an essential factor for the decision of the break room. Lisman (2011) also recommends to keep the comfortability and functionality in mind when designing the room. As he stresses that the room should be used for a break, windows and the use of light wood is advisable. It is up to the employer, the project-integrated employees or the style of the entire hotel whether the design is modern or traditional (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 4).

The hospitality industry is definitely a different business because employees do not have a fixed working time or break time. Employees are extremely busy and have to be aware of the fact that they have to shorten a break whenever necessary. Usually, employees do not have a place to go during their break, so they have to stay at the hotel and managers want them to stay. (Dela Cruz 2007.) Therefore, dining facilities with drinks and coffee machines are essential (Lisman 2011; Dela Cruz 2007; Karl & Peluchette 2006, 3). Furthermore, the literature names various opportunities for the equipment of a well-designed break room which combines entertainment, relaxation and social interaction, all to make a place fun to work at. Such opportunities are for instance video screens with the latest activities, game console, flat screen TVs, library, Internet service, pool and kicker table, comfy lounges, fitness center, massage chair and games (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 5-6; Karl & Peluchette 2006, 3; Ford et al. 2003, 20; Earle 2003, 252). Moreover, changing rooms with showers and lockers are crucial especially in the hospitality industry when working split shift and overtime in particular at climatical hot destinations.

2.2.2 Ambient Conditions

<u>Temperature and Odour</u>

The temperature and odour are issues that contribute to a holistic environment. Every room should have a constant room temperature of 18 to 20 degrees celcius and an ambient scent on a natural, consistent and pleasant basis. There is no need for artificial products as the natural scent is perceived as qualitative, arousing and intense enough. (Mattila & Wirtz 2001, 275-276.)

A good air quality is fundamental because a poor one can negativley affect the health and well-being of employees (Gutnick 2007, iii) and cause stress. Thus, aromas should not be used because of potential allergies or illnesses of the employees (Gutnick 2007, 6). The usage of plants also play a vital role as they counter ill-being and help to keep a comfort level through a freshly changed humidity balance (Gilhooley 2002, in Gutnick 2007, 35-36).

Lighting

To properly create an overall inviting atmosphere with spatial layout, colours and furniture, the lighting also needs special attention. All prior studies agree in having a light-hearted and generously lit room (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 4; Lisman 2011; Owler et al. 2010, 339) is more welcoming (Lisman 2011) and leads to health, safety and enjoyment (Ginthner 2010, 1). According to Bitner (1992, 63), lighting should support employees to see and not cause a physical pain. Therefore, the right amount and intensity of illumination is fundamental. Ginthner (2010, 2) emphasises to think about the effect that the lighting should have. Accordingly, she divides the effect into three parts: visual task, general lightning or ambient lighting and visual interest.

The visual task of light is to provide enough light to recognise a way safely. The general lighting or ambient lighting in the words of Ginthner (2010, 2) is "to set a mood or impression and maybe the lighting that provides for safe circulation within the space" whereas the visual interest is "something that adds a touch of magic, or something to tickle the user's 'joy button'." Since the break room is responsible to create a relaxing and enjoyable atmosphere, the last two effects (ambient lighting and visual interest) are most recommendable due to the fact that these kind of lightings are influencing the behaviour and mood of people (Ginthner 2010, 2; Quartier, Christiaans & Van Cleempoel 2009, 7). Further research has shown that people are keen to brightness (Ginthner 2010, 2-3; Quartier et al. 2009, 7) and wall illumination (Ginthner 2010, 2-3).

However, according to Iskra-Golec and Smith (2008, 477-478) too bright room lighting seems to be less comfortable, less natural and more glaring. Ginthner (2010, 3-4) mentions specific criteria for the evaluation of lighting such as uniform or non-unifrom light, bright or dim lights and overhead or wall lighting to create certain feelings. These feelings can be compared as follows:

- pleasant versus unpleasant
- public versus private
- spacious versus confined
- relaxed versus tense
- visually clear versus hazy

Flynn (Ginthner 2010, 3)

A break room for employees should be pleasant, private, spacious, relaxed and visually clear. All these aspects have a high, wall and non-uniform lighting in common (Ginthner 2010, 3-4). It is certain that the employees have to spend time in the break room and the wrong lighting can cause them not to do. She adds that lighting with the combination of light wood creates a warm feeling which also leads to a positive emotional response. These simple things contribute to the reduction of employee absenteeism by 15% whereas productivity enhances from 2.8% to 20% (Amble 2005).

Noise

Some people seem to be able to ignore certain noise levels whereas for others noise creates uncomfortableness and/or poor concentration. Noise has an impact on the physical and emotional health and the psychological well-being, too. It might provoke irritation, stress and induce employee to make errors. (Cooper, Dewe & O'Driscoll 2001 and Hower 1995, in Gutnick 2007,20.) Employees are constantly exposed to noise and a break room might help them to release tension.

<u>Music</u>

Music plays an important role in our lives nowadays, either in the foreground or in the background. The latter one is probably the most common one because people pay attention to it consciously and subconsciously. (Have 2008, 1.) It helps creating a pleasant atmosphere (Dubé & Morin 2001, 107; Herrington & Capella 1994, 51) and can be defined, according to Hallam (2012, 2), as "the act of music being played when the music itself is not the main focus for attention." Background music is a support of a diversity of activities being able to affect moods, emotions and feelings. However, people have preferences and familarities regarding the taste and effect of music reacting in different ways to it (Hallam 2012, 2-3; Have 2008, 1; Dubé & Morin 2001, 107). Therefore, the implementation of the right music makes it complicated because music consists of many different attributes, but basically, tempo and/or volume as well as the genre of the background music lead to the pleasantness of an environment and consequently to an approach or avoidance (Holbrook & Anand 1990 in Herrington & Capella 1994, 52; Kellaris & Kent 1992, 367-368). Bruner (1990, in Mattila & Wirtz 2001, 276) ascertains the physical (volume, tempo), emotional and preferential dimension evoked by music that have to be taken into account. In the case of a well-designed back of house it is important to think about either offering an overall music surrounding imposed by the management or providing a space for an individual selection. Findings of a recent study by Hallam (2012, 3-4, 11) indicate that a self-selection of music by employees have a more positive impact than pre-determined music on their emotions and feelings due to the fact that they are better aware of their mood and preference.

In addition, there is also a correlation between health, well-being and background music. Research has shown that lower stress, increased feelings of well-being, higher productivity, less fatigue, better performance as well as a reduction of errors made by employees are ancillary effects of background music. (Hallam 2012, 3, 8, 10-12; Herrington & Capella 1994, 53.) Hays and Minichiello (2005, in Hallam 2012, 8) see the advantage in providing music for employees since it creates "inner happiness, inner contentment and inner peace."

Science of Colours

When designing a room or part of the work environment , colours and their effect on people's emotions, feelings and mood (Yildirim & Hidayetoglu 2011, 509; Kamaeuzzaman 2010, 283; Lee & Lee 2006, 122; Garris & Monroe 2005, 72; Kaya & Epps 2004) will always play an important role. However, Kamaruzzaman (2010, 283) says that designers or persons in charge are still unaware of the effect of colours in the environment. There is a correlation between a work environment and colours and the effect on mood and productivity. Therefore, the right and appropriate selection of colours for an interior design is essential. (Yildirim & Hidayetoglu 2011, 509; Kamaruzzaman 2010, 283, 286; Garris & Monroe 2005, 72.) Due to the fact that the science of colours is a complex and extensive field, the content in this thesis is limited to the most relevant issues.

According to Ching (1995, in Kamaruzzaman 2010, 283), and Yildirim and Hidayetoglu (2011, 509), colour is a visual phenomenon of light. It is nowadays an inseparable part of everyday lives (Kaya & Epps 2004). Regan (1995, in Kamaruzzaman 2010, 283), and Lee and Lee (2006, 123) identify three different attributes. Firstly, the hue. It is the name of the colour. Secondly, the chroma. Chroma is the intensity or saturation of a colour specified on the amount of grey.Thirdly, the value of a colour determined by the brightness or darkness. Moreover, each colour is classified into three certain groups based on short or long wavelengths: warm, cool colours and achromatic colours. Red, orange and yellow are warm colours, blue, green and purple are cool colours whereas achromatic colours are white, black, brown and grey. (Yildirim & Hidayetoglu 2011, 509; Kaya & Epps 2004.)

By and large, prior studies indicate that warm colours possess a high arousal, are stimulating and exciting while cool colours are less arousing, restful and high in space. Achromatic colours though possess characteristics such as depression, boredom and sadness. (Yildirim & Hidayetoglu 2011, 509, 518; Kamaruzzaman 2010, 283, 285; Kaya & Epps 2004.) In order to get a deeper understanding , the following section will briefly describe the main features of single colours and their influence on people.

With respect to warm colours, red with the longest wavelengths, is in general a more physical colour (Wright 2013a) and stands for activity, excitement, dominance and dynamic with a strong, energetic and passionate expression. It is a stimulating colour often leading to a higher pulse rate. On the other side, strain, aggression and intensity are negative reactions to the colour red. (Wright 2013a; Yildirim & Hidayetoglu 2011, 510,518; Kaya & Epps 2004.) Regarding the spatial layout, a small room with the colour red will appear less spacious and creates a feeling of narrowness (Yildirim & Hidayetoglu 2011, 510).

Yellow is a stimulative emotional colour (Wright 2013a) with important characteristics such as optimism, activity, creativity and confidence (Wright 2013a, Yildirim & Hidayetoglu 2011, 518; Kaya & Epps 2004). Using this colour abundantly will cause depression and fear (Wright 2013a).

Orange as a mix of red and yellow combines the physical and emotional and emanates comfort, activity, passion and fun on the positive side and frivolity, immaturity and distress on the negative side (Wright 2013a).

Studies by Hemphill (1996, in Yildirim & Hidayetoglu 2011, 511) show that cool colours result in being more popular than warm colours with the order (1) blue, (2) green and (3) red, equally for women and men. Findings of another study by Kamaruzzaman (2010, 285) reveal a higher favour for blue, red and black whereas Kaya and Epps (2004) see high preferences for green, yellow and blue. All studies state blue as a general liked colour. Wright (2013a) characterises blue as an intellectual colour with positive effect such as efficiency, trust, calmness and communication. Other researchers add comfort, security, relaxation and happiness (Yildirim & Hidayetoglu 2011, 510-511, 518; Kamaruzzaman 2010, 285; Kaya & Epps 2004). From a negative perspective, blue is related to sadness, tiredness, loneliness and coldness (Wright 2013a).

Green is the colour of balance and emphasises harmony, relaxation, refreshment, naturalness, comfort, peace and calmness. Tiredness and boredom are the negative aspects associated with green. (Wright 2013a, Yildirim & Hidayetoglu 2011, 510, 518; Kaya & Epps 2004.)

Purple as the last cool colour is a spiritual colour with traits such as luxury, quality, truth and authenticity. Too much of purple will lead to supression. (Wright 2013a.) Finally, the achromatic colours are probably the least favourite ones among the groups. Black consists of all colours because of a high absorption (Wright 2013a). While glamour, power and security are positive factors of the colour black, passiveness, heaviness, sadness, depression, fear, anger and darkness are negative associations (Wright 2013a, Kaya & Epps 2004).

The colour white as the most preferred colour among the achromatics stands for purity, simplicity and clarity. White gives other colours or objects a highlighted perception, but also influences them being garish. In addition, white associates coldness, emptiness and boredom. (Wright 2013a; Kaya & Epps 2004.)

As already mentioned above, every colour has a certain saturation or intensity depending on the amount of grey. Without all the other colours, everything would be grey. This, of course, causes depression, tristesse, boredom, confusion and tiredness. (Wright 2013a; Kaya & Epps 2004.)

The colour brown is a mixture of red, yellow and black with a combination of these characteristics with a soft and warm touch. It is a colour of earth and related to the nature creating a feeling of warmth, reliability and support but also heaviness. (Wright 2013a.)

To sum up, the science of colours is a multilateral issue with a wider range of details to discuss about. When designing a room, it is important to think about what purpose or function this room has in order to find the appropriate mixture of colours. As explained in detail above, if a room should be more spacious, calm, restful and peaceful, cool colours are necessary and if an interior should be more arousing,

stimulating and exciting, warm colours are necessary (Yildirim & Hidayetoglu 2011, 521). Garris and Monroe (2005, 72) prefer to combine bright and rich colours with moderate or neutral ones to create a certain interest for the employees. Wright (2013b) points out that there is no right or wrong colour but rather, as Garris and Monroe (2005) say, the combination of colours leads to a certain reaction, either unconscious, semiconscious or conscious (Lee & Lee 2006, 123). Without any doubt, colours have a predominant effect on interior design (Yildirim & Hidayetoglu 2011, 519). Yildirim and Hidayetoglu (2011, 519) also discover that the influence of a colour does not change even though the location of furniture does. Additionally, they also suggest to take advantage of short wavelengths colours for interior design whereas Wright (2013b) proposes to orientate oneself on the brands' characteristics, values as well as personality. Issues that really needs to be considered for the decision of a colour is the space and shape of a room because in case there is a long narrow room, warm, deep and intense colours with a mixture of light colours are recommendable and the other way around (Kamaruzzaman 2010, 284). All in all, the immediate aim of the colour in the room is to create an inviting and professional atmosphere which does not overwhelm employees (Garris & Monroe 2005, 72) and give them the chance to relax and get new energy for the work.

2.3   Impact on Employees

This thesis has clearly illustrated the significance of the role of employees in the hospitality industry and the conditions of the break room for them on the one hand as well as the holisitc possibility of change on the other hand. To better understand the importance of a well-designed back of house, this chapter will exclusively concentrate on the impact on the employees.

As mentioned throughout this research, employees in the hotel industry are the most valuable assets (Lisman 2011; Bolton & Houlihan 2007; 1) and therefore, it is crucial to involve them in every hotel's philosophy. Every hotel in the world appreciates the importance of employees, but researches have shown that the conditions of their break room to relax and refresh are underachieved.

Employees have to be ranked first (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 2) and the employer's responsibility is to refocus on employees' needs and wants (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 8; Varoglu & Eser 2006, 30; Bitner 1992; 58). Studies by Jayne (2005) have shown that employees see the work as "just a job" to get paid, as a "career" for personal advancement or as a "calling" with a higher sense of meaning and purpose. The hospitality industry has to create the image combining these three kinds of perception. This is only possible by the higher concentration on the employees. Payment and personal advancement are motivators whereas the feeling to be valued with the integration of a well-designed break room is a hygiene factor (Herzberg et al. 1959, in Chitiris 1988, 64). Chitiris (1988, 76) verifies the fact that employees value hygiene factors higher than motivators. However, a research by the American Society of Interior Design (1999, in Earle 2003, 248) among 663 adults depict that compensation with 62% is the most important factor followed by benefits and physical environment rated with 22%. The physical environment being on the second place of priority disclose the need for the creation of a break room for the employees as their own. It would be a sign of a hotel's initiative providing increased employee facilities. (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 2-3.)

Accordingly, for the employees, it is a sense of respect and appreciation (Ford et al. 2003, 20) by the employer. Ford et al. (2003, 24) believe that satisfied employees have less stress, show an improvement in their work attitude and behaviour, have less sick days and are more creative than those who are dissatisfied.

2.3.1   Work Climate within the Company

The new break room will give employees a sense of belonging or, one step further, a sense of family. Therefore, the aim is to provide a place within the company which contributes to a pleasant work climate and where employees can feel like at home. (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 1-7.) This is crucial since employees in the hospitality industry do not just work together, but rather have to think together nowadays (Monroe 1999, in Gutnick 2007, 15).

An improved back of house with all the amenities is the way to integrate fun at work so that a more harmonious working atmosphere will be achieved. Yerkes (2003, 47-49) emphasises that fun belongs to work being an energy force that builds relationships and enhances performance. According to Lewis and Mottier (2012, 3-4), playing games, listening to music, relaxing or meeting up with collegues, everything together in a private break room at the hotel, will bring employees closer together. This does not only increase the teamwork, but also provides a feeling of openness and intimacy. It is all about the happiness of employees at work. Jayne (2005) supports the statement by Lewis and Mottier (2012) that happy employees have a better quality relationship as well as a better social interaction which is crucial when working in the hotel industry. A well-designed back of house is in the broadest sense fun due to the fact that it is something new for the employees that offers diversion from the daily work. Moreover, when fun is integrated in the break room, Yerkes (2003, 50) argues that creativity and innovation is stimulated, productivity is higher, the work morale changes positively and it counters the effect of stress.

2.3.2   Well-Being of Employees

Goessing points out that the well-being of the employees is the key to attract and retain the best people (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 3). The literature already examined the fact that the hotel industry is a demanding job with low payment, bad work-life balance opportunities, overtime work, working split shift and so forth. Predictably, this influences the well-being of employees. It might be interesting to note that employees in the hospitality industry take more than double the number of sick days off per year than employees from other industries (Druce 2007, 7) caused by stress and pressure.

Immoderate stress seems to damage not only the physical but also the emotional well-being of employees (Allie 1996, in Gutnick 2007, 2). The provision of a well-designed back of house where employees enjoy to be (Curtis & Upchurch 2008, 249) will assuredly contribute to a better balance. Lewis and Mottier (2012, 3) highlight that a satisfactory work-life balance is important to be a great performer.

In addition, research indicates that a break room offers employees the possibility to pursue hobbies, read or relax and have time for friends and family (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 3; Yerkes 2003, 48). They have time for this because they do not leave their workplace tired or exhausted. It seems that such a room for the employees will bring back the glamour of working in the hospitality industry (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 12) because it makes a shift easier (Davidson et al. 2010, 503), reduces stress (Garris & Monroe 2005, 72; Jayne 2005), contributes to a better health and healthy way of living and makes employees happier (Jayne 2005). All this leads to the opinion of having an interesting job and time for non-work related activities (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 5).

2.3.3   Improvement of Work Attitude

In the hospitality industry, employees are challenged to constantly maintain high standards in order to satisfy every guest (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 1), but in case the pressure and obligations, in connections with even worse conditions, are rising by the time, the work attitude and motivation will drop below employers' expectations. Karl and Peluchette (2006, 2, 6), Yerkes (2003, 50) as well as Jayne (2005) agree that happy employees are more productive, motivated and generally in a more positive mood. A study conducted by Druce (2007, 7) indicates similar results that six out of ten hotel employees say that a better work environment increases their productivity and motivation. Csikszentmihalyi (1996; 2002, in Owler et al. 2010, 340) states in his research that the performance of employees, then, seems to be effortless. Furthermore, a new designed room solely for the employees enhances flexibility, motivation, innovation, empowerment and creativity alike (Owler et al. 2010, 340). Earle (2003, 249) stresses the fact that a new physical surrounding stimulates creativity by 62%. Experts report that the fun and diversion employees will have also affect their job satisfaction (Karl & Peluchette 2006, 2), their sense of meaning and the capability to savour their lives within and outside the work environment (Jayne 2005).

Findings of a study by Earle (2003, 248) rank the physical environment in the top three regarding the factors that influence the job satisfaction. Worth noting is that the satisfaction with the workplace is positively linked to job satisfaction and vice versa in case the physical environment is below employees' expecations the dissatisfaction is higher (Lee 2006, 343).

Employees who are happy with the back of house are presumably 31% more satisfied with their job than others (Earle 2003, 248). These findings have been agreed by further research of Karl and Peluchette (2006, 3) who state that after an implementation of an improved physical environment, the "strong" satisfaction increases from 25% to 75%. They expose that satisfied employees are more motivated and able to perform beyond their duty. Interestingly, satisfied employees see a higher level of service quality for the guests as well as a coherence between employee satisfaction and guest satisfaction because satisfied employees are in favour of helping guests and providing a more personalised service. (Druce 2007, 7; Karl & Peluchette 2006, 4, 9; Varoglu & Eser 2006, 30.)

The impact of a well-designed back of house is significant and vice versa the impact of a 'dark' back of house, too. The decision to accept a job depends partly on the physical environment because 41% of employees base their choice on a nice overall environment. On the contrary, 51% of the employees would quit a job because of an inadequate physical environment. (Earle 2003, 248.) These numbers are realtively high and it again points out the conditions employees have to face at the front and back of house as well as the importance to think about the implementation of a well-designed back of house.

2.4   Impact on Employer

This chapter will underline the impact of a well-designed back of house on the employer by focusing on the three most important elements managers have to take into consideration: use of space, costs and investment and benefits.

A study conducted by Enz (2001, 39) among 170 managers from over 25 countries identifies the most relevant challenges facing managers (Figure 6). As expected, the key concern is the human capital or rather taking care of and motivate them, followed by understanding the customers, effectively using capital, aligning stakeholder's interest, using information technology and valuing brands.
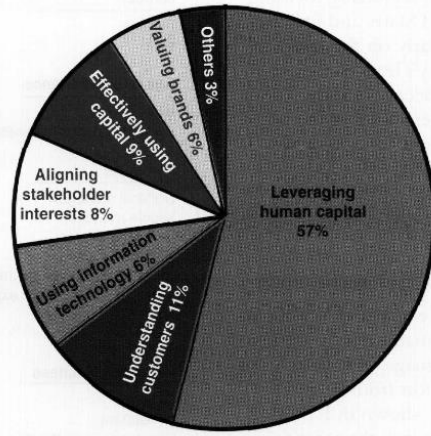
Figure 6. Key issues of concern (Enz 2001)

The problem of leveraging human capital is widely spread around the world dealing with issues such as attracting, motivating or retaining (Enz 2001, 39; Lewis & Mottier 2012, 7; Davidson et al. 2010, 504; Earle 2003, 244). A comparison between the U.S. and Europe by Enz (2001, 42) shows the key problem of leveraging human capital in the hospitality industry naming 65% in Europe and about 45% in the U.S. (Figure 7).
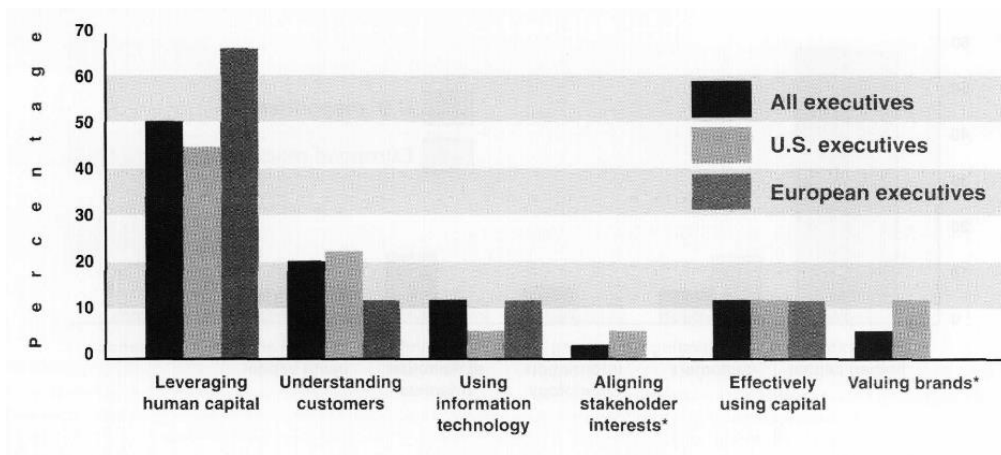
Figure 7. Comparison of key issues, senior executives in the U.S. and Europe (Enz 2001)

Jayne (2005) expresses briefly the problem and solution by saying

> You can't differentiate yourself much these days in terms of the reward you give people. Everyone wants to be competitive on salaries and benefits. You have to go for other elements in terms of creating work environments where people enjoy coming every day.

The creation of a well-designed back of house is a solution leveraging human capital because even if it is still a new way to attract and retain employees in the hotel industry, it increases the image of the industry and it shows service with dignity. It is a sign of treating employees as a significant part of the team. This is a message to the entire industry investing in employees of the future. (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 3, 7-8.) Bitner (1992, 67) asserts that the physical environment is a possibility to differentiate and position the company on a higher level than the competitors by paying attention to its own employees. A well-designed break room might facilitate the competition for talented employees because the employer who implement a designed back of house can achieve a position as employer of choice owing to an increased well-being (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 7). Another survey by Enz (2009, in Davidson et al. 2010, 504) indicates that attraction, retention and the morale of staff are the major concerns nowadays, which supports her survey from 2001. As there is an intense competition for talented employees who contribute to the success of an organisation, the new designed physical environment could also be a means to attract and retain talents (Earle 2003, 244-245).

Although the HRM follows suggestions for the break room with the aim and benefits of attraction, retention, efficiency, motivation, productivity, effectiveness, flexibility as well as a competitive advantage (Davidson et al. 2010, 501), the implementation of a well-designed back of house also hides some problematic issues such as use of space and costs & investment. These aspects need to be considered by the management or owner. The use of space and costs & investment will be discussed in the following chapters.

2.4.1 The Use of Space

The space is a resource (Kirsh 1995, 32) of the back of house and needs to be managed by the owner or management. As already brought up at the beginning, the break room possesses no substantial significance because it is still not a planned part of a hotel (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 6). However, it is not compulsory to add new space, but rather to use the available one more efficiently and see it from a different perspective (Agency Sales 1997, 40) in order to increase the use of different possibilities described previously.

It is a planning process trying to do more with less (Mooradian 1999, 30), but still creating a pleasant atmosphere to ensure the positive influence on employees.

2.4.2 Costs and Investment

The project of a well-designed back of house is apparently also connected with a certain amount of costs and investment. These numbers are in most cases more important for the management or owner of the company because it is their money which needs to be invested in the creation of the break room. It is difficult to name specific amounts of investment because the costs vary due to the size of the room, the amount and quality of furniture and equipment, the activities offered as well as the number of employees employed at the hotel. In the latter case, this seems to be the crucial factor determining the final decision of the chosen possibilities because not all employees will be at this room simultaneously.

The best practice example of the Mandarin Oriental Bangkok invested US $ 1.5 million in the project of a well-designed back of house for 1,300 employees in total (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 3). This shows an investment of US $ 1,154 per employee in the project. It has been said that employees in the hospitality industry take more than double the number of sick days off per year than employees from other industries (Druce 2007, 7). Therefore, employers have to decide either to reduce the health costs of their employees by investing in the break room once to increase the well-being, work climate and work attitude and possibly increase profit or to carry the health costs over which will definitely rise within the next years.

The approximated yearly costs for the employers are definitely way higher due to health costs, loss of productivity, work compensation, training, staff turnover and many more (Caudron 1998, in Gutnick 2007, 1).

2.4.3 Benefits

Besides the possible problems with the use of space and the costs and investment, the implementation of a well-designed back of house will generate some benefits for the employers which definitely have to be taken into account, for example an increase in employee satisfaction and accordingly guest satisfaction as well as lower staff turnover, retention and most important more profit.

A newly designed break room will surely contribute to become an employer of choice and thus being able to maintain the reputation for an outstanding service not only for the guests but also for the employees. It is the commitment of the employers to the employees in order to achieve a climate of enthusiasm where people love to work and are capable to be and remain creative and innovative for new ideas offering remarkable service. (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 1-4, 7.) However, it is important to note that the project of a well-designed back of house will bring rather long-term benefits for the employer instead of short-term ones (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 3). First of all, the employee turnover; this is the movement of employees in and out of a hotel business measured constantly by the employer (Hänssler 2008, 186). It is a common fact that the hotel industry runs short of good and qualified employees, accordingly leading to the highest turnover rate in comparison to other industries (Davidson, Timo & Wang 2009, 81-82; Hänssler 2008, 187).

Hinkin (2005, in Varoglu & Eser 2006, 31) estimates the turnover rate at 65% in the hotel industry which is also approved by Hänssler (2008, 186) who mentions a turnover rate from 60% upwards. The employee turnover has a negative impact on the employer and needs to be avoided. In most cases, it is a combination of several factors causing the high rate for example poor work-life balance, bad work environment, low payment and many more (Davidson et al. 2009, 81-82). On the other side, the problems for employers are high costs, loss of guests, staff shortage and a bad reputation (Panwar, Dalal & Kaushik 2012, 84; Hänssler 2008, 187).

Although the implementation of a well-designed back of house is rather a high cost strategy than a low cost strategy the employee turnover rate might decrease to a great extent because it is partly a solution to the just mentioned problems. Findings of a study by organisational psychologist John Izzo illustrates the result that work-life balance programmes reduce employee turnover by 50% whereas there is also an increase of productivity by 20% to register (Earle 2003, 252). The investment in a well-designed back of house in the long-term will disburse through a lower employee turnover and consequently in less stressed, more balanced, loyal and happier employees (Owler et al. 2010, 340; Davidson et al. 2009, 82). Stambor (2006) puts the costs per year of US industries due to employee turnover, employee absenteeism, lower productivity, medical costs and insurances at an incredible amount.

Secondly, Druce (2007, 7) as well as Lee (2006, 343) clearly express the importance and benefit of a break room that there is a strong correlation between a happy staff with an exceptional work attitude, better work outcomes and the level of guest service. In brief, Druce (2007, 7) claims that "happy staff means happy guests." These findings have been agreed by further research that guest satisfaction depends on employee satisfaction (Varoglu & Eser 2006, 30; Karl & Peluchette 2006, 4; Marriott, in Lashley 2000, 128). It is important for the hospitality industry to constantly strive for a high level of guest service and guest satisfaction. In most instances, this is only possible through excellent service by employees and the interaction between them and the guests, thus, making the employees happy at work influences the perception of guest service positively.

Thirdly, with respect to attraction and retention, some employers already take advantage of a designed physical environment for the employees as a recruitment strategy (Owler et al. 2010, 346) in order to seek and secure the best talents because this becomes more discouraging for the employers (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 2). Moreover, prior studies acknowledge the positive effect of a better, productive, flexible and dynamic physical environment to attract and retain employees (Earle 2003, 245, 248). Jayne (2005) summarises the way to attract and retain the best employees as "If you treat your people well, they'll treat you well."

Lastly, current research also points out the coherence between happy staff and a company's success in terms of a better bottom-line (Lisman 2011; Jayne 2005). In addition, 90% say that an improvement of the physical environment improves the competitiveness of a company on the market (Earle 2003, 249) as it seems that companies which treat their employees well are more profitable within the economy (Lisman 2011, Jayne 2005). It is the atmosphere that will be improved within the company that achieves the competitive advantage, the higher guest service and the company's net worth (Yerkes 2003, 47-48; Owler et al. 2010, 340).

Taking everything into consideration, employers have to think about how to distinguish themselves from others and get the most out of their employees by not losing them. The well-designed back of house seems to be an exceptional concept to provide a better work-life balance for employees as well as to decrease employee turnover and increase retention. Jayne (2005) believes that "the concept of happy employees leading to happy customers leading to better company performance" might be a solution employers have to bear in mind.

2.5   Service Design

Service Design as an interdisciplinary approach to design services (Stickdorn & Schneider 2012) is used in this thesis as a support to highlight the necessity of the creation of a well-designed back of house. An exact definition of Service Design is not available (Stickdorn & Schneider 2012, 29), however, the most explicit definition in the context for this thesis is made by Moritz (2005, in Stickdorn & Schneider 2012, 31)

> Service Design helps to innovate (create new) or improve (existing) services to make them more useful, usable, desirable for clients and efficient as well as effective for organisations. It is a new holistic, multi-disciplinary, integrative field.

It is the aim to either create a new or improve the existing back of house for the employees in the hotel industry so that it is more useful for employees and consequently more effective for employers. The impact on employees and employers has been explained in Chapter 2.3 and 2.4.

It is crucial to consider the following five principles defined by Stickdorn and Schneider (2012, 34):

- User-Centered (service through employee's eyes)
- Co-Creative (involvement of all stakeholders)
- Sequencing (service as a sequence of interrelated actions)
- Evidencing (make the intangible tangible)
- Holistic (see the environment as a whole)

These elements are the basis of various tools that help to design a service. A problem has been explored in this thesis and the following chapters will focus on the attractiveness of a well-designed back of house.

Service Design is used in this thesis to point out that it is worth to not always think traditional but rather creative nowadays. There are common traditional ways to solve a certain problem, but sometimes creative thinking is needed to conceptualise something new. Therefore, this thesis will implement a more creative way through the visualisations of an example of a well-designed break room, an employee journey map (Stickdorn & Schneider 2012, 158-159) and a final framework created by the researcher in the context of this study.

3   Methodology

The initiatory literature review has provided a comprehensive overview of the topic, but in order to answer the research question and the corresponding objectives, further research is needed. According to Malhotra (2010, 2-7) the market research process consists of six stages which can be used as a guideline to structure the framework of methodology.

Table 1. Market Research Process (Malhotra 2010)

Stage 1	Research Question & Problem Definition
Stage 2	Development of an Approach to the Problem
Stage 3	Research Design Formulation and Framework
Stage 4	Fieldwork or Data Collection
Stage 5	Data Preparation and Analysis
Stage 6	Report Preparation and Presentation

This chapter outlines and evaluates critically the research methodology used in this thesis by initially explaining the research problem and question before focusing on the methods as well as a comparison between qualitative and quantitative research. After having described the data analysis, the chapter will conclude with limitations, credibility (reliability and validity) and ethical issues.

3.1   Research Problem, Philosophy and Approach

In general, a research project has to assign a particular research problem which usually starts with a common idea or more specifically a gap that can be found in prior studies. The gap that has been identified in this research is that there is only a small amount of attention given to a well-designed break room for employees in the hospitality industry which might have substantial and positive influence on both employees and employers. The researcher focused on a holistic insight of room design as well as analysing the impact of such a room from the employee's and employer's point of view.

The literature review supports the fact that the pressure on employees working in the hotel industry will rise as well as that the problem for employers to attract and motivate the best talents will escalate. Consequently, an improvement of the conditions of the break room might be a successful way to tackle these problems. The topic of this thesis was chosen based on (1) a recommendation by the supervisors and (2) the researcher's personal interest. The researcher believes that this research will be beneficial to working life, is of high relevance, introduces something new and is well delimited to important facts by still examining it holistically.

Regarding the research philosophy, it needs to be distinguished between three different types: epistemology, axiology and ontology. Epistemology, contains the issues positivism, realism and interpretivism. The philosophy used in this thesis will be interpretivism. The topic of the thesis covers complex issues which, however, are interconnected, and hence, this type takes different perspectives into account, includes interpretations and involves the researcher alike. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2012, 130-140.) Saunders et al. (2012, 137) argue that interpretivism is used to put the researcher in the position of employees and employers in order to receive an empathetic stance. Positivism and realism are not applicable since this thesis implies outlooks, recommendations and feelings. The other two philosophies axiology (value study) and ontology (objectivism, subjectivism and pragmatism) are out of question because firstly, data will be collected from individuals and through observations and secondly, findings will not be based on the researchers' assumptions but rather on the interview results and interpretations. (Saunders et al. 2012, 130-140.)

The thesis is research-oriented because a qualitative study with interviews and observations have been completed. Saunders et al. (2012, 144-148) distinguish three research approaches: deductive, inductive and a combination of both, abductive. As this thesis can be categorised into interpretivism it is basically inductive but also uses the deductive way since a detailed literature review (theoretical background) is anteceded initially before collecting the data. However, the literature review provides the deductive background and is used as an outline for the interview and observation within the inductive empirical part which presents a new insight to evolve.

As there is only few research conducted about the influence of a well-designed back of house on employees and employers the induction is necessary to build up a new framework explaining the coherence and offers space for further research.

3.2 Research Question and Objectives

As just paved, a definition of the problem deals with the selection of a research question and the including research objectives which have to be determined not too narrowly but also not too broadly in order to reach a certain focus and appropriate scope for the thesis (Guthrie 2010, 6). The overall research question is formulated from brainstorming, reading literature and developing an idea (Guthrie 2010, 18):

What is the significance of a well-designed back of house and how does it influence employees and employers?

The corresponding research objectives are as follows:

- To investigate the overall situation and find out how a well-designed back of house is considered.
- To determine the aspects which form a well-designed back of house.
- To identify how and to what extent a well-designed back of house influences employees.
- To understand the impact of a well-designed back of house on employers.

3.3 Research Design

The research design describes a framework for conducting the research which means the collection and analysis of information to answer the general research question of this thesis (Malhotra 2010, 102; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2012, 158 – 160). This research belongs the category of an applied constructive research as the purpose is to solve a real-life problem with a potential for a practical implementation (Guthrie 2010, 5; O'Leary 2004, 134). It aims to answer the questions what, how and why.

Besides being constructive, the research also has a descriptive (literature review) and an explanatory aspect (results of primary research) alike which Saunders et al. (2012, 171-172) referred to as descripto-explanatory. Guthrie (2010, 5) mentions that "the researcher wants to find out how things work and wants the findings to be used or taken into account by the management or owner." The research is definitely not conclusive since the research area is still a new approach, but it generates new knowledge and ideas in the field.

3.4 Secondary Research

Secondary research is existing information that has already been gathered for another purpose than the following thesis (Saunders et al. 2012, 304, 307). According to Bulmer, Sturgis and Allum (2009, in Saunders et al. 2012, 304), this information "can be further analysed to provide additional or different knowledge, interpretations or conclusions." For this thesis the secondary data frames the literature review in the second chapter. Saunders et al. (2012, 317-319) identify several advantages and disadvantages of secondary data that need to be considered. Advantages of secondary data are time and money saving, of high quality, permanent, comparative and contextual whereas suitability to the core research, currentness of data and quality might be disadvantages. The data collected for this research is valuable and provides an overview of the research area. However, journal articles are the most frequent used secondary data in this thesis, retrieved from the online database provided by Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, due to the fact that there has not been much research before about the influence of a well-designed back of house on employees and employer in the hospitality industry. Chapter 3.9 deals with reliability and validity in more details.

The researcher has found out that there is theory available about the influence of the physical surrounding on people, but widely focused only on the guests and not on employees. The problems which employees and employers face in the hospitality industry are clearly illustrated in the literature whereas the solutions such as higher salaries, less overtime work, less stress and so forth are common, obvious and difficult to implement.

Therefore, the one-time investment in a well-designed back of house facilitates the situation and benefits both employees and employers in the future. Table 2 exhibits a conceptual image of the topic explained in the secondary research.

Table 2. Conceptual Image (Self)

Key topics	References
Back of House	

– Development
 	
   – Perception
 	
   – Human Resource Management
	Prifti 2013; Lewis & Mottier 2012; Lisman 2011; Davidson, McPhail & Barry 2010; Bjorkman 2007; Druce 2007; Varoglu & Eser 2006; Karl & Peluchette 2006; Earle 2003; Ford, McLaughlin & Newstorm 2003; Bitner 1992

Holistic Analysis	

– Function and Facilities
 	
   – Ambient Conditions
 	
   – Science of Colours
	Lewis & Mottier 2012; Hallam 2012; Lisman 2011; Have 2008; Dela Cruz 2007; Gutnick 2007; Herrington & Capella 1994; Wright 2013; Yildirim & Hidayetoglu 2011; Kaya & Epps 2004

Impact on Employees	

– Work Climate
 	
   – Well-Being
 	
   – Work Attitude
	Lewis & Mottier 2012; Jayne 2005; Yerkes 2003; Ford, McLaughlin & Newstorm 2003; Karl & Peluchette 2006

Impact on Employers	

– Use of Space
 	
   – Costs/Investment
 	
   – Benefits
	Enz 2001; Lewis & Mottier 2012; Davidson, McPhail & Barry 2010; Kirsh 1995; Mooradian 1999; Gutnick 2007; Hänssler 2008; Owler, Morrison & Plester 2010; Lisman 2011; Jayne 2005; Druce 2007

3.5   Primary Research

Primary research is data that will be collected first-hand by the researcher to solve the above mentioned problem through observations, interviews, questionnaires to only mention a few (Saunders et al. 2012, 678). The right choice of an appropriate method is important. The research in this thesis implements a methodology by the use of qualitative primary techniques in forms of interviews and observations in order to achieve better and personalized results and opinions and a more extensive insight into the mood, views and feelings of the employees and employers (Stake 2010, 11, 37). For this study, this technique is a good approach to receive the primary data that help frame an answer to the research question and the corresponding research objectives.

The following section, qualitative versus quantitative, will briefly compare both types and define the chosen methods used in this research in more details.

3.5.1   Qualitative vs. Quantitative

Qualitative and quantitative researches are two different types of primary data collection which differ in their approach. Quantitative research as one of the major research approaches is data in form of numbers with variations, averages and differences (Saunders et al. 2012, 161-162; Stake 2010, 11; McQueen & Knussen 2006, 331). This approach is frequently in forms of questionnaires or surveys with a set of close ended questions. The range of respondents is by far broader than the sample of a qualitative study which favours the way for generalisation and an easy comparison and analysis.

Qualitative research on the other side is data in words and not numbers (Saunders et al. 2012, 161, 163; Guthrie 2010, 157; O'Leary 2004, 11). It contains for example interviews, observation or focus groups (McQueen & Knussen 2006, 335). Stake (2010, 11, 37) states that a qualitative research is appropriate for exploring feelings, personal experiences and perceptions as well as understanding human values of the interviewees. According to McQueen and Knussen (2006, 335) it enables the interviewees to express the discrepancies in their feelings, cognitions and behaviours.

Therefore, a qualitative study can be categorised into an interpretive study of a certain problem addressing an area that is still unclear or less ascertained (Stake 2010, 36; McQueen & Knussen 2006, 335).

A qualitative study in this thesis was chosen because the feelings, perceptions, attitudes and behaviours of employees and employers in the hospitality industry are important and the researcher tried to comprehend the correlation between the mentioned answer (result) and the corresponding reaction. In other words, it is about what employees and employers say in their own words by simultaneously getting an insight into their feeling and experience. A qualitative study will certainly provide a deeper insight into the topic as it also expects the involvement of the researcher (Saunders et al 2012, 163; McQueen & Knussen 2006, 331-332) who is able to direct an interview and receive more valuable results to answer the research question. This substantiates the interpretive philosophy described previously. Guthrie (2010, 157) determines the advantage of a qualitative study as the following: "In researching people's subjective perceptions, we build up scientific knowledge about their personal knowledge by objectifying their perceptions systematically."

It is important to note that with a qualitative study there is only a small sample because conducting interviews is time consuming (Guthrie 2010, 118; McQueen & Knussen 2006, 336) and not possible to analyse with a computer programme. A sample is a smaller part of the population. The type of sampling in this thesis is non-probability or non-random which results from the research question, objectives and strategy. The research is a purposive sample interviewing participants with more or less common characteristics. (Saunders et al. 2012, 260-261, 284, 287; McQueen & Knussen 2006, 94-95.) Thus, the researcher has more tolerance in discussing the topic beyond the prepared questions generating different insights for the thesis as well as new ideas for further research (Guthrie 2010, 118). Additionally, the impact on employees (work climate, well-being and work attitude) and employers (benefits) is hard to measure in numbers and therefore, interviews are more meaningful than for instance a questionnaire.

3.6 Semi-Structured Interviews

For this thesis, the planned primary qualitative research was chosen in forms of semi-structured interviews, a set of prepared questions which can be used to a broader or lesser extent (Saunders et al. 2012, 374; McQueen & Knussen 2006, 352-353). These questions can be answered in order with the addition to be flexible in pursuing related and interesting topics or ideas (O'Leary 2004, 164). The advantages of personal interviews are that the focus can be put on feelings, perceptions, attitudes and impressions. With a one-on-one interview also referred to as face to face or Skype interview the researcher can manage the interview process and give the interviewee the chance to express his or her thoughts freely (O'Leary 2004, 164).

In total, ten interviews between August 5 and August 25, 2014, were conducted; five with experienced employees working in the hospitality industry as well as five interviews with HR managers, General Managers and owner to guarantee as most comprehensive results as possible. Since the aim was to get a more international overview of the situation at the back of house, the researcher conducted interviews in different countries with different people who worked in different places. All interviews were conducted in four and five star hotels. The interviewees (employees and managers) were chosen based on the researcher's network and relationship within the industry and appointments were made within the above mentioned time frame. It was important that the experience of working in different hotels in different countries was given as well as a certain influence of a manager or owner to be able to possibly implement a well-designed back of house in their hotels.

The interview protocol for the management and the employees were subdivided into seven parts based on the literature review's layout: personal profile, general questions, perception of the break room, dimensions of a well-designed break room, impact on employees, impact on employers and additional comments. Among these parts distinct questions which slightly differ from management and employees were asked to answer the research question and objectives. (See Attachment on page 98-106) The interviews were conducted in both German and English which made it more comfortable and, depending on the mother tongue, easier for the interviewee to express feelings and emotions.

Both interview protocols were pilot tested with an experienced manager and employee from the industry. It is essential to pilot test an interview in order to minimize misunderstandings and difficulties in answering the questions as well as to assess the questions on validity, reliability and suitability to answer the research question and the corresponding research objectives accordingly (Saunders et al. 2012, 451-452). After the pilot testing minimal changes were done by rephrasing and adding some questions and by following a psychological way asking general questions and ending each part asking about the implementation of a well-designed back of house. This way was chosen to let the interviewee think about how important a designed break room might be.

3.6.1 Observation

Observation is a wide-ranging method to collect primary data. However, within this thesis, observation has been an addition to the interviews (Saunders et al. 2012, 341). O'Leary (2004, 170) defines observation as "a systematic method of data collection that relies on the researchers ability to gather data through his or her senses." In the words of Saunders et al. (2012, 345, 348) the observation best suited for this research is observer-as-participant/descriptive observation or non-participant observation as per Guthrie (2010, 109, 113). The researcher is not an active member of a group even if the identity is revealed. The researcher's attention was put on observing activities, situations, behaviours, emotions and surroundings with a plus on informal and unstructured conversations with employees or employers. The idea behind observation is to study the current situation of the back of house in hotels and also the behaviour and perception of employees. Taking notes, drawing and taking pictures by the researcher have clarified the topic and gave him a better understanding of how to solve the problem. Since the researcher also wanted to conduct a holistic analysis of the employees, the aspects smelling, hearing, feeling, tasting and seeing also played a vital role to compare the results of the interviews with the own observation.

In total, four observations betweeen August 5 and August 25, 2014, were undertaken in Germany, Spain, Greece and the Caribbean. The observation protocol reflects the structure of the holistic analysis in Chapter 2.2 to guarantee a clear comparison between the literature review and the findings within the empirical part. This protocol can be found in the attachment on page 107-109.

The observed hotels came about networking and relationship with previous workplaces/managers as well as about spontaneous visits during vacations and business trips. Furthermore, one of the interviewed managers offered the researcher the chance to observe the back of house after the interview to get a picture of the conditions by himself.

3.7 Data Analysis

The analysis of qualitative data requires special attention because it has complex, multiple and unclear meanings which have to be explored, analysed, clarified and grouped together regarding common patterns and categories to answer the research objectives and consequently the overall research question. These topics were based on the literature review achieving an explicit comparability between the literature review and the empirical part. (Saunders et al. 2012, 546, 550, 557, 563.) All information was stored accordingly with a digital voice recorder and normal spreadsheets which were important for the observation process. This information was transcribed in detail by identifying what has been said and in which way (tone) and presented through a contextual description and analytical findings. (Saunders et al. 2012, 550, 563-564.)

Certainly, coding was implemented as well as the assurance to treat all provided information confidentially by indicating no names neither from the interviewees nor from the observed back of houses of the hotels. The coding of each interview within this thesis is as follows:

Table 3. Interview Coding

Management		Employee	
General Manager 1	M1	Employee 1	E1
General Manager 2	M2	Employee 2	E2
HR Manager 3	M3	Employee 3	E3
HR Manager 4	M4	Employee 4	E4
Owner 5	M5	Employee 5	E5

Another criteria of choosing the interviewees were based on different genders, ages, positions and experiences because all these attributes lead to a different insight into the topic; men and women in different ages, in different positions as well as with more or less experience in the hotel industry will provide the researcher with a broader range of results.

Table 4. Observation Coding

Hotels	
Hotel 1	H1
Hotel 2	H2
Hotel 3	H3
Hotel 4	H4

There was one hotel the researcher received the permission to use within this thesis. This hotel is the Fairmont Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten Hamburg, sometimes referred to as Hotel 3 (H3).

3.8 Limitations and Critique

Within this thesis, there are also some limitations. The research was solely based on a qualitative research by conducting interviews and observations which limits the amount of samples. However, since the aim of the research was to explore the influence of a well-desigend back of house on employees and employers, their feelings and emotions are in the foreground and therefore, a quantitative study would not have been representative. The approach of a well-designed break room is still relatively new and not much research has been conducted yet. This thesis should be a starting point for further research in the hospitality industry aiming for a larger sample.

In total, only ten interviews and four observations were undertaken because more would have go beyond the scope of the thesis. Another critique might be that some interviews were conducted through Skype which slightly limits the researcher's ability to clearly identify feelings, attitudes and reactions of the interviewees.

3.9 Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are two issues that need to be assured within a research. Reliability refers to consistency of the findings in order to repeat the primary research generating similar results, observations or drawing simliar conclusions. However, Saunders et al. (2012, 382) state that findings are not necessarily intended to be repeatable because it depends on the conducted research. Since the topic of this thesis is a relatively new approach in the hospitality industry, the research provides an abductive way providing space for further research. Moreover, all questions are based on the literature review and the semi-structured interviews were pilot tested with experienced employees and employers in the hospitality industry as well as recorded by a digital voice recorder and taking notes to ensure reliable results. (Saunders et al. 2012, 192, 680; McQueen & Knussen 2006, 142.) The sample represents the stakeholders who are able to implement a well-designed back of house and who benefit from it. Different biases also occur when doing qualitative research. The researcher avoided an interviewee bias by conducting the interviews in a private room to talk about the topic without any constraints. As the researcher interpreted the results from the interview in the way he understood the response, a research error might appear due to a false interpretation. (Saunders et al. 2012, 192.) This bias was evaded, on the one hand, through the pilot test to assure that the questions are formulated and understood clearly and, on the other hand, through the fact that ambiguities of the answers were clarified during the interview.

Validity is the coherence between the questions and the real outcome or more precisely the correctness of how exactly the methods or questions capture what they should capture (Saunders et al. 2012, 684Guthrie 2010, 10; McQueen & Knussen 2006, 143). This thesis comprise a detailed literature review and the questions of the interview and categories of the observation are based on the literature review, research question and the research objectives. The methods interviews and observation were clearly justified (Guthrie 2010, 11) and thus, validity is ensured.

3.10 Ethical Issues

Ethical issues and the access to receive data are important elements within the process of a thesis. Since the data provided for this thesis come from interviews and observations, Saunders et al. (2012, 226-227) define ethical issues as an appropriate behaviour towards the interviewed persons and those included in the research by protecting their rights. The research conforms to the Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences guidelines for a Bachelor thesis and takes the ethical guidelines from the National Advisory Board on Research Ethics at the Finnish Academy into account. Previous research has been treated ethically by quoting all information truthfully as well as accurately in order to avoid plagiarism.

The interviews and access of the researcher to observe the back of house has been on a voluntary basis indicating the respect of the human subjects and the hotels. The researcher has complied a consent form including the details and purpose of the research, the permission, the respect to withdraw at any time, a time frame of the interview and the fact that no information of names will be shared with third parties (See attachment 3 on page 110-111) apart from the exception mentioned above. This consent form has been signed by both parties. The interviewees have received the questions early in advance and the researcher offered the possibility to provide the findings of the thesis to the interviewees to not only get feedback but also to cater to a cooperation in the future. All information received from the interviews and observation has been treated honestly, confidentially and anonymously during the data collection as well as the analysis and reporting process (Saunders et al. 2012, 223, 238-241, 245; Guthrie 2010, 15-21; McQueen & Knussen 2006, 350-351.)

4 Research Findings

This chapter will present the research findings received from the four observations and the ten semi-structured interviews conducted with General Managers, Human Resource Managers and a hotel owner as well as with employees. First, there will be a brief profile description of all interviewees to highlight their background and position in the hotel industry. Second, an overview of the interviewees' answers and observations will be explained by following the structure of the particular protocol and matching common themes and patterns from all answers together.

No names will be mentioned because it was promised that all information will be kept anonymously and an appropriate consent form has been signed for both observations and interviews. However, there will be one hotel indicated within the findings, analysis and conclusion chapter which was authorised by a manager of the hotel. This hotel is the Fairmont Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten Hamburg (H3).

4.1 Personal Profile of Interviewees

The personal profile of each interviewee is important for the background of this thesis because only certain employees and managers were selected to participate in the interviews to ensure valid and reliable results so that the industry can benefit from the research. Important criteria were a good mix between men and women, a sound experience of working for different hotels in different countries as well as the position.

Employee 1 (E1)
E1 is female, 22 years old and she has already worked for three different hotels, both privately owned and part of a bigger hotel chain, from 60 to 340 rooms. The positions she was employed at were Front office attendant, Food & Beverage attendant and Housekeeping attendant. After having completed an apprenticeship in the industry she attended a hotel school where she gained another year experience through various internships.

Employee 2 (E2)

This female interviewee is 26 years old and studied tourism management and business administration. Her experience adds up to five hotels, three in Germany and two in Spain with different room and apartment availabilities from 30 up to 165. Her area of operations was Restaurant Service, Marketing and Guest Relations.

Employee 3 (E3)

E3 is female and 26 years old. With working experience in four different hotels in Germany, Greece and the Caribbean, E3 gained already experience in several departments from Front Office, Food & Beverage, Housekeeping, Accounting and Human Resources.

Employee 4 (E4)

E4 is male, 25 years old and he started working in the hotel industry in Australia after high school. During his bachelor studies he broadened his knowledge through part-time jobs and internships in Germany and Spain. The hotels he worked for belonged to renowned hotel chains in the world. At the moment he completes his Master Degree in Human Resources Management.

Employee 5 (E5)

E5 is the most experienced interviewee among all five. He is 27 years old and completed from 2008 until 2011 a three years apprenticeship getting an insight into all hotels' departments. He also attended a hotel school as a top up student to finalize his studies with the Bachelor Degree. Right now he is employed as an Event Coordinator in a five star luxury hotel.

Manager 1 (M1)

M1 is male and 30 years old. He has ten years experience working in the hotel industry, six years of them in a management position. He has mostly worked for small hotels in more remote locations such as Central America and Africa where the focus was on the hotel day and night. At the moment he is the General Manager of a smaller property with almost 80 employees.

Manager 2 (M2)

M2 is a female General Manager of a property in the Caribbean. She is 42 years old and worked for smaller and bigger sized hotels on the mainland and private islands around the world.

Manager 3 (M3)

M3 is female and she started her career with a three year apprenticeship in a five star hotel in Germany, followed by a year of working in Australia, New Zealand and Fiji. In 2013 she completed a three years studies in the Netherlands. During her studies she went to Bangkok and Bali and worked as a Housekeeping Management Trainee in Germany before she joined the Fairmont Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten in Hamburg as a Human Resource Coordinator.

Manager 4 (M4)

M4 is female, 26 years old and is employed as a Human Resource Manager as well as Assistant Accounting Manager. She passed through several departments (Front Office, Housekeeping, Food & Beverage, Human Resource and Accounting) in the hotel industry and settled in as a HR Manager in a medium sized hotel where the HR department is still quite new.

Manager 5 (M5)

M5 is a male owner of a five star hotel in his fourties. He has managed the hotel already for 12 years and took over the hotel from his family.

4.2 General Facts relating to the Back of House

When asking the interviewees what they associate with the term "Dark Side" all had a common opinion that it is something negative, mysterious, hidden and normally not visible to the public. E2 went further and talked about "darkness, black, sorrow and sadness" whereas E5 mentioned it as a place where you do not like to go since it creates a feeling of fear and uncomfortability. A clear statement was done by M2 indicating that the dark side is the back house in any given hotel even though the back of house should actually be referred to as the heart of house in the hotel industry.

M3 was aware of the fact that this place is normally invisible to the guests, but she was proud to say without any constraints that the back of house area is a popular place to show when doing site inspections at the hotel; "if you are proud of a place you have, you have to present it to the public." She clarified that the back of house is a nice and private place which is popular to use for events of a certain size.

With respect to the imagination of what can be defined as a well-designed break room, all interviewees had similar answers. First of all, it has to be a place mostly used by the employees where they have easy and quick access to at all times and have a distance to the workplace. In the words of M2, such a room has to be "appropriate to staff needs and offer an appropriate size to accommodate the maximum number of potential staff at a given time." Moreover, the rooms need to be inviting and comfortable regarding different facilities such as suitable lounge areas, clean equipment, refreshments and the possibility to have access to games, books and/or newspapers. E3 summarised it as a room that is modern and functional. The main purpose of a well-designed break room according to the interviewees was the chance for employees to come down, relax, recharge and enjoy spending time.

The opinions differed concerning the question if a break room is offered for the employees. A break room was offered at the hotels E1 and E3 worked for whereas E2, E4 and E5 first noted that they also had a break room, but then considered it more just as a break room-cafeteria mix to get a quick lunch and dinner and not to take a break. Four out of five managers had the same difficulties whether to consider a cafeteria with shaking tables and white plastic chairs as a break room or not. While thinking about the right answer to this question the researcher found out that the managers struggled and thought about the fact that they actually do not have a room for employees where they can go and sit down during their break. All managers stressed that a break room is important nowadays for the employees because it is a well-known certainty in the hotel industry that every single employee accomplishes a lot on a daily basis. Therefore, the employees need a space to have a few minutes for themselves. M2 explained that "it is important for a staff member to be able to take any break completely away from their working environment, in a decent surrounding in order to truly benefit from the break."

This has been supported by M3 who states that a break room is a room where "they [the employees] can behave normally and they do not need to show their smile all the time." On the other side, all interviewed employees also emphasised the importance of a well-designed break room in today's world of working in the hospitality industry. The reasons behind this concordant answer were the unsocial long working hours, the stress and pressure through constant high expectations by the employers as well as the habit to schedule the employees to work split shift. E5 worried that "work can take over your life." Employees and managers saw the advantage of a break room in terms of employee's well-being to calm down and relax in order to be more productive, motivated and happier when going back to work.

4.3   Perception of the Break Room

When it comes to the perception of the break rooms at hotels, the researcher recognized that almost all employees and managers shared a common view. In general, the perception was poor, disappointing and run down due to the fact that there has not much money invested over many years. E2 tended to say that the room is "just kind of requirement." M3 experienced several break rooms in her life, but rather alluded them to "simple and not comfortable." The hotels she has worked for only offered a place to sit down and nothing else where eating and smoking area were not separated from each other. E5 was waiting for a nice room for employees because he knew them as "very dirty rooms with uncomfortable furniture if there is any."

Important to note is that E4 was not able to describe the conditions of any break room since he never perceived one at all hotels he has worked for. Accordingly, he generalised his experience as "I do not know how many nice and appealing break rooms there are in the hotel industry, but definitely not a lot because otherwise I would have heard about it and it would be a topic many more talk about as for example at Google." Also only M2 and E1 believed that most break rooms are about adequate, but with the addition that they only used these rooms occasionally.

Talking about the conditions and satisfaction of the current break rooms, two out of five employees did not have one at the hotel. Interesting was the reaction and quick answer that there is none since it created disappointment and sadness. The place they spent their break is at the backyard or their department area. E3 and E5 described the actual conditions as not the best with wobbly tables and white plastic chairs and very old, backache creating sofas. "I am not really satisfied because if I am, I would spend more time in that room, exactly my half an hour break time" was the reaction of E5 when it came to the question of satisfaction. The reaction of E3 regarding the satisfaction was "one of the housekeeping ladies cleans the room during her own break once a week." On the other hand, E1 seemed to be happy with the break room if you do not have to spend a very long time in there. It had furniture from previous rooms, TV and a nice designed lounge area with a separate smoking room. The room created a "feeling of community because we call it 'our area'." However, there was an ambiguity in E1 statement because there is a fundamental difference between spending a few minutes in the room as housing is close by to take a break or spending a longer time since housing is too far to go home in case they have to go back to work. Four managers (M1, M2, M4, M5) admitted that the break rooms need some renovation and improvement starting from scratch with new design through colour effects and new furniture and facilities.

In addition, they all realised that employees are not satisfied with the conditions because M1 stated that "they [the employees] wish they had a real one [break room]" whereas M4 indicated that "most employees do not use it. Almost all employees take their break outside for example at the maintenance building." Solely M3 talked about an unique break room with up-to-date conditions at the Fairmont Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten. It was the first place where she perceived what is meant by a well-designed break room. Not surprisingly, she assessed the overall satisfaction of the employees with the break room as excellent since it offers a great variety for everyone's taste. M3 emphasised that especially employees who have already worked at other hotels appreciate the break room because they are entirely aware of the conditions at other places.

Comparing similarities and differences between the front of house and back of house, employees recognised two totally diverse areas with no similarities and big differences. E1 exposed that "the front of house and break room do not have anything in common." They saw the front of house as a perfect, neat and up-to-date area because it is the place where the guests spend their time and on the opposite the back of house as very simple and always still good enough for the employees. It might be interesting to note that E4 started questioning himself by asking "usually the back of house always lacks quality. The question is: Do the hotels really care about the conditions of the room? Are they investing in their employees?" E5 had the opinion that the back of house is in a bad state and totally neglected so that it is hard to feel comfortable since "the place looked like it will fall on your head every second."

These impressions by the employees can be justified as four managers (M1, M2, M4, M5) conceded that no money was spent in the back of house over the last years. Worth noting is that M1 and M2 had never been or only once at the break room at their hotel whereas M3 and M4 are there every day or sometimes twice. M4 only took a quick lunch there because she did not feel comfortable in the room, but M3 loved to spend time there. The reason was that the hotel M3 works for is the only one among the five that invested in a well-designed back of house. She pointed out that it was important for the General Manager of the Fairmont Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten to invest in the back of house to follow the mission "Turning Moments into Memories" not only for the guests, but also for the employees. Consequently, money was invested in 2012 and 2013 in the cafeteria, break room, restrooms, smoking room, corridors and kitchen area and for 2015 it is planned to renovate the changing rooms and showers.

All interviewed employees would like to see an improvement through the management because they think it will help to boost the overall motivation and efficiency and contributes to the employee's happiness. E5 accented that "the management are the people who mostly never come to that area. It would be nice to see some of them asking us how we feel about this place."

4.4 Dimensions of a Break Room

Findings of the dimensions of the break room are not surprising because the facilities (furniture and equipment) most employees and managers experienced are normal, cheap and uncomfortable tables and chairs. E3 and M4 added dirty and old sofas as well as partly working fridges, microwaves, ovens and sinks. E5 also had an automat with snacks and soft drinks. The facilities offered at the hotel of M3 are endless with two counters for salad buffet, hot meals and fruits as well as juices, soft drinks and coffee, a comfortable lounge area, small and bigger tables with cushioned chairs and seats, two TVs, one computer, pictures of employees on the walls, smoker's room, library, live camera as there are no windows and many more.

Concerning the ambient conditions the researcher found out that lightning, temperature and odour were not paid much attention. E5 complained about very bright standard neon lightning that "flashed everybody entering the room." E2 mentioned that there was no natural light since there were no windows which created a depressed atmosphere. E1 and E3 had lightning which was adapted to the spatial circumstances as well as windows in their break room contributing to a natural light and the possibility to get fresh air whenever needed. E5 had air condition instead of windows due to the fact that the break room was located in the basement of the hotel.

Everybody was satisfied with the temperature, but the problem for most employees was the odour. E3 described it as a "bad odour from the food", E5 as "so and so, after a clean-up it smelled nice, but after a few days a mildewed scent came up" and E2 talked about "an indefinable scent." It might be neglected or ignored by many, but the ambient conditions do affect the atmosphere in a room according to all interviewed employees. They shared the opinion that the overall perception of a room influences the atmosphere as people perceive everything together and accordingly, it affects a person's mood. E1, E3 and E5 summarise: Do you enter the most beautiful room when it smells odd? – No. Do you enter it when you are freezing or sweating? – Probably not. Do you enter it when it is too dark or too bright? – Probably not.

All managers followed the notions of the employees that the ambient conditions lightning, temperature and odour affect the atmosphere in a room. However, only M3 took all three elements into consideration. Attention was paid to a comfortable lightning whose brightness can be regulated, ventilation system that could regulate the temperature and odour in the room. M4 on the other hand would consider the ambient conditions if she had the chance to renovate the break room.

Regarding music, all managers answered that no music is offered at places where staff takes a break. M3 justified the decision to guarantee a good rest and because conversations in a room will also always lead to a certain acoustic level. M1 and M2 did not offer music because dependent on the location it might disturb the guests and everyone has a different taste of music style. M4 talked about the general phenomenon today that most employees will use and play with their smartphones during the break. Therefore, a separate music area with a private selection is more favoured by both employees and managers.

Interestingly, nobody of the employees ever thought about the combination of colours in the break room and their influence on them. Solely M4 and M5 could explain the reason because M5 stated that "I might have paid attention, but if I did, it was subconsciously. You have a first impression entering a room and you see the whole picture." This was also agreed by M4 who said "not focusing on a specific colour, but the general impression or the mix is important." However, when asking for their favourite colour to relax the best a great variety was named for instance natural colours such as green, light wooden brown, blue, but also warm colours such as orange and red. From the manager's perspective the answers were mixed. While M1 had never thought about the colour effect, M2 understood that colours can have an influence. She preferred calm muted colours since they work best to provide a calm respite for a break time. M4 was aware of favoured colours, but she would rather use colours that match with the logo of the hotel and the surrounding. M3 stressed that the employees took very much part in the design of the break room, especially the ones who had a good feeling of right colour combinations, decoration and the needed facilities.

To better visualize the imagination of a well-designed break room, the researcher created two examples of how such a room could look like taking the aspects of the holistic analysis into account. Obviously, there are so many different ways of designing a room, but the two pictures were additives so that the interviewees were able to place themselves into this room in their imagination to express their opinions and feelings (See attachment 4 on page 112).

On the whole, the feedback and reactions by all interviewees were positive. The employees were impressed by the rooms because they are open, very modern, innovative and inviting to spend a break and relax. It has a diversity of activities which is good depending on the daily mood. E3 stated that with the offer of lounge areas, reading materials, music station, pool table or a TV "you basically please everybody." E2 "would love to spend time in these rooms; it seems to be a perfect room every employee will be dreaming of." E1 appeared to be a bit sceptical even though she liked the room. To her mind the breaks, then, have to be longer than half an hour. When asking the others, only E5 was not sure if most employees spend too much time in there. M2 struggled as well because her "feeling as an employer is that employees may never go back to work as it can potentially be a distraction even though the rooms look amazing!!" The sole complaint by M1, M4 and M5 was the game console or TV which might take up too much time. However, E3 and E4 added that employees should be old enough to not extend their break time just to be longer in these rooms and play or watch TV, but rather respect it and see it as a benefit offered by the employers to appreciate the employee's work. Another essential idea provided E5 indicating that "these rooms can also be used to get together for common projects or meetings to think about new ideas for the hotel."

All five interviewed managers have already thought about the implementation of a well-designed break room with entertaining and relaxing facilities, but only at one place it was implemented. Although all interviewed employees would welcome a well-designed break room none of their hotels offered a room that pleased everyone. An interesting response was given by E2 whether she would welcome such a room: "As an employee – yes. As a manager – no" because of not being controlled during the break. From her perspective, she believes that a break room is only necessary for employees.

It can be said that all interviewees are in favour of a well-designed break room with the facilities that are needed and preferred by everybody. E4 suggested doing an internal survey and looking at best practices outside the hotel industry to find out what employees would like to have and then trying to implement as much as possible so that they develop confidence and appreciation at the place they work.

4.5   Observations

This section will focus on the results conducted from the observations which serve as an addition to the interviews particularly for the holistic analysis, the perception and dimensions of a well-designed back of house. The results will follow the structure of the observation protocol.

Hotel 1 (H1)

H1 was a five star hotel in Spain. The first impression and feeling of the conditions of the offered break room at this hotel was a grey and depressing room combined with coldness and mournfulness. The conditions seemed to be dull, but the room had the potential to change despite the small square size, the deep ceiling and the fixed heating station for the food. Besides the heating station, the other furniture and equipment at this room were three long and grey banquet tables with grey chairs, a snack and soft drink automat as well as a coffee machine. The temperature was cool and freezing which created an uncomfortable atmosphere. The odour was an acute feeling in the nose including a cold, mildewed and muggy combined with food scent.

A general, uniform and high intensity lightning which was very bright because of a neon bulb was used in this room. In addition, the lightning was uncomfortable, unnatural, unpleasant, public and tense as we know it from a hospital corridor. The noise level was low in the room because on the one hand, the room was separated from noisy areas and on the other hand, it was dimmed well. The only noises to hear were people talking and eating as there was no music played. Colours were not given any attention. White walls, grey tables and chairs were the dominant colours in the room.

The employees adapted to the room being kind of depressed and not happy and in a hurry to eat and go back to work instead of staying their whole break in the room. On the opposite side of the break room, the researcher observed a shower and changing room for men and women which looked more modern and clean with a Mediterranean touch. Additionally, little shower kits and towels alike were offered for men and women. However, at a deeper glance these rooms revealed little faults that need renovation.

Hotel 2 (H2)

The second observed break room at H2 was in Greece, a five star Leading Hotel. The first impression when entering the break room was mysterious and dark because it was hidden behind a broken stone wall, piles and a lot of plants. It seemed to be not only a break room for employees, but also a storage place for very old furniture. The size of the room was very small both inside and outside. Even though the place was narrow, the space used to store old facilities was bigger than the one for the employees who only had two small tables and white plastic chairs. In the corner, there was a snack and soft drink automat to pay which was almost completely empty. Inside there was a small room that looked like a previously dish washing area. Since the temperature only depends on the weather conditions most employees were outside. Nevertheless, the open space outside contributed to a constant fresh air flow whereas inside a muggy, smoky scent of mildew and cigarettes dominated.

There was a uniform lighting outside over the tables which was very bright and intense and probably created an uncomfortable atmosphere in the evening. Inside there was a single light bulb available providing light sporadically. The noise level was low due to the fact that the room was isolated from the daily working place and downstairs in the basement. Music was not played in any of the rooms as well as colours were not given any attention since the walls looked like concrete walls. Not many employees were seen during lunch time except for some having a smoke. The entire room was a very neglected area for a Leading Hotel even though it had a perfect size to accommodate enough employees at the same time. It seemed that some employees avoid this area and some being there only occasionally.

<u>Hotel 3 (H3)</u>

H3 was a Grand and Leading Hotel in Hamburg, Germany. The researcher got the permission to mention the hotel's name because they explained that they have nothing to hide from the public. It is the already above mentioned hotel, the Fairmont Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten, the one where the researcher also conducted an interview. The researcher was overwhelmed, fascinated and impressed by the entire break room the hotel offered for the employees. It was very modern and well-designed with a lot of little details. Happiness and relaxation immediately appeared together with a refreshing and energetic feeling. The whole space was well used and added up to three rooms separated from each other through piles, open walls and doors: a dining room, a lounge area and a smoking room. Sofa chairs, bright wooden tables with cushioned chairs, stylish lamps, a buffet with a cold and hot station, coffee machine, soft drinks, bread station, fireplace, TVs, modernised bathrooms and so forth are the facilities that created a glamorous atmosphere of working in the hotel industry.

The rooms had a comfortable temperature and odour through the natural wooden furniture and the installed ventilation system. The room had non-uniform lighting which made the room bright, but through the natural colours the light were not given any big attention. The only noise to hear were people eating and talking, but still a place to relax was easy to find. No music was played in this room on purpose as clarified above to guarantee a good rest and because conversations in a room will always lead to a certain acoustic level. The dominant colours in the dining room and fireplace lounge were natural ones such as light to dark browns and green through plants. Red, yellow and green were the colours used in the other lounge area. The bathroom colours at the ladies had an elegant touch of purple whereas the men had a brown and yellow touch.

All employees seemed to be very happy coming into the room and being able to serve themselves from the offer of fresh salads, soups, hot dishes and coffee, water, juices or soft drinks. The employees used all places to read, to listen to music, to be online or to talk to others.

This was a break room par excellence. It can be another leading example for others in the hotel industry. Obviously, it seemed to be cost-intensive and therefore, the researcher was told that it was and that it is still a step by step process to change the back of house. Having a break room like this seemed to be a dream of every employee working in the industry. Asking several employees about the conditions before, common answers were given that it has turned completely. The employees appreciated the room and were satisfied with the offer. Interesting to note is that one employee mentioned that "even the people who said they actually do not need a fancy break room, are spending most of the break time there to refresh." The pictures in the attachment (page 113-114) will illustrate the conditions at the Fairmont Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten in more detail.

Hotel 4 (H4)

The last hotel, H4, was a small hotel in the Caribbean, however, with more than 70 employees. The conditions at the break room were poor and limited and the white in white colour created a cold, open and unpleasant atmosphere. The space itself was open with a high ceiling overlooking an old sugar plantation and the sea. There was a separated shower and changing room not being used for years. The facilities were old and simple from a broken wooden table with white plastic chairs, uncomfortable blue sofas, a rusty fridge, oven and microwave and an old shower/changing room. There was a comfortable and warm temperature since the weather is similar all year around in the Caribbean and the open space offered constant fresh air. One light bulb in the middle of the room offered light for the whole place in the evening. The noise level was low even though you could hardly hear machines underneath the room. At the last observed hotel there was no music played as well. The dominant colour in the room was white except for two light blue-green sofas. The employees did not seem to be happy because while sitting there was a constant moving which might be a sign of inconvenience of the sofas and chairs. They looked bored and tired.

The attached pictures (page 115-116) will visualize the described conditions in the break room in more details to see how the room for employees looked like.

4.6   Impact on Employees

When asking the interviewed employees how they feel working in the hospitality industry, they all agreed that it is a unique job because of the possibilities to work in various departments, the chance to go abroad and experience different cultures, to work in an international team or to have great career opportunities. However, they also mentioned the negative aspects which made up a big part. "It is a very stressful environment with unsocial working hours. There is no time to relax and you have to be available all the time" said E3. E4 and E5 were the same opinion and highlighted the problems of not having a pleasant work-life balance and pressure every day. Concerning their role at the hotel, all of the employees saw themselves and the others as an important representative of the hotel. E2 talked about "as important as every other employee. Everyone works together to make the guests happy." They all stated that the team spirit is an elementary point because in case someone is not doing the job properly it could have a huge impact on guests satisfaction and the hotel's image.

From the manager's point of view the employees are important and valuable assets. M2 said that "employees are ambassadors for your hotel. They are the vital link between a guest and management. Employees can also be the main reason that a guest will return." A similar opinion had M3 that the employees are the most significant capital because "without them the hotel would not be the one it is today. The guests are happy because our employees are happy and satisfied as well." M1 and M5 summarised it as "staff are key and happy staff means happy guests." M3 added that because of the importance of the employees they started to build a well-designed break room to relax. However, when talking about which benefits the managers offer their employees only M3 was able to mention the nice back of house. The others (M1, M2, M4 and M5) only stated for instance the discounts on food and beverage, a night staff bus or loans. The same picture reflected the answers of the employees. E1 had no benefits except for food coupons whereas E3, E4 and E5 were offered for example family and friend rates, accommodation, food and beverage or free use of sport activities. Interestingly, E2 indicated the normal payment as a benefit with the explanation that during her internships she considered it as a benefit.

Besides that, E5 brought up an essential point that especially the use of sport activities was only allowed at a certain time when basically no one had time to use it.

Positively to note is that all employees have fun working in the hospitality industry despite all the negative aspects already mentioned above. It is the diversity, guest contact, cultural experience and team spirit that most employees enjoy while working in the industry. Nevertheless, to be even more motivated all employees stressed to get more appreciation from their managers for their work. Appreciation and the feeling to be valued are points that all employees are missing. Asking them more specifically which kinds of appreciation are desired, they directly said any kinds of appreciation. The managers on the other side were not all sure if the employees have a lot of fun during work because M1, M2, M4 and M5 shortly hesitate and their answers started with "I think" or "I believe" that they love interacting with guests and team members. Also most managers were not sure about which needs and wants their employees have. Solely M3 was sure that all employees have fun at work and if not they will always find ways to change it. It was the view of all managers that fun is a fundamental aspect which contributes to an open working atmosphere and builds up a good team spirit. Basically everyone tried to do different activities to different occasions over the year.

All managers wanted to create a safe, pleasant, open and friendly atmosphere for the staff to be productive and to enjoy coming to work every day. The way they were doing it was with simple benefits and activities as mentioned above. However, M1, M2 and M4 pointed out that it is not always easy to create such an environment with a good work climate, work attitude and well-being of the employees, mostly because of gossip, conflicts between and among the departments and the huge amount of work every day. M3 was contented with the work climate, work attitude and well-being, "every year we have a survey and personal conversations with the employees to find out their satisfaction with the hotel." These three elements are important for the interviewed employees. E4 said that the "working atmosphere and well-being have a significant correlation. Work can always be managed somehow, but your well-being depends on how you feel at work with your colleagues and the working conditions." It was the fact that everybody should have the same attitude towards the job to create a pleasant climate in order to feel well at work.

Three out of five interviewed employees (E1, E2, E5) wished that their work-life balance is more considered whereas others desired more activities from the HR department. E2 would appreciate "things which make life easier and improve the work-life balance" and E5 "a work-life balance to pursue at least a hobby at home." Except for E4, the other interviewees highlighted the difficulties to pursue hobbies. E1 stated that "if shifts and working hours remain the same, it is not a problem", E2 believed that "it is hard because you have to work on weekends, in the morning and in the evening, holidays, generally every time" and E5 said "it is tough."

When the researcher asked if they think a well-designed break room might create the desired atmosphere, all interviewees agreed. Notwithstanding that all employees had the same opinion that a well-designed break room does not fully contribute to a better work-life balance they thought that it helps to achieve a better work balance, a "real line between work and break" according to E5. The conditions of the break room at the moment did not inhibit the employees to do the job properly, but E5 figured out that "it might influence me a bit. You normally look forward to a break, but right now there is nothing to look forward to. So probably it might inhibit me doing the job not as proper and effectively as I would be able to do it." E1, E2 and E3 supposed that a well-designed break room makes the break more agreeable to relax and refresh to go back "with full battery and energy" to work. They saw it as a support to work because it might motivate them and help to strengthen the team spirit. E5 considered that the well-designed break room "might support the employees subconsciously because they will leave the break in a different mood. So it influences their work attitude through a higher motivation and consequently being more productive." E4 built up the sequence of "more relaxed means more energy, means more attention which means better service."

Rising the question if a well-designed break room contributes to creativity, innovation, flexibility, motivation, job satisfaction, less stress, higher productivity and happiness, the interviewed employees agreed with all points except for flexibility as it is a personal trait some being more flexible than others. The point is that "people nowadays are more creative, innovative, motivated and happy in an environment they like" as per E5.

Having a place to come down intrinsically will lower the stress and satisfy the employee so that he or she will automatically comes up with new ideas during the break and accordingly going back to work being motivated and more productive. E3 also saw the advantage of such a break room as for instance in the picture (See attachment 4 on page 112) in that it "enhances communication between and among employees. This leads to an overall improvement of the working atmosphere."

Furthermore, the interviewed managers believed as well that it will improve the work climate, work attitude and well-being because it would have been a benefit offered by the management to show that they take care of the employees. M3 acknowledged this fact because she said that "after having already renewed our back of house, it is safe to say that this has lead to a high employee satisfaction and an incredibly improved work climate." On the other hand, M2 answered sceptically that it might be possible to improve the atmosphere but she believed that "there are other factors which could be rated as more important to a staff member before a well-designed break room." This might be true, but M1 and M5 looked at it as a change that lasts for a long time and from which employees and employers can benefit. It is not a benefit that only lasts temporarily. Overall agreement among the managers was that the creation of a well-designed back of house is a good proof to show the dedication to the employees and that they take the well-being of the employees to their heart.

4.7   Impact on Employers

The employers, in this case the managers of a hotel, take on a certain responsibility for the entire hotel and it is quite obvious that key issues of concern will arise which managers worry about when managing a hotel. Four out of five interviewees from the management revealed the employee satisfaction as their key concern followed by guest satisfaction, occupancy of rooms and restaurants and financial issues. The problem with the human capital from the manager's perspective is the satisfaction and retention of the employees. M3 stressed that "if the employees change too often, it is difficult to form a team" and M1 explained the problem of retention and proper training of employees that "a lot of effort goes into training and benefits, but if they leave, everything starts again."

Besides the retention and turnover, M2 experienced problems to motivate them and make them clear that every single job in a hotel is a "vital component to the overall success of the hotel." Therefore, they aimed to keep the turnover at a low level and attract new and current employees with new innovations only for them, as for instance the well-designed back of house at the Fairmont Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten. According to M1, "the same way our employees try to attract the guests to come back to the hotel, the management has to do the same with the employees by valuing them with something that differentiates us from others in the industry in order to keep them." Additionally, M3 emphasised that an annual employee survey is done to evaluate the satisfaction, attraction, retention and turnover. The average annual staff turnover at the hotel of M3 is about 28%.

There was a common view that the employers can benefit from a well-designed break room. M2 stated that it shows the employees that the management cares about them and that they feel special. For M1 and M5 the motivation is a crucial factor because it leads to a higher productivity whereas for M4 and M5 it is the well-being of the employees to have a place to relax and refresh. They also shared the opinion to have a place where the team spirit can be strengthened. However, M3 knew the advantage of the designed break room such as the happiness of the employees and the word of mouth that people talk about the place and how well they treat the employees.

Consequently, there was almost an overall agreement that a new break room increases the creativity, innovation, flexibility, productivity, motivation and happiness of the employees who are then able to bring the hotel to the next level. M3 is convinced that the work attitude and appearance will be influenced positively through these aspects because "an employee who realises what has been done for him, will go the extra mile even though it is not his/her task." M1 did not see creativity, innovation and flexibility as changeable since these are traits a person was brought up to. M2 emphasised that the named aspects might increase potentially, but "a pay increase would work just as well." All interviewed employees talked about a higher motivation, less stress and a satisfaction because a designed break room would be kind of a hotel room only for them.

E5 pointed out that such a room affects an employer positively because "not only one person benefits from it, but rather everybody. A feeling of belonging and community will come up, kind of strengthening the team spirit."

It is worth mentioning that, besides M3 whose hotel already started to invest in an inviting back of house since 2012, all managers considered an implementation to a certain extent at their hotel. M1 did not see it as a definite high cost strategy even though some investment needs to be done. It rather depends on what a hotel is looking for to achieve. A low budget will not hinder the investment in a well-designed break room because there is always a way to change things step by step or to let a room look more attractive with cheap and simple changes.

The chance to become an employer of choice aroused discrepancies between the interviewees. E2, E3, E4, E5, M3, M4 and M5 believed that it is a new way to distinguish oneself from others. E4 and M3 identified it as a "tool to improve negative conditions to become more attractive and make working conditions more pleasant." E3 added "if an employer takes care of the employees, the employees will also take care of the business" which "puts the hotel in the true light" according to M3. M1 and M2 agreed to a certain degree because they were convinced that the employer of choice is the one which pays the most.

Lastly, it can be said that all managers could see an increase in guest satisfaction and profit in case a well-designed back of house leads to a higher employee's satisfaction and motivation. They are aware of how big the influence of such a room could be because with one bigger change and investment, three major issues of concerns they always have (employee and guest satisfaction & financial issues) could be solved. Therefore, all agreed that happy staff means happy guests means more profit.

5 Analysis

This section will compare and analyse key findings of the interviews and observations and sets them in the context with the literature review. For a more comprehensive understanding, findings of the primary research were analysed thoroughly in relation to the research objectives.

Bitner's Framework for Understanding Environment-User Relationships in Service Organizations (Bitner 1992, 60) was already briefly explained. Bitner (1992) implemented his framework from the perspective of the employees and customers whereas the researcher slightly changed the approach looking at employees and employers and how they behave regarding the development of a well-designed back of house. A back of house has different environmental dimensions of which ambient conditions and space/function were looked at both in the literature and the findings. They are perceived by the employees and employers in a certain way. The internal responses are the reactions to the break room leading to certain behaviours (approach or avoidance). Figure 8 below will illustrate the adapted framework of the topic.

The literature has shown that the servicescape, in this case the well-designed break room, is perceived differently by the employees and the employers. The conditions of the break room being a "Dark Side" can be clearly approved by the employees as they notice this room as run-down. Obviously, this causes a negative internal response (cognitive, emotional and physiological) and leads to an avoidance of the room.

On the other side, the literature indicates that most employers regard this room as still good enough. Their internal response cannot be clearly identified as it is hard to figure out when it was the last time they entered this room (Lisman 2011). However, the findings of the interviews revealed the contrast to the literature because all managers were aware about the situation and conditions at the back of house, but with the addition that they hardly enter this room. This is probably because of avoidance as well. Due to that the behaviour and social interaction between and among the employer and employee might be tense.

Figure 8. Adapted Framework for Understanding Environment-User Relationships in Service Organizations (Bitner 1992; Self)

5.1 Objective One

<u>To investigate the overall situation and find out how a well-designed back of house is considered</u>

The overall situation of break rooms at the hotels could be described as not satisfying, gloomy and depressing because of the miserable conditions (Druce 2007, 7). This seems to be still a common problem at many places (Lewis & Mottier 2012; Bjorkman 2007; Lisman 2011; Dela Cruz 2006) in the industry due to a high dissatisfaction by the employees concerning their break room (Druce 2007, 7). Besides the piteous situations, in some cases there was no break room available at all for the employees (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 6). This phenomenon was reflected in the interviews because two out of ten interiviewees mentioned that there was no break room available and employees spent their break time somewhere else. Among the other eight interviewees only one responded positively to the break rooms she experienced. Moreover, three observations have shown that the conditions are inacceptable for employees to take a break.

There is a big contrast between the front of house and back of house situation (Bjorkman 2007). The front of house is a perfect, neat and up-to-date designed place, obviously because it is what the guests perceive. The back of house, on the other side, is the total contrast and according to the findings, Bjorkman's (2007) statement of the back of house with "no heart" can be confirmed. However, Prifti (2013) and Rahe (2011) referred to the back of house as the heart of house which was only mentioned by one interviewee. Since the literature and findings predominate with this contrast these two places could be compared to as the bright and dark side. In the majority of the places a well-designed back of house was not considered and the "Dark Side" as a negative and mysterious place arising sorrow and sadness reflected the overall situation in the hospitality industry.

The back of house is still, widely spread, a neglected area. No money was invested over the last years because they were seen as still good enough (Lisman 2011). The managers were aware of the conditions and talked about the fact that these rooms need some investment, but except for one hotel, no other one has ever invested in a renovation of this room. Awareness, action and follow-up are three points that have to be evaluated when implementing a well-designed back of house. First, the awareness of the situation is important. Then, the development of an action plan what can be changed aiming for certain results and finally, an assessment if these changes led to the desired results. Although there is a common view that money has to be invested primarily in the front of house (Lisman 2011) the managers considered a spending into the back of house in the near future. In the course of the interview, they realised how bad the conditions truly are when they were forced to think about it. Their awareness about the real conditions were initiated and an input what can be done with any room was delivered by the researcher.

There are exceptions to mention in the hotel industry such as The Mandarin Oriental Bangkok and the Fairmont Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten Hamburg (H3). Both have invested a lot of money in the back of house especially in the room for the employees. It was not a change that happened within a few weeks, but it was rather a long process of small improvement so that the back of house looked as nice as the guests amenities (Prifti 2013).

The fact that the responses before and after the implementation of a well-designed back of house had turned from negative/no impact to extremely positive (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 7) showed the necessity to think about the significance of a well-designed back of house. H3 followed the same philosophy to intergrate the well-being in the working conditions of the employees (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 3) with the same results. M3 stressed the happiness of the whole team with the new break room. Accordingly, it might be true that the mood of the employees is influenced by the condtions at the back of house.

The researcher shares the view that most back of houses are outdated with miserable conditions for employees to relax. Since the back of house is not seen by the guests there is no attention given to these rooms. However, there is no doubt that all rooms have the potential to improve in their own ways. Best practice examples are the Mandarin Oriental Bangkok and the Fairmont Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten Hamburg. Based on experience working at three different hotels in three different countries, such excellent examples are still rare within the industry and it can be said that no room was ever considered to improve within the next years.

5.2   Objective Two

<u>To determine the aspects which form a well-designed back of house</u>

The single dimensions of a break room had to be seen on the one hand as individual ones and on the other hand as holisitc ones so that they harmonise together . The literature highlighted the function and facilities regarding spatial layout, furniture and equipment as well as the ambient conditions regarding temperature, odour, lighting, noise level, music and colours. (Bitner 1992, 63, 66; Johansson et al. 2002, 162; Lewis & Mottier 2012, 4; Gibson 2003, 18; Lisman 2011; Dela Cruz 2007; Karl & Peluchette 2006, 3; Ford et al. 2003, 20; Earle 2003, 252; Mattila & Wirtz 2001, 275-276; Gutnick 2007; Owler et al. 2010, 393; Ginthner 2010, 2-3; Quartier et al. 2009, 7; Have 2008, 1; Yildirim & Hidayetoglu 2011; Wright 2013, Kaya & Epps 2004). The arrangement of the space had to be used generously having a private and social area (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 4; Gibson 2003, 18).

The furniture and equipment were elements which make a room functional and comfortable offering an area for entertainment (e.g. TVs, game console, pool table), relaxation (e.g. lounges, library with books and magazines) and social interaction (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 5-6; Lisman 2011; Karl & Peluchette 2006, 3; Ford et al. 2003, 20; Earle 2003, 252). According to Lisman (2011) functionality and comfortability were two crucial elements that should lead to a productive, dynamic, creative and developing break room which is different from the workplace and stimulates the needs and wants of the employees. Contributing to this environment was a comfortable temperature, odour, lighting and noise level (Mattila & Wirtz 2001, 275-276; Gutnick 2007). Music and colours depend on the personal taste. In case of a well-designed back of house it is important to think about either offering an overall music surrounding or providing a space for an indvidual selection. The colours will be chosen on the purpose of the room being comfortable and functional alike.

Findings highlighted that all interviewees had similar imaginations of how a well-designed back of house can look like taking the comfortability and functionality into consideration. However, the aspects temperature, odour, lighting, music or colours were not mentioned. The reason was because most people predominantly perceive everything holistically by using all five senses subconsciously. The observed hotels also revealed a total inconsistency with the literature. In most cases the dimensions did not harmonise together and caused a negative impact on everyone's mood. There might be break rooms that look inviting and comfortable at the first glance, but through a displeasing odour, the overall atmosphere suffered. Therefore, it is important that every dimension gets the same attention and is set in relation to the others because some combinations might not lead to the desired result.

For the practical relevance two examples of well-designed break rooms were created by the researcher boosting the imagination of the interviewees having such a room available at their workplace (See attachment 4 on page 112). All dimensions except for the temperature, odour and noise level (which cannot be identified from a picture) were involved in the creation of the rooms aiming for the dynamic, productive, creative and developing break room which was stated in the literature.

To the researcher's mind, when implementing a well-designed break room, the possibilities are wide-ranging. There is definitely not one best practice example. The overall positive feedback given by the interviewees to the self-designed break rooms supports the researcher in his new and innovative approach. The room unifies modernity, diversity and openess by still having a certain privacy which was the aim during the creation process. It is a room to truly relax, refresh and interact with other team members. These aspects are vital determinants to increase motivation and productivity.

Hotels, such as The Mandarin Oriental Bangkok or the Fairmont Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten Hamburg, took already advantage of a well-designed back of house with commendable results. Depending on the size and space of the hotel, both used two different ways to design the break room, however, by keeping all aspects that form a well-designed room in mind. One might mention that employees will spend too much time in this room and neglect the work, but the researcher believes that clear statements have to be done by the employers and he agrees with E3 and E4 that employees are old enough not to extend a break instead being professional and consider this room as an excellent benefit from the employer. The aim is to go for a recreative break and not for a nap (Lisman 2011).

5.3   Objective Three

<u>To identify how and to what extent a well-designed back of house influences employees</u>

The influence of a well-designed back of house on employees plays an important role. Employees are seen as the most important and valuable assets in the hospitality industry (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 2: Lisman 2011; Bolton & Houlihan 2007,1) which was also agreed by the interviewees. They are the ones who create the experience for the guests with their exceptional service every day and keep the business running. The working conditions in the hospitality industry are tough, sometimes unsocial and time or a place to relax is mostly not available. It is not surprising, that many people leave the industry since the requirements rise and fun becomes less.

As Lewis & Mottier (2012, 8) state, employers have to refocus on the needs and wants of the employees and make them feel special by providing the same service to them as to the guests.

Employers have identified several benefits such as discounts on rooms or food and beverage, awards, career advancement or training which can be offered to the employees. The findings accord with the literature that these benefits are common in the hotel industry and are nothing special anymore. The researcher sees problems and difficulties nowadys for most managers to name their employees' needs and wants. Generally, it is fun, appreciation and the opportunity to grow personally and to grow the business. Knowing the employees' needs and wants is crucial to keep them satisfied and motivated so that they stay longer with the company.

The aim of a well-designed back of house is still new and as mentioned above not widely spread, but it might be a project that improves the work climate, work attitude and well-being. With the implementation of a well-designed back of house, the industry promotes indirectly for an enthusiastic climate among the employees. The reciprocal understanding, cooperation and relationship is fundamental in the hotel industry in order to achieve a high level of guest service. Employees should not always be forced by the managers telling them what to do, but rather give the employees the chance to be creative and happy together in their work. By providing a well-designed break room, a sense of belonging or family should be created with an overall enjoyable work climate among the employees (Lewis & Mottier 2012, 1-7). The indicated ordinary benefits for individual employees are not the way to achieve this work climate because the whole team is not considered.

The researcher aims with the well-designed break room an appreciation by the management for all employees and it is, compared to other benefits, long-term. Certainly, money might be a higher motivator than a new designed break room (Earle 2003, 248) which was also stated by one manager. It is true that money is the highest motivator, but the researcher considers money as a momentary benefit as employees might expect more in the future does not matter in good or bad times of the business. However, a newly designed break room is a benefit that lasts for a long time.

It is present and accessible every day for the employees and an employer could satisfy everyone at the same time.

It is essential for the researcher that the break room offers a diversity for employees so that they are able to strenghten the team spirit among each other which leads to a better work climate. Having the feeling to be part of a team has an immense influence on one's work attitude and well-being. It is clear to truly benefit from a well-designed break room through less stressed and more relaxed employees who will definitely work in a different, positively changed mood. Apart from that, the motivation will increase and consequently, employees are more productive, efficient and creative during work (Jayne 2005; Druce 2007, 7; Owler et al. 2010, 340).

Besides that, findings and literature (Earle 2003, 248; Karl & Peluchette 2006, 3) coincide with the fact that an employee with these attributes will have a high satisfaction and happiness with the employer because the well-designed back of house is a reasonable proof of appreciation. Then, there is no doubt among the interviewees and the researcher that the employees are in favour to go the extra mile for the guests and provide an even more personalised service (Druce 2007, 7; Karl & Peluchette 2006, 4, 9; Varoglu & Eser 2006, 30).

5.4   Objective Four

<u>To understand the impact of a well-designed back of house on employers</u>

Enz (2001, 39) states in his study that managing the human capital is still the major concern of most managers. The majority of the interviewed managers still recognised the same problem today to manage the employees, particularly retain and satisfy them. Findings support the point that to achieve employee retention and satisfaction, appreciation is needed because employees have to be valued and taken care of. The previous chapter highlighted that most benefits and incentives are short-term appreciations whereas a well-designed back of house is considered to be long-term. This requires a certain sum of investment depending on the size of the hotel and the amount of employees.

Lewis & Mottier (2012, 3) considered the realisation as a high-cost investment. However, the managers were not solely interested in the costs for the implementation, but more in how they can benefit from the newly designed room. Money did not seem to be the decisive point because on the one hand a room can be designed cheaper and simpler by still creating it nice and on the other hand if this room contributes to higher revenue, the investment is worth it.

It is a surprising result for the researcher that money does not seem to be the crucial point to implement a well-designed break room. He thought that the managers are more interested in the costs and investment but instead the benefits are more important. This is a success and shows the researcher that the employers think about a possible implementation as an appreciation for the work of the employees.

With respect to the benefits, an employer can differentiate itself from others with the advantage of having a well-designed break room and be more competitive. In accordance with Lewis & Mottier (2012, 1-4, 7) a differentiation will contribute to become an employer of choice. This might be true, but it has to be distinguished what kind of differentiation. In case of a break room the interviewees beheld the fact to become an employer of choice as critical. Nobody will exclusively base the decision to take or quit a job on the availability of a designed break room. The researcher thinks that it might not be the crucial factor, but certainly one that should be kept clearly in mind. Every additional benefit that other hotels do not offer is a competitive advantage.

In general, employers also recognise a problem with the morale (e.g. attitude, motivation or productivity) of employees, the attraction and retention which causes a high employee turnover and is connected with high costs, loss of guests, staff shortage or bad reputation (Varoglu & Eser 2006, 31; Hänssler 2008, 186; Davidson et al. 2009, 81-82; Panwar et al. 2012, 84). They want to have a high guest satisfaction and also the positive financial results. These issues were listed among all managers facing it on a regular basis. To attract new talents or retain the existing ones is difficult due to the bad reputation of the whole industry or the diversity to work worldwide.

Employees and employers look for personal and commercial benefits and advantages. The purpose of a well-designed break room for employers is the recognition of an outstanding service for the employees to make them happy.

Happiness is an element rated the highest to be present at work. Regardless of the financial results, happy employees mean happy guests (Druce 2007, 7; Lee 2006, 343, Varoglu & Eser 2006, 30; Karl & Peluchette 2006, 4). Accordingly, the financial results will be a matter of course (Jayne 2005). This, in turn, leads to employer's happiness.

5.5   Employee Journey Map

The employee journey map is another tool of service design (Stickdorn & Schneider 2012, 15-159) to visualise the probable consequence of a "Dark Side" and of a well-designed back of house. It highlights the employee's daily experience with the back of house in a "vivid" and "structured" way (Stickdorn & Schneider 2012, 15-159) and is based on the literature and the results from the interviews. Figure 9 below is a simple, basic and self-explanatory employee journey which points out a vicious circle in red that might occur through the miserable conditions at the back of house. Sooner or later this could lead to a fierce employee-management relationship so that there might be always a tension between them. Obviously, it is not easy for employees to work in such an environment where they are dissatisfied even though they started with a high motivation.

On the other hand, there are also some who experience a daily journey which is full of satisfaction and appreciation. This journey starts every day again with a high motivation and these employees are able to do their best to satisfy not only the guests and their employer, but also themselves. Figure 9 indicates in green colour the positive touchpoints that employees experience. This journey is the contrast to the one in red. A valued employee-management relationship is the achievement which could be created through a well-designed break room.

Figure 9. Employee Journey Map (Self; Stickdorn & Schneider 2012, 159-159, 226)

5.6   The Work-Environmental Influence on Stakeholders

The course of the thesis highlighted the fact that the whole work environment has a great impact on the employees and consequently on the employers and guests. The work environment consists of the back of house and front of house and takes the constant relationship between the employees, employers and guests into consideration. This relationship became apparent because all three influence each other in different ways, but the purpose remains the same by satisfying everybody. The situations and conditions of the work environment are important because they are perceived by the employees and guests and they are immediate factors of satisfaction. Nevertheless, the service which is provided by the employees is still the decisive factor of guest satisfaction. The problem described previously is the employee's perception of the two diverse areas (the back and front of house) which might impact their work attitude, work climate and well-being either positive or negative.

The researcher focuses on the improvement of the back of house for the employees, most likely leading to a circular flow of an overall satisfaction of all three stakeholders. Figure 10 below emphasises "The Work-Environmental Influence on Stakeholders" by an improvement of the back of house. The situations and conditions of the back of house have been clearly characterised in this thesis and the need for renovation was shown. The first step is exploration and development. According to the researcher within this first step a thorough analysis needs to be done to find out what can be improved. A concept will illustrate the design, the purpose and the costs for the development of a well-designed back of house. The involvement and communication with the employees during the whole process is essential and in accordance with the literature because they will be the one who should enjoy spending time in the new break room.

As soon as the concept is designed it needs to be reflected and implemented. At this point it is crucial to be aware of the holistic aspects that form a well-designed back of house with all intangible and tangible touchpoints. The management has to believe in the whole project and always has to communicate with the employees for improvement.

The well-designed back of house itself is the key factor in this framework, kind of a private hotel room for employees which is comfortable and functional. The last three steps, impact on employees, guests and employers basically point out that happy and satisfied employees are more willing to go the extra mile to provide a service excellence to the guests. They, in turn, will be happy and satisfied as well and will spend more money and the probability to return increases. Finally, the employer has to evaluate the effect of the whole change. The researcher supposes that with satisfied employees and guests and a higher profit the well-designed back of house might be a solution to the major concerns of most employers.

However, important to note is that the impact on the three stakeholers (employee employer and guest) can not be seen yet as entirely proven facts as further, similar and repetitive research with a much higher sample has to be conducted in order to draw a final and definite conclusion about the real influence. This study is a beginning and still based more or less on assumptions by the researcher about the probable impact on the stakeholders.
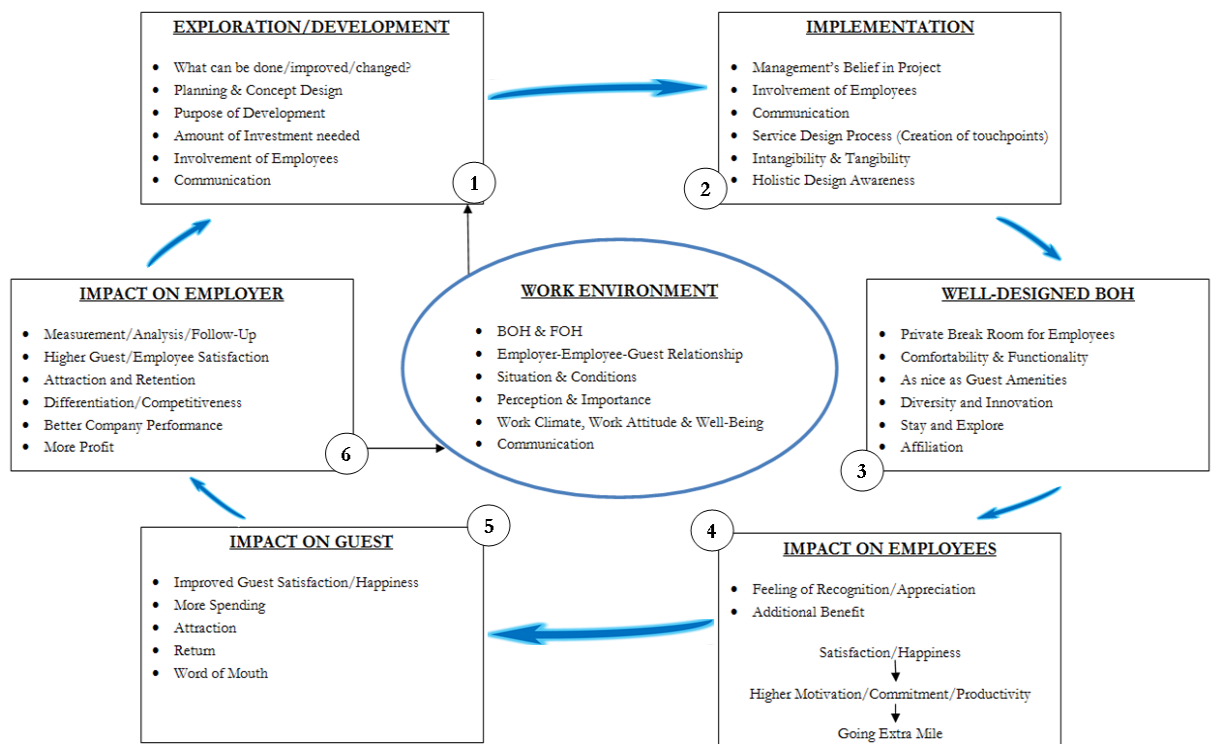

Figure 10. The Work-Environmental Influence on Stakeholders (Self)

The researcher considers in this service design process the statement of Moritz (2005, in Stickdorn &Schneider 2012, 31) to create a new back of house or improve the existing ones. The service in terms of a new designed back of house is more useful, desirable for the employees and efficient and effective for the employer and the hotel (Stickdorn &Schneider 2012, 31). In addition, the five principles are reflected in Figure 9 and 10. A well-designed back of house is staff-centric because the focus is on the employees since the benefits for guests and employers is a logical consequence. The circular flow involves all stakeholders and is therefore co-creative.

The service of the new break room includes interrelated actions (sequencing) among the employer, employee and guest. Evidencing is, accroding to Stickdorn and Schneider (2012, 42-43), the way to "make the intangible tangible." In case of the break room, it is essential to provide and design the room with a personal touch of the employees. The last principle, holistic, sees the environment as a whole (Stickdorn and Schneider 2012, 44-45). Examining, analysing and designing the back of house considering all five senses as well as identifying the influence on employees and employers represent the holistic analysis.

6 Conclusion and Recommendations

The last chapter will provide a general conclusion of the topic and will highlight the contribution and implication to the hospitality industry. As the empirical part presented an abductive research the following will also give recommendations for further research. To finalise this chapter, a personal and professional development by the researcher about the thesis process will be done.

6.1 Conclusion

The research showed that the implementation of a well-designed back of house has an impact on the whole work environment in the hospitality industry and therefore influences employees, employers and guests positively. A better work climate, work attitude and well-being on the employee's, higher satisfaction on the guest's and a higher profit on employer's side are only some benefits from a newly designed back of house. It was indicated that most hotels do not pay any attention to the conditions of break rooms for their employees even though they consider them as the most important assets. Employers are aware of the fact that employees are responsible to provide service excellence to the guests every day and that a hotel is running successfully. However, as appreciation to their employees, most employers only offer benefits which are not different from others instead of thinking to be really staff-centric.

The interviewees recognise the neglectfulness of the back of house in hotels and favour a well-designed back of house. It is clear that the requirements on hotel employees are constantly rising, but still there is no real place to relax and to motivate them. A break room which harmonises in all aspects of room design might be a possibility for employers to enhance the overall employee's satisfaction and consequently increase the guest satisfaction and maximise profit.

The current study shows that the realisation of a well-designed back of house is advisable. It is only existent at a few hotels, however, with commendable results. These few examples are definitely beneficial and a dedication to be more staff-centric.

The focus of the perceived benefits is primarily the ones mentioned above. Findings support the certainty that happy and satisfied employees are more willing to go the extra mile for the guests in order to also make them happy and satisfied. It is the investment in a new break room so that employers are able to solve three of their major concerns, employee and guest satisfaction/happiness by probably generating a higher profit.

6.2   Contribution and Implication

This study contributes to the research in terms of the impact of a well-designed back of house on employees and employers. To the researcher's knowledge, there is no other study that examines which aspects form a well-designed back of house and how it influences employees and employers. Even though this is a first-time research, it is an evidence for academics and employers in the field that evaluates the situation and offers solutions for improvement. The researcher believes that the creation of a break room is a new and innovative way and is beneficial for the practical relevance in the hospitality industry.

The findings point out that employees and managers believe that a well-designed back of house is an essential factor which might enhance motivation, productivity and happiness of employees and can lead to a higher guest satisfaction and therefore to a higher profit. However, all benefits for all involved stakeholders (employees, employers and guests) are still unknown and mostly assumptions. It is crucial that employers understand the importance of the break room and advise themselves about the possibilities they have to implement.

The research provides certain clues how and where to start when it comes to designing a room and what to consider so that it has the desired results for all stakeholders at the end. Even though this study is solely focused on the hospitality industry, there is no doubt assigning the idea of a well-designed break room to other industries and find out which influence it might have.

6.3   Recommendations for Further Research

The study has shown an abductive approach. The phenomenon of a well-designed back of house and the influence on employees and employers is new and not widely analysed yet. Academic articles are rare and limited. The framework of "The Work-Environmental Influence on Stakeholders" (Figure 10) is a first-time research which offers an inductive approach for further research. The study also identified the feasibility of the creation of a well-designed back of house through the holistic analysis which provides different insights in what can be done and further researched.

Additional research should be conducted about the applicability of a break room in general and how it really influences employees and employers. This thesis pointed out that further research in more depth is needed so that these results can be compared to this paper and move from assumptions to concrete and precise facts.

The researcher recommends conducting further research in order to receive more reliable and valid results through a greater sample. This could be either qualitative or quantitative. This study used a qualitative research which provided a deeper insight into the topic from the perspectives of employees and employers. On the one hand, further qualitative research could be conducted solely focused on the employee's or employer's point of view. The focus on a single stakeholder might provide a better understanding about the necessity of a well-designed back of house. On the other hand, there is also the possibility to conduct a quantitative research in form of a survey. This can also be focused on employees or employers. An additional quantitative research could repeat the results from this study through a greater sample and open again new knowledge.

To also enhance the understanding of the aim of a well-designed break room the researcher suggests undertaking further research among employees and employers in one, two or three hotels and if applicable execute an implementation. It would be beneficial and interesting to ascertain and highlight the difference between almost same hotels. One that offers a well-designed break room and one that does not. At this point the impact on employees and employers could be better proved and further conclusions can be drawn.

Moreover, this paper examined the history and importance of the back of house, different aspects of room design, service design and analysed the impact on stakeholders. These points should be researched individually to fine-tune the creation of a well-designed break room to fully benefit from it.

Finally, broader geographical areas need to be investigated in order to receive a more detailed either national or international overview about the topic. This is necessary because the researcher only conducted ten semi-structured interviews with employees and employers as well as four observations to support the interviews.

6.4   Evaluation of the Thesis Process

The decision on the research topic was an important criterion for the researcher because it had to be one that arouses personal and professional interest. Initially, the aim to examine the "Dark Side" was a recommendation by the supervisors which immediately developed after deeper research to the ultimate topic. The topic is complex because it combines insights from different fields which were merged together within this study. Being a complex topic is the reason of the personal interest of the researcher. It started being a challenge where to start and how to interconnect the single fields to one, but by the time the literature was combined and interpreted together and new ideas arose. This kept the researcher motivated and eager at all the time. The primary and secondary research helped the researcher to broaden his knowledge and expertise in working with literature which is particularly useful for the working life and further future studies.

The topic was not only chosen because of its complexity, but also due to the practical relevance for the whole hotel industry. The outcome itself is a new, innovative and useful approach for the hospitality industry to take advantage of a well-designed back of house to probably enhance the overall stakeholder's satisfaction by also increasing the profit. To date, only few hotels actually take advantage of it. For the researcher it was important to research a topic which is holistic considering the three main stakeholders in a hotel.

Involving the interaction or relationship between employer, employees and guests is of future relevance and essential for the researcher's personal and professional growth. It is crucial to understand how to appreciate the work of the employees as they are the driving factor of a hotel's success. It is the purpose to always create something new for them and look at different options such as for example a well-designed back of house.

Despite some obstacles within the whole thesis process, the researcher is more than satisfied with the final result. The researcher still considers a good time management even though the thesis exceeded the timetable created at the beginning. The reason was a full time job during the thesis process. The learning process and the perfection of the thesis were more important instead of handing in a thesis that lacks quality and depth. A still unknown research area required an own input by the researcher which he managed with the framework of "The Work-Environmental Influence on Stakeholders." This framework generates new ideas or starting points for further research as it is still mostly based on assumptions than proven facts. Conducting more primary research about this topic, either qualitative or quantitative, will increase the reliability and validity so that the results become more conclusive facts.

In addition to this, the personal and professional contact in the industry was significant. Through the interviews and observations the researcher not only made contacts with employees and employers from the industry, but also encouraged them to think about an implementation of a well-designed back of house. Maybe not now, but in the future. If the researcher only convinced them to consider a possible creation or improvement, it would have been a good starting point for the future.

Within the next few years, the researcher believes that this topic will gain even more interest from the industry. More and more hotels will improve their work environment for employees to be competitive and satisfy them in order to be able to offer an even better service to the guests and generate more profit for the business.

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Earle, H. 2003. Building a workplace of choice: Using the work environment to attract and retain top talent. Journal of Facilities Management, 2, 3, pp. 244 – 257.

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Attachments

Attachment 1. Interview Protocols

<u>Interview Protocol for Employees</u>

<div align="center">

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

</div>

<u>Date:</u> _____

<u>Time:</u> _____

<u>Location:</u> _____

<u>Type of interview:</u> _____

<div align="center">

<u>**Overview of the topic**</u>

</div>

"Examining the Dark Side – The Importance of the Back of House."

The study's purpose is to understand the influence of a well-designed back of house or rather break room on employees and employers. The findings of this research will provide the hospitality industry with a deeper understanding of what is characterized as a well-designed break room and how it contributes to an improved well-being, work climate and work attitude on the employee's side and attraction, retention and more profit on the employer's side. It will also analyse how a higher guest satisfaction relates to the implementation of a well-designed back of house.

<u>**Personal Profile**</u>

<u>Name:</u> _____

<u>Position:</u> _____

<u>Company:</u> _____

<u>Brief career description:</u> _____

General Questions

1. What do you associate with the term "Dark Side"?

2. How and what do you define as a "well-designed break room" in the hospitality industry?

3. Have the hotels you worked for offered you a break room/recreation area ?

4. Do you think a break room is important nowadays and why/why not?

Perception of the break room

5. In your opinion, how would you describe the conditions of the break rooms in hotels in general? Or how did you perceive it over the time?

6. How do you see the conditions of the break room at your hotel?

7. Are you satisfied with the situation of the break room and why/why not?

8. Compared to the front of house, do you see any similarities/differences to the break room?

9. How did/do you feel at the break room?

10. Do you agree that an improvement of the conditions through the management is necessary? Why/why not?

Dimensions of a well-designed break room

11. What facilities (furniture and equipment) were/are offered for employees in a break room? Were/Are you satisfied with them?

12. How did/do you perceive the lightning, temperature and odour at the break room?

13. Do you think lightning, temperature and odour affects the atmosphere in any way?

14. Can you please describe your feelings about the imagination being in such a room? (Please see attached pictures 1 and 2)

15. Do you ever pay attention about the combination of colours in such rooms and their influence on you?

16. Would you welcome a well-designed break room for employees with pool table, TVs, game consoles, library, comfortable lounges or music zones for example to relax and refresh within the hotel?

Impact on Employees

17. How do you feel working in the hospitality industry?

18. How do you evaluate your role at the hotel? Do you see your work enough appreciated/valued?

19. Do you have fun working at the hospitality industry? Why/why not?

20. What motivates you at work to keep the required standards at a high level?

21. Which benefits were/are provided by the hotels you worked/work for?

22. Would you prefer other benefits than for example higher salaries?

23. How do you rate the (working) atmosphere regarding work climate, work attitude and your well-being?

24. Do you think you can pursue a good work-life balance (work and hobbies) when working in the hotel industry? Why/why not?

25. How can you relax the best when you are stressed, demotivated or tired?

26. Do the conditions at the break room inhibit you doing your job properly or more effectively?

27. How do you think a well-designed break room might support the work of the employees?

28. Does a better break room contribute to a better work-life balance in your opinion?

29. Do you agree that a well-designed break room contributes to creativity, innovation, flexibility, motivation, job satisfaction, less stress, higher productivity and happiness of the employees? Why/why not?

30. Would you consider a well-designed break room for employees as a factor to take a job or on the contrary, an inadequate break room to quit a job?

Impact on Employers

31. What does your employer do to attract and retain you at the hotel?

32. How do you think your employer can benefit from a well-designed break room?

33. Do you agree with the statement "happy staff leading to happy guests leading to a better company performance?" Why/why not?

34. Do you believe that a well-designed break room might be a new chance to become an employer of choice and differentiate oneself from others by putting the employees first and creating an even more exceptional guest service?

Comments

_____

_____

_____

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Date: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

Type of interview: _____

Overview of the topic

"Examining the Dark Side – The Importance of the Back of House."

The study's purpose is to understand the influence of a well-designed back of house or rather break room on employees and employers. The findings of this research will provide the hospitality industry with a deeper understanding of what is characterized as a well-designed break room and how it contributes to an improved well-being, work climate and work attitude on the employee's side and attraction, retention and more profit on the employer's side. It will also analyse how a higher guest satisfaction relates to the implementation of a well-designed back of house.

Personal Profile

Name: _____

Position: _____

Company: _____

Brief career description: _____

General Questions

1. What do you associate with the term "Dark Side" in the title of the thesis?

2. How and what do you define as a "well-designed break room" in the hospitality industry?

3. Do you offer a break room/recreation area for the employees?

4. Do you think a break room is important nowadays and why/why not?

Perception of the break room

5. Where is the break room located at the hotel?

6. In your opinion, how would you describe the conditions of the break rooms in hotels in general? Or how did you perceive it over the time?

7. How do you see the conditions of the break room at your hotel?

8. What do you believe your employees think about the break room?

9. Compared to the front of house, do you also spend money in a break room for employees?

10. How often do you enter the break room?

Dimensions of a well-designed break room

11. What facilities (furniture and equipment) do you offer your employees in a break room?

12. Have you ever thought about to offer an entertaining and relaxing place for your employees with pool table, TVs, game consoles, library or comfortable lounges for example? Why/why not?

13. Do you think lightning, temperature and odour affects the atmosphere in any way?

14. Do you take any of them (lightning, temperature or odour) into account?

15. Do you provide music at the break room? Why/why not?

16. Do you ever pay attention about the combination of colours in such rooms and their influence on employees?

17. Can you please describe your feelings about the imagination being in such a room? (Please see attached pictures 1 and 2)

Impact on Employees

18. Which role do your employees play in your hotel?

19. What do you think your employees' needs and wants are nowadays?

20. Do you believe you appreciate/value the work of your employees enough? And which benefits do you offer your employees?

21. What (working) atmosphere do you want to create for your employees?

22. Do you think that your employees have fun at work and love to work here?

23. How important is fun at work and what do you do to intergrate fun at work?

24. Are you happy with the work climate, well-being and work attitude of your employees? Why/why not? And how do you meseasure it?

25. Do you think a well-designed break room is a good proof to show the dedication to the employees? Why/Why not?

26. Do you believe that you are able to increase the work climate, well-being and work attitude by offering a better work-life balance through the implementation of a well-designed break room?

Impact on Employers

27. What are your key issues of concern you worry about when managing a hotel?

28. How do you differentiate yourself by being competitive on the market for employees?

29. Specifically, what kind of problems do you see with the human capital?

30. How do you rate the staff turnover, attraction and retention of employees?

31. What do you do to attract and retain good employees and young talents (taking Baby Boomers, Generation X and Y into account)?

32. How do you think you can benefit from a well-designed break room for your employees?

33. Do you think a break room might increase the creativity, innovation, flexibility, productivity, motivation and happiness of the employees?

34. Do you agree with the statement "happy staff leading to happy guests leading to a better company performance?" Why/why not?

35. Would you take an implementation of a well-designed break room to a certain extent into consideration?

36. This project generates long-term benefits and is a high cost strategy: Would you invest or at least consider to invest one time in an inviting break room for the employees?

37. Do you believe that a well-designed break room might be a new chance to become an employer of choice and differentiate yourself from others by putting the employees first and creating an even more exceptional guest service?

Comments

_____

_____

_____

Picture 1 (example of a relax room)
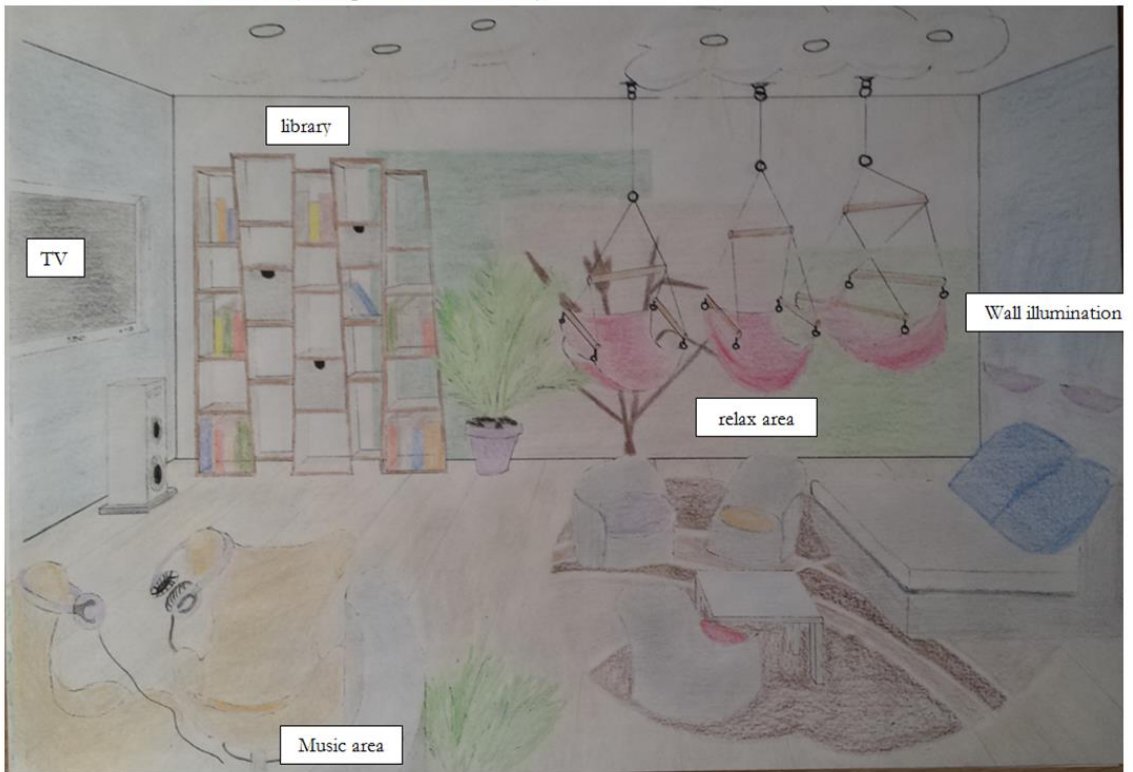
Picture 2 (example of an activity room)

Attachment 2. Observation Protocol

OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Date: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

Conditions/First Impression/Feelings

_____

_____

_____

Spatial Layout

_____

_____

Facilities (Furniture & Equipment)

_____

_____

Temperature

_____

_____

Odour/Scent

_____

_____

Lightning

_____

_____

Noise Level

_____

_____

Music

_____

_____

Colour Schemes

_____

_____

_____

Impression of employees

_____

_____

_____

Additional Comments / Informal Conversation

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Attachment 3. Consent Form for Interviews and Observations

Consent Form for Interviews

CONSENT FORM

Title of the research project and purpose:

"Examining the Dark Side – The Importance of the Back of House."

The study's purpose is to understand the influence of a well-designed back of house or rather break room on employees and employers. The findings of this research will provide the hospitality industry with a deeper understanding of what is characterized as a well-designed break room and how it contributes to an improved well-being, work climate and work attitude on the employee's side and attraction, retention and more profit on the employer's side. It will also analyse how a higher guest satisfaction relates to the implementation of a well-designed back of house.

Name and position of the researcher:

Alexander Datz, Final year student, Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information about the title and purpose of the study above and have had the opportunity to ask questions which have been answered satisfactorily.	
2. I understand that my participation is voluntarily and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason.	
3. I understand that all information about me will be treated confidentially by mentioning no names in any written work.	
4. I understand that all collected data will be treated honestly and only used for the purpose of the research.	
5. I agree that the interview will be audio-recorded and the material solely used for the research purpose.	
6. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in the research project.	
7. I understand that you will be discussing your progress of your research with the research supervisor of the Haaga-Helia UAS.	
8. I agree to take part in the study.	

_____   _____   _____
Name of Participant   Date   Signature

_____   _____   _____
Name of Researcher   Date   Signature

Consent Form for Observations

CONSENT FORM

HAAGA-HELIA
University of Applied Sciences

Title of the research project and purpose:

"Examining the Dark Side – The Importance of the Back of House."

The study's purpose is to understand the influence of a well-designed back of house or rather break room on employees and employers. The findings of this research will provide the hospitality industry with a deeper understanding of what is characterized as a well-designed break room and how it contributes to an improved well-being, work climate and work attitude on the employee's side and attraction, retention and more profit on the employer's side. It will also analyse how a higher guest satisfaction relates to the implementation of a well-designed back of house.

Name and position of the researcher:

Alexander Datz, Final year student, Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information about the title and purpose of the study above and have had the opportunity to ask questions which have been answered satisfactorily.	
2. I understand that my participation is voluntarily and that I am free to withdraw the researcher from observation at any time without giving any reason.	
3. I understand that all information about the hotel will be treated confidentially by mentioning no names in any written work.	
4. I understand that all collected data will be treated confidentially and only used for the purpose of the research.	
5. I agree that the observation by the researcher will be done by notes and the material solely used for the research purpose.	
6. I agree that the observation by the researcher will be done by taking pictures and the material solely used for the research purpose.	
7. I understand that you will be discussing your progress of your research with the research supervisor of the Haaga-Helia UAS.	
8. I agree to take part in the study.	

_____   _____   _____
Name of Participant   Date   Signature

_____   _____   _____
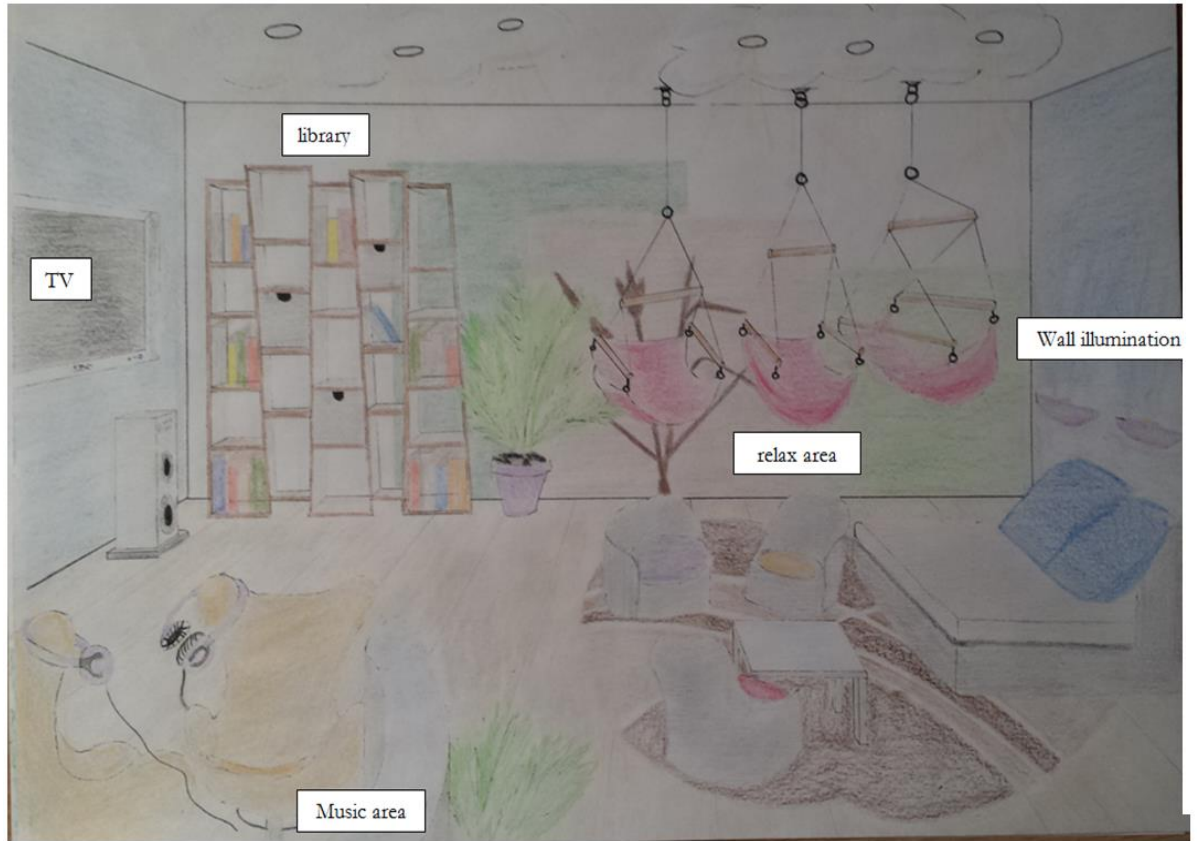Name of Researcher   Date   Signature

Attachment 4. Examples of a Well-Designed Break Room

Attachment 5. Back of House Fairmont Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten

Attachment 6. Break Room Hotel 4 (H4)