Examining the Effect of Positive Affectivity on Altruism among the Star Hotel Employees; The Role of Perceived Organizational Support

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Abstract:
Hospitality industry has a great influence in the growth of an economy. In this sector, the services of the employees play a vital role in delivering and creating a lasting experience. Delivering quality customer service is the critical element that determines the success of hotel business. The focus on serving the customers should be greater in star hotels as the customer expectations are comparatively higher due to the high cost of each and every services that they offer. For this to be fulfilled, the employees should have the energy and enthusiasm to serve the customers with utmost sincerity. In creating a sense of positivity and selfless service among the employees, the hotels have a major role to play. This study focuses on the effect of perceived organizational support (POS) on positive affectivity and its effect on the altruistic behaviour of the employees among the five and three star hotels in Ernakulam district. The results of the study proved that perceived organizational support has an effect on positive affectivity of the employees, which in turn had an effect on altruism. The study proves to give an insight into the importance of devising suitable strategies by the hotels to keep the employees happy in the workplace by proving them the required support from their part.

Keywords: *Hospitality, Customer Service, Perceived Organizational Support, Positive Affectivity, Altruism, Hotel.*

1. Introduction

Hospitality industry is a very important component of any nation. Unlike the other industries, the success of this industry depends solely on the services provided by the employees. Their capability to effectively deal with the customers and offer quality service depends on their inner positivity and emotional state. This requires employees to be highly energetic and pleasant. Especially in hotels, the initial impression that the customers form decide the rate of repeated visits. This holds highly true in star hotels, where the expectations of great services are high. It is, thus, essential to have employees with a positive mind-set. Positive affectivity describes the positive affects experienced by people. It is a human characteristic.

Individuals with high positive affectivity are greatly enthusiastic, active and confident. The presence of positive affectivity also decides the extent of interaction of the individual with others. "Positive affectivity tends to increase creativity and brings about happiness" (Barsade& Gibson, 2007). Research studies shows that people who are high in positive affectivity can concentrate on their tasks fully, are energetic and determined and also reduces turnover and promotes organizational commitment.

Concern for others is a vital requirement in the hospitality sector. The employees need to be concerned about the feelings and emotions of the customers. Rather, about their well-being. Altruism is, thus, the determinant of high customer satisfaction and loyalty. The quality of helping

others is the most critical factor required in this sector. Positive emotions help people to build social connections and thereby, to build rapport with the customers. "Altruism is a multifarious and multidimensional concept. It is a broad family of motives that cause people to help others" (Wilson, 2015).

The positive mind-set of the employees is influenced by the working environment and the true concern of the organization for the employees. The extent to which the employees believe that they are valued and taken care of by the organization greatly affects their emotions. If the perceived organizational support is high, the employees will feel valued and will result in positive mental state, which directly affects their quality of the services they offer.The organizational support theory framework, according to Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) suggests that, "providing employees with fairness in terms of procedures, supervisor support, and organizational rewards and/or positive job conditions results in employees increased feelings of being valued and cared for by the organization".

This study is an attempt to uncover the effect of perceived organizational support on positive affectivity and its effect on altruism among the employees in the five and three star hotels in Ernakulam district.

2. Research Gap

Being a service intensive industry, the survival of hotels depends on the service quality of the employees. It is important for them to be cheerful and be in a positive mental state so that they can serve their customers to the fullest. "Display of positive emotions resulting in socially desirable employee expression leads to customer satisfaction" (Pugh, 2001). Several research studies related to hotels have focused on the need for positive affectivity and altruism among the employees. Only limited studies focus on the role of the organization in creating positive affectivity among the employees. The present study encompasses the importance of perceived organizational support, positive affectivity

and altruism among the employees in the five and three star hotels in Ernakulam district.

3. Theoretical Framework
Perceived Organizational Support

Perceived organizational support is defined as, "employees' general perception regarding the extent to which their organization values their contribution and cares about their well-being" (Eisenberger, et.al., 1986). The concept of POS is derived from the social exchange theory and reciprocity. According to Eisenberger and Stinglhamber (2011), "employees reciprocate for the positive treatments they receive form the organization by developing and displaying more favorable attitudes and behaviors toward the organization". It is a general perception of the employees towards the organization and "the extent to which the organization values their contribution and care about their well-being" (Eisenberger, et.al., 1986).

The concept of POS is based on the organizational support theory proposed by Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002). POS results in several positive outcomes for the employees and the organization. It will increase the commitment, engagement, organizational citizenship behaviour and reduces the turnover among the employees. POS, in short, will increase the obligation of the employees to help their organization to reach the goals. It also affects their expectation that higher performance will be rewarded. It will also increase their in-role and extra-role behaviour and performance and will undoubtedly decrease the turnover, absenteeism and withdrawal behaviour.

Higher levels of POS improves the work attitudes of the employees and result in effective work behaviors. This will increase their interest in helping their organization succeed. The support from the organization will elicit several positive responses from the employees. It will also enhance their overall sense of well-being. Hakeem, and Nisa (2016) have identified the significant antecedents and consequences of POS from the literature. The

antecedents proposed by them are – rewards and job conditions, career development, supervisor support, co-worker support, procedural justice and work-family support. The outcomes of POS are – job satisfaction, reduced stress and strain, organizational commitment, employee engagement, in-role performance, organizational citizenship behaviour and decreased turnover intention and withdrawal behaviour.

Positive Affectivity

Positive affectivity describes the extent to which an individual experience positive feelings and emotions. It also effects the level of an individual's interaction with others and the surroundings. People with higher degree of positive affectivity are very energetic, enthusiastic and confident. Positive affectivity affects the social behaviour and the interpersonal processes of an individual. It also influences the cognitive skills as well as the decision making and the problem solving capability of the individual. Positive affectivity stems from positive psychology. It describes the factors that allows an individual to foster and flourish and to adapt to any situation in creative ways (Crompton and Hoffman, 2013).

According to Fredrickson (2011), positive emotions have the capability to affect their intellectual and social resources. Positive emotions play a motivational role in the behaviour of an individual (Ray, 2005). Positive psychology provides pleasant experiences and enhances well-being (Csikszentmihalyi, 2009). Sense of well-being results in satisfaction, contentment and social bonding. It also promotes optimism and happiness. Positive affectivity leads to several favourable outcomes for the individual and the organization. Research studies indicate that positive emotions increases satisfaction, commitment, extra-role behaviours, retention and reduces absenteeism. It also significantly reduces burnout thereby maintaining good health of the individual. Positive and productive social exchanges is another important outcome of positive affectivity.

Altruism

Altruism or altruistic behaviour is understood my researchers as a selfless behaviour of an individual with a focus on enhancing the welfare of others. It brings in a social bonding among people (Wuthnow, 1993). It is a behaviour of an individual without any intention to gain personal benefit. Social exchange is found to be the basis of altruism. It is defined by Berkowitz (1972) as, "an act done to benefit others without any intention to receive any benefit in return from the other people". The only benefit they want in return is the pleasure of knowing that they have helped someone who wanted help or support. Wuthow (1993) also defines true altruism as "a purely selfless act which corresponds to a much higher level of existence which an individual can only aspire to". Several research studies have found that the intention to help others is found to be either a personality factor or a situational factor that have an impact on the behaviour. It was also found by researchers that the altruistic trait stems from empathy (Stotland, et.al., 1978). Altruistic behaviour is also displayed by an individual due to the belief that others' welfare is his/her personal responsibility (Berkowitz and Daniels, 1964).

The term altruism was first coined by Auguste Comte in 1851. He described it as an intention for self-gratification and "an unselfish desire to live for others". Through promoting the welfare of others, the individual intends to increase his/her own welfare and well-being. But in modern situations, it is difficult to expect true altruism from majority of the people. So the pure motives of altruism is unfulfilled (Warneken and Tomasello, 2009). According to Einolf (2011), "the pureness of altruistic behavior may also derive from religious ideals, values, and beliefs of helping others". There are several socio-psychological and personal factors that greatly contribute to the emergence of altruism among the individual. It is said to be an extension of prosocial behaviour which is a voluntary act that results in greater benefit for others.

Several studies have pointed towards the existence of reciprocal altruism rather than true altruism. True altruism is exhibited only by very few individuals in the modern society. Fennel (2006) describes reciprocal altruism as "a human social behaviour that exists between individuals who are not relatives who expect to have reciprocal interactions that result in benefit for both the parties". People are said to help each other with an expectation to get something in return. Reciprocal altruism is found to be prevalent especially in the hospitality research. Altruistic behaviour is an important element in the hotel business. The readiness to serve others without expecting anything in return will add on to the service quality of the employees. Altruism is also found to have relation with several other individual traits including self-esteem, locus of control, self-actualization and so on.

Perceived Organizational Support and Positive Affectivity

According to researchers, perceived organizational support is suggestive of positive behaviour and emotions. "The feeling of being highly cared and valued by the organization result in positive job-related emotions" (Eisenberger, et.al., 1986). High POS, according to Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002), is associated with positive mood for an individual. The overall supportive environment in the organization promotes better interactions among the employees and result in good and positive emotional states. The notion of being taken care of by the organization leads to an emotional reaction that benefits both the employee and the organization. Several important outcomes are associated with POS including affective commitment, higher job involvement and increased performance (Eisenberger, et al., 2001). All these outcomes are resultant of the optimistic and constructive mental state of the employees. The support provided by the organization will result in employees experiencing positive effects. This study is an attempt to understand the effect of POS on positive affectivity.

Positive Affectivity and Altruism

The thought of helping others will mostly arise in the minds of individuals who are in a positive mental state. In short, the act of altruism indicates the positive mental state of an individual. The true feelings of generosity and kindness is determined by the optimism and cheerfulness of the individual. Positivity brings about happiness, hope, trust and creativity and also helps in building relationships with others. These positive emotions help an individual to cope up with difficult situations through creativity (Lipschitz and Itzhaky, 2005). Positive emotions experienced by an individual acts as an antecedent to creating a desire to serve others without expecting anything in return. Positive affectivity is predominantly linked to building positive relations and social bonding between people. Adams (1967) suggests that there occurs a positive "spill-over" and a positive concern for others. This positive concern acts as an accelerating force behind the development of pro-social behaviour which results in the act of helping others. The positive mood of an individual results in greater concern about the well-being of others. Positive affect that the individuals experience is found to have an effect on their interaction with others and the surroundings.

The theory of egoism is behind the concept of positive affectivity whereas social exchange theory is behind the concept of reciprocal altruism. The social exchange theory proposes that social behaviour or relationship is the result of the exchange process that happen between people. The exchange is aimed at maximising gain for the individuals involved in the exchange process. The theory of egoism proposes that people tend to do favours to their kin because of their genetic similarity. Generally people are interested to help people who they know. Empathy towards others is the source of altruism and it focused on the welfare of others.

4. Objectives of the Study

1. To understand the effect of perceived organizational support on positive affectivity among the five and three star hotel employees.
2. To analyse the effect of positive affectivity on altruism among the employees.

Proposed Model of the Study
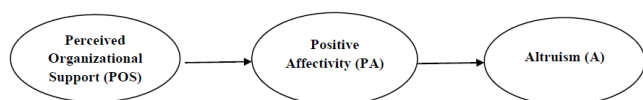
5. Research methodology

The study was conducted among the managerial employees and the front office employees who have a direct interaction with the customers. The data was collected from 96 front office and managerial employees of five and three star hotels in Ernakulam.

Questionnaire for the study was administered to 96 front office and managerial employees of five and three star hotels in Ernakulam district. Five point likert scale was used for the study in which, 1 = ''strongly disagree'', 2 = "disagree", 3 = "neutral", 4 = "agree", 5 = "strongly agree". Items were coded in a way that high scores equate to high levels of the construct of interest.

6. Measures Used

Perceived Organizational support was measured using the scale adapted fromEisenberger, et.al (1986).

Positive affectivity was measured using NAPAS (Negative and Positive Affect Scale) developed byMroczekand Kolarz (1998).

Altruism was measured using the Altruistic Personality Scale developed by Rushton, et.al. (1981).

Data Analysis and Discussion of Results

The data was analyzed using SPSS and Warp PLS.

Reliability Analysis

The reliability and validity of the constructs were checked.

Table 1 Reliability Analysis

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Perceived Organizational Support	.879
Positive Affectivity	.927
Altruism	.854

Source: - Data Analysis

The results of the reliability analysis shows that all the constructs in the study are highly reliable. All the values are well above the threshold suggested by Heir et.al. (2003). The values are ranging from .854 to .927.

In order to understand the effect of perceived organizational support on positive affectivity and the effect of positive affectivity on altruism, the following analysis was performed in WarpPLS and the result of the analysis is presented below.
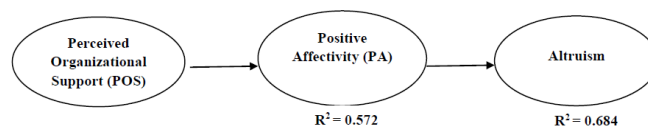

Table 2 Path Co-efficient and P-value

	Path co-efficient (β)	P-value
POS ⟶ PA	0.33	<0.01
PA ⟶ A	0.47	<0.01

Source: - Data Analysis

Discussion of Results

The study found that perceived organizational support had an effect on the positive affectivity of the employees (57%). The feeling that the organization is taking care of them, affects their emotions positively. It promotes positive organizational behaviour which results in improved performance and commitment towards the organization. The expectations from five and three

star hotels are comparatively higher because of the higher price for their services. So it is essential to meet the standard and it is possible only with the ardent services of the employees.The hotels should support their employees in all possible ways, including helping them strike work-life balance.

POS yields several positive consequences for the employees as well as the organization. The very feeling of being considered and valued will enhance the esteem and morale of the employees which will undoubtedly reflect in the services they offer. The positive emotions will help in building rapport with others and enhance the feeling of concern for others. Positive affectivity triggers happiness and confidence. This will promote well-being for oneself and others. "The interactions employees have at work with one another and a supportive work environment result in positive emotional states" (Eisenberger, et al., 1986). The study also proved that positive affectivity had an effect on the altruistic behaviour of the employees (68%).

7. Implications of the study

This study reflects on the importance of organization in producing positive consequences for both the organization and the individual. In the hotel industry, employees should be taken care of in order to bring out the best possible services from them. The study throws light into the role of hotel management in enhancing the well-being of the employees. The employees should feel valued by the organization and in eliciting this feeling, the organization must pay special attention to the needs and emotions of the employees. This will make employees happy and cheerful in their job. The commitment towards the organization will lead to commitment towards serving their customers and a feeling of concerned for others. They offer selfless services to others.All these positive outcomes are dependent on the support offered by the organization to the employees. So, the study brings out the significance of providing the needed support to the employees by the organization and the importance of devising strategies to elicit employee commitment.

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