



Managing customer citizenship behaviour: The moderating roles of employee responsiveness and organizational reassurance



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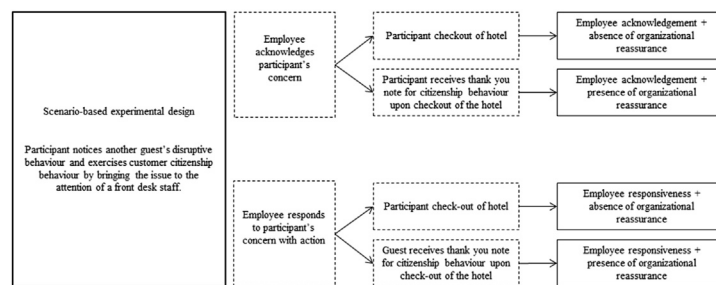
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HIGHLIGHTS

- Examines the influence of employee responsiveness and organizational reassurance towards customer citizenship behaviour.
- Focuses on one aspect of CCB identified in extant literature: the policing of other customers.
- Applies a scenario-based experimental design in the context of a hotel.
- Employee responsiveness and organizational reassurance moderates guest satisfaction, loyalty, and perceived value.

GRAPHICAL ABSTRACT



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ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of employee responsiveness and organizational reassurance towards customer citizenship behaviour (CCB) on building guest satisfaction, loyalty, and perceived value. The study considers insights from concepts in psychology including attachment theory, self-congruity theory, affect infusion model, and social exchange theory which are relevant to the problematics of CCB. The scenario-based experimental design used in this study focuses on one aspect of CCB identified in extant literature: the policing of other customers. In a hospitality context, guests voluntarily participate in safeguarding an organization's quality when they identify areas that may be impacted by opportunistic behaviours of fellow guests. This context is highly relevant in hospitality and tourism settings where the behaviour of one individual may directly impact the experience of another given the co-creation of experience in a shared environment. Both employee responsiveness and organizational reassurance were found to significantly moderate guest satisfaction, loyalty and perceived value.

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1. Introduction

A concept garnering increased attention by tourism and hospitality researchers, and industry practitioners is customer

citizenship behaviour (CCB). Customers, guests, and tourists can often be considered “partial employees” in many service-related businesses such as hotels and group packaged tours (Bove, Pervan, Beatty, & Shiu, 2009; Liu & Tsaur, 2014). They co-create and participate in both the production and consumption of services, and provide feedback on the firm's activities through their direct involvement in the service encounter before departure (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). As transient employees, customers can

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provide extra-role behaviours such as assisting other customers or suggesting areas for service improvements, which are voluntary and helpful behaviours offered to the organization but are not required for core service delivery (Groth, 2005; Lee, Law, & Murphy, 2011; Mudambi & Schuff, 2010; Namasivayam, 2003; Schuckert, Liu, & Law, 2015; Zhang & Tran, 2010). Customers are motivated by a desire to support service providers by giving feedback and to push for improvements in service quality, as well as supporting existing and/or future consumers and their experiences (Yoo & Gretzel, 2008).

Past research shows that CCBs can provide an organization with a potential source of competitive advantage. For example, it can improve organizational performance through enhanced relationships among participants in the service encounter (Rosenbaum & Massiah, 2007; Yi, Natarajan, & Gong, 2011). Past studies have also identified a significant positive relationship between CCB and perceived service quality (Yi & Gong, 2006).

Despite insights from previous research, few studies have examined CCB in a hospitality context. Past studies tend to focus on one specific service encounter between a customer and employee. In hospitality and tourism experiences, an entire service experience typically consists of multiple encounters through different points in time (Bitner, Booms, & Mohr, 1994; Ekinci, Dawes, & Massey, 2008; Liljander & Strandvik, 1995; Weiermair, 2000). For example, a hotel guest may exhibit CCB by providing a front desk staff with a suggestion after check-in. The immediate touch-point of this service encounter is the responsiveness of the employee towards the guest's suggestion. Other potential touch-points during the entire service delivery may include the guest's experience in the lobby, the hotel restaurant(s) or other facilities before finally demonstrating gratitude for the guest's suggestion upon check-out (Paraskevas, 2001; Wu & Liang, 2009).

The present study seeks to address this research gap through a scenario-based experimental design in a hotel context to examine the effects of employee responsiveness and organizational reassurance towards CCB on guest satisfaction, loyalty and perceived value. The authors focus on one type of CCB identified in extant literature which is the "policing of other customers" (Bettencourt, 1997; Bove et al., 2009; Gruen, Summers, & Acito, 2000). This phenomenon refers to a customer observing and reacting to another customer's behaviour to ensure that appropriate behaviours occur or inappropriate behaviours are discouraged. This CCB is highly relevant in a hospitality setting as well as in many tourism contexts such as group tours, events or attractions where the behaviour of one customer may directly impact the experience of another given the shared environment and the co-creation of experience (Jo Bitner, Faranda, Hubbert, & Zeithaml, 1997; Huang, 2008; Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1997; Verhoef et al., 2009).

The study examines both employee responsiveness and organization reassurance towards this CCB in two different service encounters. First, the study considers the responsiveness of the employee: acknowledgement of the concern (e.g., "thank you for your feedback") versus responsiveness (e.g., attempts to take immediate action to address concern). Second, the study examines the influence of a follow-up service reassurance by the hotel (e.g., presence or absence of gratitude) towards the guest's citizenship behaviour.

The authors begin by drawing upon concepts in psychology that should be considered in this context including attachment theory (Bowlby, 1973), self-congruity theory (Landon, 1974; Sirgy, 1982), and affect infusion model (Forgas, 1995). These concepts are relevant to the problematics of CCB; for example, attachment theory in consumer research suggests the strength of the relationship or bond between the consumer and the organization's brand can define a consumer's willingness to make sacrifices (i.e., CCB) for an

organization. It is also important to consider self-congruity theory as guests assume identities as both "consumers" and "partial employees"; in this regard, self-congruity theory suggests the match (or mismatch) between a brand and an individual's self-identity could influence their attitudes and choices. As per the CCB context of this study – "policing of other customers" – guests may develop a sense of obligation and/or entitlement to express concerns to hotel representatives when fellow guests demonstrate unacceptable behaviours. The voluntary nature of CCB – as well as the study's scenario of expressing concerns, or negative affect – lends itself to the affect infusion model, which provides insight into how positive or negative affect could influence an individual's cognitive judgement into the risks and gains within a particular situation. In this vein, another contribution of this study is considering how these concepts could complement social exchange theory to address opportunities for capturing CCB, enabling guests to help and contribute to success of the organization.

The study is also informed by social exchange theory (Homans, 1958), showing that employee responsiveness and organizational reassurance towards CCB moderates guest satisfaction, loyalty, and perceived value towards the organization – here the hotel. Social exchange theory (SET) involves a system of reciprocity between parties which includes not only material goods but also symbolic value (e.g., approval and prestige). The central essence of SET is contingent upon receiving reactions from others, which over time, result in mutually and rewarding transactions and relationships (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). In this regard, this study contributes to the theoretical understanding and development of CCBs in the hospitality and tourism management literature by examining the moderating effects of employee responsiveness and organizational reassurance on customer satisfaction, loyalty, and perceived value. Methodologically, the use of scenario-based experimental designs is growing in the field of tourism and hospitality, but remained relatively limited in the context of CCB. This study represents an opportunity to contribute to this stream of research by providing a detailed discussion of the considerations and steps of a scenario-based experimental approach. The authors conclude with practical managerial implications for industry by discussing how tourism and hospitality practitioners can capitalize on CCB opportunities.

2. Literature review

2.1. Defining customer citizenship behaviour

Customer citizenship behaviour (CCB) comprises of extra-role behaviours that customers voluntarily engage in during or after the service delivery (Groth, 2005; Gruen, 1995). Other terms for CCB in the literature include customer voluntary performance and customer extra-role behaviours (Bailey, Gremler, & McCollough, 2001; Bettencourt, 1997; Rosenbaum & Massiah, 2007). Extra-role behaviours may involve a sacrifice on the customer's part (such as time and effort) which are outside the customer's required role for service delivery, but are provided as help, assistance or support to benefit an organization (Keh & Teo, 2001).

Bettencourt (1997) described CCB as consisting of three generic dimensions: loyalty, cooperation, and participation. Groth (2005) later identified three different aspects: making recommendations, providing feedback to the organization, and helping other customers based on citizenship behaviours in internet service deliveries. In an effort to consider a broader set of behavioural elements, Bove et al. (2009) developed eight conceptually distinct types of CCB from the organizational behaviour and marketing literature: (1) positive word of mouth, (2) displays of relationship affiliation, (3) participation in a firm's activities, (4) benevolent acts

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