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The Influence of Employee Conduct on Clients' Perceptions of Quality of Service and Overall Contentment

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Abstract: The current study aims to examine the correlation between both favorable and adverse behaviors exhibited by staff, the impression of the service provided by consumers, and overall customer satisfaction. The findings of the ongoing inquiry establish a strong correlation between the behavior of all personnel, irrespective of its positive or negative nature, and the general contentment of clients. The study investigated the impact of behaviors on customers' perceptions and overall satisfaction by analyzing pertinent literature and collecting insights on how employees' behaviors influence customers' perception of quality and overall satisfaction. The studies in this context have confirmed the correlation between these variables and their following and alternating influence. Furthermore, it has been determined that the behavior of employees significantly impacts the overall contentment of customers, irrespective of their gender, country, purpose of visit, frequency of visits, and duration of stay. Ultimately, the study provides guidance and tangible methods for hotel employees to strategically execute effective strategies that inspire employees to exhibit favorable behaviors towards guests.

Keywords: satisfaction, organization, hotel, employee.

1. Introduction

Within any hotel business, a diverse range of employee behaviors can be noticed within the workplace. Employees' behaviors encompass the multitude of acts performed by individuals employed within the organization. [1]. Employees can display certain behaviors that are advantageous, demonstrating their constructive acts in favor of the firm, fellow employees, and customers. Conversely, there could be negative behaviors that can impair a productive work atmosphere. The existence of negative behaviors may elicit tension, provoke minor illnesses, and perhaps result in depression among employees. The peril is in the capacity of these harmful behaviors to spread and contaminate others, like to a highly contagious influenza virus[2]. This can exert a substantial influence on the productivity of the organization and ultimately have adverse consequences for the health and performance of its staff. Researchers states that the harmful conduct of employees with a pessimistic mindset has caused enormous harm to many businesses, leading to daily financial losses in the millions for employers. Furthermore, it results in the estrangement of customers, diminishes work morale, and adds to elevated employee turnover rates [3].

The acts of employees are crucial in a service organization as they form a vital link between the organization and its clients. Furthermore, they play a crucial role in establishing prosperous professional connections with clients. Furthermore, they can ensure consumer satisfaction by keeping the promises given to the customer. Saad and Amy posited that consumer happiness can be attributed to three main factors: staff conduct, service excellence, and pricing. Hence, the behaviors exhibited by staff have a substantial influence on consumers' perception of service quality and their overall satisfaction[4].

ISSN: 1001-4055 Vol. 44 No. 6 (2023)

Customer perception refers to the degree of concurrence between anticipated expectations and the real-life encounter. When there is compatibility, if the customer is pleased, they are seen as content. Customer satisfaction is determined by evaluating the perceived effectiveness of a product or service in relation to the customer's initial expectations. When the performance surpasses expectations, it results in affirmative validation and contentment. Conversely, if the performance does not meet expectations, it leads to negative confirmation and dissatisfaction (5). Bei and Chiao (6) investigated customer satisfaction as the result of perceived service quality, product quality, and cost, which are evaluated based on a customer's overall assessment. In their study, Dimitris et al. (7) provided a definition of customer satisfaction as the assessment of the extent to which a product or service fulfils the expectations of a customer.

The employees of a firm play a vital role in influencing consumers' perceptions and satisfaction. They bear the ultimate responsibility for providing a service of superior quality that meets consumers' expectations (8).

The objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between positive and negative behaviors displayed by employees, the perception of service quality by consumers, and the overall satisfaction of customers. The primary objective of this study is to evaluate whether 5-star hotels in Egypt take into account the conduct of their staff and its impact on customers' impression of service quality and overall satisfaction. Additionally, its objective is to establish principles for improving employees' comprehension of their conduct and its correlation with customers' sense of service excellence and overall contentment. Finally, its aim is to offer recommendations and practical applications for hotel professionals to strategically devise and execute efficient methods to promote favorable employee conduct towards clients.

Hypotheses

Five hypotheses were formulated based on the assessment of existing literature and the aims of the study.

H1: Employee behavior significantly influences client satisfaction.

Hypothesis 1a: The positive behavior exhibited by employees directly influences the overall contentment of customers.

H1b: The staff's unpleasant behavior detrimentally affects clients' overall contentment.

H2: The behavior of employees has a considerable impact on consumers' perception of the quality of service.

H2a: The positive behaviors exhibited by employees directly influence consumers' opinion of the quality of service.

H2b: Employee misbehavior detrimentally affects clients' opinion of the quality of service.

H3: The level of customer satisfaction is strongly linked to how customers perceive the quality of service.

H4: The influence of employees' conduct on total customer satisfaction varies depending on the characteristics and inclinations of the customers.

H5: The influence of employees' conduct on total client satisfaction fluctuates depending on the specifics of the visit.

Methodology

The data was acquired from affluent hotel patrons in Uttar Pradesh. A random sample of 33 five-star hotels, which accounts for 30.5 percent of the total population of 108 five-star hotels according to UP tourist data, was selected. A grand total of 330 surveys were delivered, with each individual hotel receiving a set of ten questions.

Development of a Questionnaire

A poll was created to examine the relationship between employees' positive and negative behaviors, customers' opinion of the quality of service, and total customer satisfaction. This study was based on the research conducted by Parasuraman et al. (1988), a thorough review of relevant literature. The research questionnaire was based on the SERVQUAL scale, developed by Parasuraman et al. (9). The employees' behaviors have been categorized into five groups according to the SERVQUAL model: responsiveness, reliability, assurance, tangibility, and empathy. The initial segment of the questionnaire aimed to gather data pertaining to the customer's profile, including their age,

ISSN: 1001-4055 Vol. 44 No. 6 (2023)

gender, nationality, socioeconomic status, purpose of visit, prior accommodation experiences, duration of stay, and frequency of visits.

The latter portion of the questionnaire consisted of 40 statements that outlined both bad and favorable employee behaviors. The statements in the questionnaire were presented in a haphazard and unorganized fashion. The impact of the designated employee behaviors on customer satisfaction was evaluated using a five-point scale that spanned from (-2) to (+2). A grade of (-2) signifies a little effect on customer satisfaction for good behaviors, whilst a value of (+2) signifies a substantial effect on customer satisfaction. A rating of (0) indicated a neutral impact. The measure exhibited a negative correlation with undesired behaviors.

While tallying the data, the responses were categorized into three unique groups: Satisfied (consisting of scores of +2 and +1), Neutral (consisting of a score of 0), and Unsatisfied (consisting of scores of -2 and -1).

The final segment of the survey comprised two inquiries that sought to assess the influence of employee conduct, be it negative or positive, on consumers' assessment of the service they receive and overall contentment. Respondents provided their answers on a five-point Likert scale, with a score of 1 indicating a minimum effect and a score of 5 indicating a substantial influence.

Pre-Testing and Pilot Assessment of the Questionnaire

A team of five professionals specializing in survey design and academia assessed the face authenticity of the questionnaire.

The respondents were directed to evaluate an initial version of the instrument and offer feedback regarding its clarity, language, consistency, finishing time, and the questionnaire's efficacy in measuring its intended variables. Their remarks highlighted the lack of clarity in certain terms and proposed integrating alternative assertions concerning employee conduct. The necessary modifications have been executed.

A sample of 20 clients was used to test the second iteration to identify any deficiencies or problems with the structure and design of the questionnaire. The objective was to collect suggestions, evaluate the practicality of the predicted timeframe for questionnaire completion, and analyses the participants' understanding of the designed questionnaire.

After analyzing the results of the pilot test and consulting with relevant experts, some adjustments were made. The second component of the questionnaire underwent substantial revisions, replacing the seven-point scale used to evaluate the impact of employees' activities on customer satisfaction with a simpler five-point measure. To streamline the questionnaire process, the number of behaviors has been lowered from 50 to 40.

2. Results

Characteristics of the Participants

The respondents' demographic profile and the features of their visit are displayed in **figure 1.** The participants represented several regions, including Ayodhya (22.4%), Mathura (20%), Lucknow (16.7%), Agra (12.9%), and others (23.8%).

ISSN: 1001-4055 Vol. 44 No. 6 (2023)

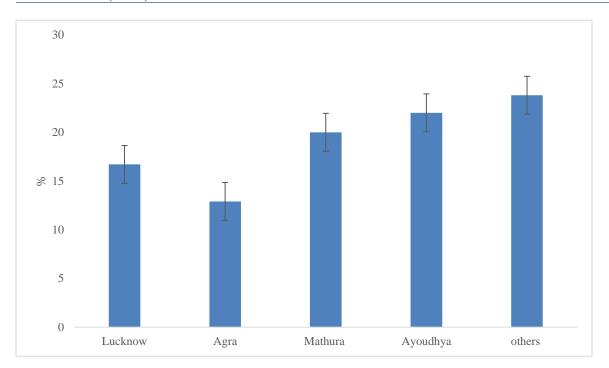


Figure 1: The demographic profile of the respondents and the characteristics of their visit are presented.

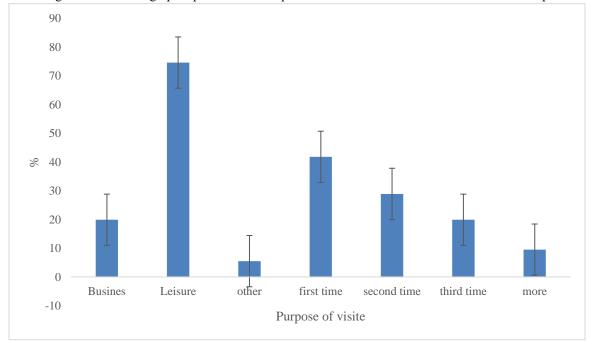


Figure 1.b. Attributes associated with the visit

The subjects were categorized into distinct age cohorts. The age cohort with the largest proportion (27.9%) was the 30–40-year-old group, followed by the 20-30 year old group (25.9%), the 40-50 year old group (21.9%), and the 50-60 year aged group (13.4%). The demographic consisting of individuals aged 60 and above constituted 6% of the overall population, while the demographic comprising individuals under the age of 20 constituted 5%. Males constituted a majority of the participants, with a proportion of 55.2%, while females made up 44.8%. The majority

ISSN: 1001-4055 Vol. 44 No. 6 (2023)

of clientele, specifically 59.2 percent, were married. 29.9 percent of the consumers were single, while 10.9 percent had other situations such as engagement and divorce. Considering the aim of the visit, most consumers (74.6 per cent) indicated that they travelled for leisure, while 19.9 per cent indicated reasons related to business and only 5.5 per cent identified other causes such as contacting relatives/friends or purchasing. Among the entire customer base, a substantial chunk (41.8%) consisted of initially hotel visitors, while 28.9% were returning for their second visit. In addition, 19.9% of the individuals were on their third visit, while only 9.5% had visited the hotel more than three times. Approximately 36.8% of guests stayed at the establishment for a length of from 4 to 6 nights. Approximately 33.8% of clients had a duration of stay that fell within the range of 2 to 4 nights. Additionally, a mere 8.0% of consumers experienced a duration of only one night.

The results of the current study, as shown in **table 1**, demonstrate that all negative behaviors had a substantial negative effect on customers' general satisfaction. The behaviors (D10) in the empathy category had the lowest recorded percent, with 57.7% of consumers expressing unhappiness with it. The behavior labelled as A6 in the reliability grouping, which pertains to personnel declining to modify submitted orders, had the most substantial adverse effect on consumers' overall satisfaction. Therefore, an overwhelming majority of customers (97.51 per cent) expressed dissatisfaction. The considerable adverse consequences of such behaviors might be attributed to the customers' inclination to support a hotel in which they are spending their money. As a result, they expect to receive services that satisfy their expectations. Discontentment emerges promptly after a disruption in the process of delivering services. Eventually, as every negative behavior was discovered to have a substantial adverse effect on customers' satisfaction, hypothesis H1a is validated. This observation is corroborated by Berry's (1999) claim that service frequently fails to meet expectations, irrespective of its apparent excellence, when clients sense neglect, such as when service personnel display discourteous conduct. Consequently, this impedes the potential for recuperating from a dissatisfactory service encounter.

Conversely, the outcomes for the favorable actions mentioned in **Table 2** had a noteworthy beneficial influence on consumers' overall contentment, with the exception of behavior (B1) under the responsiveness category. Most of the consumers (58.21%) indicated a neutral impact of this behavior. (D4) The practice of actively and empathetically listening to consumers and addressing their requirements in a positive way received the highest rating for its substantial influence on consumer happiness (99%). Subsequently, there was a highly effective implementation of the check-in process (98.5%) and a committed effort to resolve customer complaints (98.01%). This study supports hypothesis H1b as it found that almost all positive behaviors had a significant positive impact on customers' overall happiness. Thus, it may be deduced that the actions of employees have a direct impact on the overall satisfaction of customers, as indicated in premise 1.

Table 1: The influence of positive as well as negative behaviors on the overall experience of customers

		Satisfied			Neutral		1	Unsatisfied
Behaviors demonstrating reliability		R.	%		R.	%		R. %
1.	Makes sure equitable handling of every customer.	194	96.52	7		3.48	0	0.00
2.	Executes the billing process with precision and accuracy.	166	82.59	3.	5	17.41	0	0.00
3.	Delivers timely and effective replies to your needs.	182	90.55	1:	9	9.45	0	0.00
4.	Induces avoidable delays in fulfilling a request, leading to an extended waiting period.	0	0.00	3:	3	16.42	168	83.58
5.	Does not actively solicit or promote comments from	3	1.49	2	6	12.94	172	2 85.57
	Does not proactively seek or endorse							

ISSN: 1001-4055 Vol. 44 No. 6 (2023)

		1		1	1		-
6	comments from consumers. Refuses to make alterations to	1	0.50	1	1.00	196	07.51
6.	Refuses to make alterations to previously placed orders.	1	0.50	4	1.99	196	97.51
7.	Consistently experience erroneous and	0	0.00	12	5.97	189	94.03
7.	imprecise invoicing.	0	0.00	12	3.91	109	34.03
	procedures.						
Actions	displaying a prompt and attentive attitude						
8.	Addresses consumers using their given names.	79	39.30	117	58.21	5	2.49
9	Responds to incoming phone calls in a	194	96.52	7	3.48	0	0.00
10	kind and helpful manner. Cater to the unique requirements of	187	93.03	10	4.98	4	1.99
10	consumers with disabilities.	10/	93.03	10	4.96	4	1.99
11	Exerts utmost diligence to address and	197	98.01	4	1.99	0	0.00
11	resolve all of your problems	177	70.01		1.55		0.00
12	Responds to your grievances in an	1	0.50	8	3.98	192	95.5
	impolite and unfavourable manner.						70.0
13	Leads to a sense of being disregarded	0	0.00	6	2.99	195	97.0
	in the flurry of tasks.						
14	Exhibits negative emotions in the workplace.	0	0.00	4	1.99	193	96.0
15	Refuses to accommodate particular	1	0.50	11	5.47	189	94.0
	demands, claiming it is not within their jurisdiction.						
Indicati	ons of confidence					<u> </u>	
16	Demonstrates appropriate decorum when interacting with you.	160	79.6	41	20.4	0	0.00
17	Demonstrates the ability to cultivate	174	86.5	27	13.4	0	0.00
	harmonious relationships with clients.						
18	Demonstrates an extensive	158	78.6	43	21.3	0	0.00
	understanding of all goods and services.						
19	Lacks the ability to maintain	5	2.49	21	10.4	175	87.0
	comprehensive documentation of items, orders, and other relevant information.						
20	Insufficient information provided	1	0.50	23	11.4	177	88.0
	during the point of sale.						
21	The receptionist turns away from you while facing in the opposite direction.	0	0.00	26	12.9	175	87.0
	"" the facing in the opposite uncetion.						
22	Offers a warm greeting and displays a	194	96.5	7	3.48	0	0.00
	wide grin.						
				1	1	<u> </u>]

ISSN: 1001-4055 Vol. 44 No. 6 (2023)

23	Engages in courteous conversation	194	96.5	4	1.99	3	1.49
	with you.						

This finding aligns with the current corpus of works and other empirical inquiries carried out by other specialists. Grönroos (1990) noted that the behavior of employees in a service organization creates a connection between the organization and its clients. Furthermore, Hansen et al. (2003) argued that if a client is satisfied with the interaction with a formal employee, it is probable that the customer will maintain the relationship for an extended period. Liao (2007) examined the correlation between the conduct of customer service personnel and their proficiency in managing customer complaints and recovering from service mishaps. The objective of this study was to comprehend how these behaviors influence the view of service organizations and contribute to favorable client outcomes.

The results obtained by the researcher from both a field study and a research experiment demonstrated that the performance of service recovery, which includes actions such as offering an apology, problem-solving, and displaying courteous and timely handling, had a beneficial effect on customer satisfaction and future consumer repurchase intention. The impact was conveyed through the customer's feeling of fairness.

The results are illustrated in **Table 2** With respect to the Reliability dimension, the results reveal that 54.23 percent of customers' responses demonstrated a substantial impact of these behaviors on overall satisfaction. Conversely, a mere 13.43 per cent of customers' feedback suggested that satisfaction had a negligible effect on the same aspect. Therefore, it can be deduced that the collection of behaviors linked to the reliability aspect has the greatest influence on the degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction among hotel guests.

Table 2: Customers' satisfaction according to their profile

Dimensions	p-value by				
	Gender	Nationality	Purpose of visit	Number of visits	Length of stay
1. Reliability					
1.	0.17	0.12	0.166	0.128	0.236
2.	0.20	0.33	0.251	0.101	0.086
3.	0.23	0.17	0.116	0.204	0.168
4.	0.38	0.31	0.213	0.146	0.286
5.	0.06	0.41	0.16	0.161	0.177
6.	0.31	0.19	0.213	0.056	0.282
7.	0.41	0.31	0.166	0.174	0.122
2. Responsiveness					
8.	0.31	0.25	0.262	0.081	0.17
9	0.18	0.22	0.132	0.119	0.281
10	0.13	0.36	0.181	0.263	0.3
11.	0.02*	0.33	0.263	0.172	0.172
12	0.01*	0.22	0.263	0.234	0.11
13.	0.40	0.36	0.222	0.169	0.137
14.	0.22	0.33	0.097	0.125	0.177
15	0.33	0.22	0.281	0.136	0.096
3. Assurance					
16.	0.03*	0.16	0.186	0.242	0.102
17	0.35	0.14	0.143	0.232	0.19

ISSN: 1001-4055 Vol. 44 No. 6 (2023)

18	0.05*	0.14	0.151	0.279	0.284
19.	0.36	0.18	0.207	0.265	0.113
20.	0.09	0.39	0.288	0.3	0.135
21	0.44	0.37	0.273	0.099	0.096
4. Empathy					
22	0.46	0.21	0.252	0.221	0.251
23	0.40	0.27	0.221	0.192	0.081

^{*}Correlation exists.

Based on the results of the Responsiveness dimensions, 50.75% of consumers reported a significant level of satisfaction. These findings indicate that responsiveness practices have the second most impact on determining the level of pleasure or discontent among hotel guests. The most powerful aspects in overall consumer happiness are the behaviors of reliability and responsiveness. Consequently, it is imperative for managers of luxury hotels to actively cultivate these behaviors by encouraging favorable actions and reducing unfavorable actions during customer interactions.

Based on the Tangibility dimension, 45.77% of consumers indicated that these behaviors had a notable effect on their overall satisfaction. Although it is ranked relatively low, this behavioral group should not be considered less important. According to the survey results, 40.30 percent of respondents reported a moderate influence on overall satisfaction, while only 13.93 percent reported a low impact of this behavioral group on overall satisfaction.

Regarding the Assurance dimensions, 42.29 percent of responses from customers indicated a noteworthy effect on overall satisfaction, while a considerable proportion (25.37 percent) of replies showed a small influence of these behaviors on overall satisfaction. Based on the statistics, the Empathy element was determined to have the lowest influence on overall customer satisfaction. Only 36.32% of the responses were utilized to assess the influence on satisfaction, revealing a substantial impact. In addition, over 43.78% of the respondents indicated a moderate impact on satisfaction.

In summary, the aforementioned data suggest that employees' behaviours have an impact on overall happiness. However, the extent of this impact differs across several behavioural categories, as evaluated by SERVQUAL (tangibility, responsiveness, assurance, reliability, and empathy). This reconfirms hypothesis H1.

Testing the second and third hypotheses of the study presented further challenges. Assessing the impact of actions on customer perceptions and overall satisfaction necessitates a substantial period of time to precisely ascertain this influence. The hypotheses were first evaluated by conducting a thorough examination of existing literature. Subsequently, customer feedback was collected to assess the impact of employee activities on customer perceptions of service and overall satisfaction. Existing literature has firmly demonstrated that customer perceptions of service quality have a pivotal impact on determining total customer satisfaction. This relationship has undergone thorough examination and is well recognised in the field of services marketing. Recent evidence has substantiated a cause-and-effect connection between perceptions of service quality and evaluations of satisfaction within the hotel sector. Collier and Coldstein (2004) have corroborated this correlation, while Robert et al. (2006) have additionally unearthed that customer perception of quality exerts a substantial influence on customer satisfaction. In 2007, Hensley and Sulek conducted a study to examine the relationship between consumers' impression of service quality and their overall satisfaction. The researchers employed three metrics to evaluate customers' impression of service quality: propensity to endorse the service to acquaintances, inclination to introduce acquaintances to the service, and intentions to continue using it. The study's findings revealed a robust and statistically significant link between the two variables.

The results on the impact of employees' conduct on customers' assessment of the quality of service and overall satisfaction are displayed in Table 4. The average scores for both factors were significantly high, reaching 3.7 and

ISSN: 1001-4055 Vol. 44 No. 6 (2023)

3.9 correspondingly. The feedback from consumers substantiated the substantial impact of employees' conduct, whether favorable or negative, on both parameters. This establishes a link between them. Therefore, hypotheses H 2 and H 3 are confirmed.

The Chi-square (2) test was used to assess the influence of behaviors on customers' overall pleasure, as indicated by customer responses. The objective of this investigation was to evaluate the disparities in customer profiles. Table 5 was employed to provide a basis for the comparison process, considering several criteria like nationality, gender, purpose of visit, duration of stay, number of visits,. The findings indicated that there was no statistically significant correlation between female and male persons regarding the influence of staff behaviors on overall satisfaction. The results indicated that there was a statistically significant distinction between males and females in only seven out of the 40 activities examined.

Customers with varying lengths of stay. From the facts, it can be deduced that employees' behaviors have a substantial influence on overall customer satisfaction, regardless of customers' gender, country, reason for the visit, the number of visits, and time spent stay. Thus, assumptions H 4 and H 5 are not supported.

Previous research can aid managers to determine the most consequential positive and negative behaviors that influence customer satisfaction, and subsequently rank them according to their degree of importance.

3. Conclusion

The findings of the present study indicate that the behaviors exhibited by staff, whether bad or positive, have a direct influence on the overall happiness of consumers.

This finding is consistent with the information found in academic publications and other empirical investigations. Furthermore, the research examined how actions influenced customer perceptions and overall satisfaction by assessing perspectives on the influence of employee behaviors on customers' perception of quality and their overall contentment. The findings in this context validated the link between these variables and their subsequent and reciprocal impact.

After analyzing customer profiles and visit data, it was determined that employee behaviors significantly impact total customer happiness, irrespective of customer gender, nationality, purpose of visit, number of visits, and duration of stay.

To summarize, it is evident that human interaction plays a crucial role in determining customer happiness. When customers are content with the quality of human contact, they may be more inclined to overlook other issues. The hospitality sector significantly depends on providing service to clients, and many of its services are very intangible, relying mainly on creating a favorable customer experience. Within the hotel industry, the effectiveness of hotel management is heavily dependent on the performance of its employees. Consequently, employees have the potential to serve as a fundamental source of competitive advantage.

The values and actions of hotel personnel have a significant impact on service quality and client satisfaction.

Hotel personnel can improve the reputation of the hotel and the perceived and actual quality of service by delivering great service. Hospitality managers can utilize these findings to their advantage by adjusting methods to effectively engage and retain highly proficient, dedicated, and content personnel, while simultaneously ensuring client satisfaction and delight. The organization's likelihood of success increases as management commit resources towards staff development, mirroring their approach with customers.

In summary, the results of this study confirm the conclusions made by Deborah and Wanda (2008), who suggested that developing a method to evaluate the agreeableness trait of hospitality employees could assist hospitality managers in selecting candidates more likely to deliver exceptional customer service and ensure customer satisfaction.

The present investigation encountered various limitations. A constraint of the study was its exclusive emphasis on luxury hotels with a 5-star rating in Egypt. Further inquiries should encompass supplementary categorizations of hotels, along with alternative service settings such as restaurants and motels. The ongoing analysis specifically targeted 40 of the most notable positive and negative staff behaviors. The study's findings were indicative rather

ISSN: 1001-4055 Vol. 44 No. 6 (2023)

than conclusive. An empirical investigation was carried out at a certain moment in time. Engaging in a longitudinal study would yield advantages, as well as incorporating employees in the field study.

This study can offer useful insights for prospective future research, such as performing specialized investigations to ascertain the elements that influence employee conduct and feelings towards the workplace and examining the effect of managerial behavior on staff performance in the workplace. Future research should prioritize the investigation of the same study hypotheses, but from the viewpoints of both clients and personnel. It is imperative to authenticate the conclusions of this research and determine whether the viewpoints of clients and staff members coincide or differ. Furthermore, further study has the potential to build a comprehensive framework for analyzing the links between employees and customers in diverse corporate contexts, resulting in important findings for research efforts in this domain.

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