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THE INFLUENCE OF EMPLOYEE GOAL ORIENTATIONS AND EMPLOYEE SELF-EFFICACY ON PERCEIVED SERVICE QUALITY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to enhance service quality research by examining whether hotel employees attitudes, motivations and behaviors had an effect on perceived service quality. In the recent years, interests in service marketing and practice have become of great importance. The role of the individual service employee has become paramount to the service delivery process (Singh, 2000). A conceptual framework was developed and data was gathered from one 4-Diamond hotel. 184 responses were ultimately used for analyzing, which resulted in an 81% response rate. A full structural model was tested on the hypotheses (both the magnitude and the direction) once the measurement model was obtained. A non-significant path was eliminated and a revised model was tested against an alternative model. Fit indices were assessed for acceptable fits with all three models. Overall, the results of the proposed path model were supported. The relationship between employee self-efficacy and performance orientation was the only hypothesis not support. This study identified that learning and performance goal orientations effects on perceived service quality were mediated by self-efficacy and they both had direct and indirect influences on each other, with the indirect path being stronger.

INTRODUCTION

In the recent years, interests in service marketing and practice have become of great importance. The role of the individual service employee has become paramount to the service delivery process (Singh, 2000). The attitudes and behaviors of contact employees have been empirically tested to influence a customers' perception of service quality (Bowen and Schneider, 1985). Formulating efficient and valued services requires an understanding of employee attitudes, abilities, behaviors and motivational factors that affect performance outcomes (Bowen and Schneider, 1985, Bitner, 1990, Hartline and Ferrell, 1996, Humborstad, et al., 2014).

Decision makers must recognize the behavioral influences within the organization in order to determine how employees interpret and react to the practices, policies, and procedures of the work environment (Levin, 1995). It is believed that individual goal orientations motivate employees to behave in response to certain circumstances and events (Ames and Archer, 1988, Swift et al., 2014). Researchers have found that employee goal orientations can be affected by internal and external factors, which in turn, produces a variety of behaviors that effect employee perceived service quality (Gist and Stevens, 1998, Malik, 2012). Self-efficacy has also been shown to be a mediating factor in determining levels of motivation with specific application to employee task performance (Bandura, 1986).

Recent attention from academic research has focused on individual goal orientations as motivational predictors of employee service behaviors (Colquitt, et al., 2001, Lee et. al., 2006, Porath et al., 2006). Empirical research and theory hold that an individual's goal-oriented behaviors contribute to one's ability to increase performance (Gellatly and Irving, 2001, Colquitt, et al., 2000, Humborstad, et al., 2014). Strong interest has been shown in literature as to the gap between goal-oriented behaviors and performance outcomes (Dweck, 1986, Dweck and Leggett, 1988, Button, 1996). Dweck (1986) defines goal orientation as an individual's predisposition, or motivational orientation toward a task or learning situation. The framework that is the most popular comprises of two motivational constructs: *learning* and *performance*, both of which hold different response patterns (Dweck, 1986). Goal orientation literature states that individual's set goals, works at obtaining these goals, and adjusts their behaviors accordingly, to achieve desired outcomes (Locke and Latham, 2004).

Within the hotel industry, the concept of the service employees motivational behaviors relating to their service quality, is a vital component in remaining competitive and profitable (Mill, 1985). As the delivery of service is highly variable, hotel organizations are dependent on their service employees to try to maintain consistency in their provision of quality service (Cairncross and Kelly, 2008). In order to comprehend what behaviors motivate service employees, it is important first to understand the sources of motivation and any factors that may mediate or moderate this relationship (Bandura, 1990). How an individual determines the selection of their goals (i.e., learning or performance) is the subject that leading hotel organizations recognize as a key component to their success (Lee-Ross, 1998, Lee et al, 2006).

The following section provides a review of literature on employees learning and performance goal orientations, self-efficacy as a mediating variable and perceived service quality. Followed by the section on the data and methodology procedures, along with the results of the tested hypotheses. The last section discusses the conclusions, managerial and academic implications and offers recommendations for future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Quality of service delivered to customer is critical to becoming or remaining successful. The attitudes and behaviors of service employees have been shown to affect the customers' perceptions of service (Bowen and Schneider, 1985). Given the interactive experience between the service, employee and the customer, organizations are struggling to provide exceptional service quality (Schneider and Bowen, 1999). Within the hotel industry, the intense competition and declining economy has led hotel organizations to improve strategies in their service delivery to gain a competitive advantage (Stevens et al., 2007). Kandampully (2002, p. 11) stated "of all the challenges facing the hospitality establishments today – including intense competition, globalization, and technological innovation – the single most pervasive and pressing challenge is the ever increasing demand of customers for service quality."

Goal orientation is usually described as an individual predisposition, or motivational orientation, that one has, towards an achievement situation (Dweck and Leggett, 1988). The objective of motivation research is to understand how the individual determines the "selection activation and sustained direction of behavior toward certain goals" (Bandura, 1990, p.69). Motivation has been a popular construct and goal orientation is one of the predominant models that seeks to explain why people behave the way they do. An extensive amount of research over the past decades has substantially supported that goal orientations have an effect on individual response patterns in a variety of achievement related situations (Button et al., 1996). Goal orientation literature suggests that there are two motivations for achievement: *learning orientation* (mastery) and *performance orientation* (ego), both orientations produce different response patterns (Dweak and Elliot, 1983, Dweck and Leggett, 1988, Preenen, 2014). Individuals with a learning orientation are intrinsically motivated and achieve through acquiring new skills, knowledge and mastering these situations and tasks. These individuals seek out challenges, maintain performance when presented with difficult

situations, and evaluate levels of task mastery to reflect their progress (Sujan, 1994, Bouffard et al., 1995). Performance orientation results in extrinsic motivation and individuals achieve competence by seeking favorable evaluations relative to others, avoid challenges, and when presented with obstacles, performance declines (Diener and Dweck, 1978, Ames and Archer, 1988, Dweck and Leggett 1988).

Organizational research suggests that relationships between goal orientation and performance outcomes are mediated by self-efficacy (Kanfer, 1990, Phillips and Gully, 1997, Steele-Johnson et al., 2000). According to Stajovic and Luthans (2000) and Momeni et al. (2014), an individual's sense of efficacy in their abilities to perform a job that translates into higher job performance. Much of the research on the effects of goal orientation and performance outcomes has been conducted by Kanfer's (1990, p.60) framework, he states, "that goal orientation was considered an individual difference and distal motivational factor that affects performance outcomes through proximal motivational status, particularly self-efficacy." Therefore, according to Kanfer's framework, many researchers believe that the effects of goal orientation on job performance to be mediated by self-efficacy (Phillips and Gully, 1997, Steele-Johnson et al., 2000). Bandura (1986), states that individual's must have the innate ability to achieve a domain-specific task in order for self-efficacy to be a significant predictor of performance.

Bandura (1997) also emphasized the importance of a strong relationship between efficacy assessment, the task, and the outcome being measured, so that the efficacy levels, strength, and generality can be accurately identified. In 2003, Pietsch et al. conducted a study to test the relationships among situational motivation behaviors, self-efficacy, and performance in a high school setting. Results from various factor analysis models showed that self-efficacy is a strong mediating variable in measuring performance on a specific task. Pintrich (2000), believes that this direction of thinking is based on the fact the different goal orientations would trigger specific patterns of self-efficacy responses. Learning goals create similar effects on a person's perceived competence, and, in turn, induce them to adopt adaptive patterns of learning. However, performance goals may create two different types of learning patterns, 1) goal oriented people with high perceived competence apply adaptive ways of learning, and 2) when people have lower self-efficacy beliefs of their capabilities to perform the tasks, they are inclined to resist patterns of learning (Dweck and Leggett, 1988, Swift, et al., 2010, Ajala, 2013).

Research demonstrates that job performance is an individual's overall performance/task proficiency or as performance on specific dimensions, such as the quality and quantity of work. Job performance is multidimensional and a product of (1) environmental and organizational variables, (2) individual attributes, abilities, and skills, (3) the individual's particular attitudes, perceptions, and motivation to perform (Olson and Borman, 1989). Service quality is one of the most prominent areas of research in service management and marketing (Gronroos, 1990, Fisk, et. al., 1993). The origins of service quality are based in the confirmation/disconfirmation paradigm (Gronroos, 1992). Accordingly, as customer consumes a product, they compare the quality they have experienced to that of their prior expectations, which leads to an emotional reaction manifested in the satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the products or services purchased (Woodruff et al., 1983). Lewis and Booms (1983, p.99) defines service quality as "a measure of how well the service level delivered matches customer expectations. Delivering quality service means conforming to customer expectations on a consistent basis." The service quality literature views expectations as consumer desires or wants that they feel a service provider *should* offer rather than *would* offer (Oliver, 1977).

The role of service quality is known to be a crucial determinant for the success of an organization. Parasuraman et al., (1988, p. 42) defines service quality as "perceptions resulting from a comparison of consumer expectations with actual service performance." Klaus (1985) asserts that quality service is a variable of the skills, attitudes and personal traits of the service provider. Likewise, service quality literature has consistently shown that the dominating determinate of service quality is the employees' perceived ability to be able to handle customers in a flexible manner and have a level of competency in their job

positions (Reardon and Enis, 1990, Parasuraman, Zeithamal, and Berry, 1990, Agus, et al., 2007). According to a Liao and Chuang (2004), service quality relies on the employees' delivery and when employees' deliver the quality of service to the customers, customers will have a more positive evaluation of the organization.

A review of the service quality literature highlights the important dimensions of service quality. Bitner (1992) suggests that when choosing alternatives in the levels of service quality that customers rely on cues and evidence of service. Cronin and Taylor (1992) explain that service quality is antecedent to customer satisfaction and customer satisfaction has an impact on buying intentions. The definitions of quality, according to (O'Neill, 2001) can be unified as one construct of consumer-perceived quality, where quality can be defined only by customers and occurs where an organization supplies goods and services to a specification that satisfies the customer's needs. However, since the quality of goods can be measured by objective measures, they are considered tangible; it is the intangible measures of service quality that makes this unified concept more difficult and relatively challenging (Najjar and Bishu, 2006). Bitner (1992) concluded that service quality includes, in most cases, the means of delivery and an interaction of service employees. Zeithaml and Bitner (1996, p. 164) state, "employees who actually perform the service have the best possible point for observing the service and identifying impediments to quality. Customer-contact personnel are in regular contact with customer, and thereby come to understand a great deal about customer expectations and perceptions." Oliver (1997) acknowledged that there are two aspects of service quality 1) the product or service being evaluated and 2) the person who is evaluating. Therefore, the perceptions of quality are known to be unique to the individual experience. It is the ever-changing perceptions and expectations of the customer that is relative to evaluating and defining levels of quality (Lovelock, 2001). Research consistently emphasizes that competitive advantage is obtained through a constant form of analysis to determine service quality initiatives and improvements and it is through this process that signifies an organizations commitment to service quality (O'Neill, 2001).

Gronroos (1983a, p.24) defines perceived service quality as the "outcome of an evaluation process where customers compare their expectations with the service they perceive to be received." In 1983, Gronroos developed a framework to explain service quality using the traditional concepts from the Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction model. He defined two basic dimensions of service quality as either: *technical* and *functional*. Technical quality is *what* the customer actually receives from the interaction with the service provider. Functional quality is the *how* the technical quality is delivered to the customer. Researchers propose that the *functional quality* variable is of more a rational nature and is therefore closely related to the service employee-customer interaction then the *technical quality* dimension which will not count for the total quality which the customer perceives has been received (Gronroos, 1982, 1990, pp. 37-38). According to Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry (1988, p.15), perceived service quality is viewed as "a global judgment, or attitude, relating to the superiority to the service" and define it as the gap between expectations of service quality and the delivered service quality. Past research states, that perceived service quality can be difficult to define and measure because of the unique properties of service being intangible, heterogeneity, and inseparable of production and consumption. The studies in measuring perceived service quality have been directed to meet or exceed the external customer's expectations, and have looked at service quality as a measure of how the delivered service levels compare to consumer's expectations. Hamer (2006) and Malik (2012) suggests that in practice there should not be "under-promising and over-delivering" but in fact, lesser consumers' expectations (i.e. under-promise) and deliver an elevated level of service (i.e. over deliver).

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The service marketing literature has emphasized the importance of service employees in the service delivery process (Schlesinger and Heskett, 1991, Haskett et al., 1994). Researchers have determined that service quality delivery is more important in service organizations in comparison to other organizations due to the

intangibility, heterogeneity, and inseparability of services (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 1985). Service employees are vital to service organizations and have the ability to influence customer's perceptions of service quality (Bitner et al., 1994).

The main objective of this study was to examine whether certain behavior orientations and motivations of service employees affect service quality delivery, as seen from the perceptions of the employee. Although research has focused on various service quality attributes, there has not been a study that explores the effects, particularly of employee goal orientations, on perceived service quality. More specifically, the evidence provided by research examining individual traits in predicting performance supports the argument that the role of various individual orientations is both significant and influential (Colquitt et al., 2000). Since goal orientations produce the intentions of behavior which are represented by different ways of approaching, engaging, and responding to job tasks, it is therefore important to investigate the relationship between these individual orientations and how they affect service quality. Based on the literature review and directed by the research questions, the following hypotheses were proposed:

H_{01}:   Employee learning goal orientation does not influence perceived service quality.

$H1$:   Employee learning goal orientation does positively influence perceived service quality.

H_{02}:   Employee performance goal orientation does not influence perceived service quality.

$H2$:   Employee performance goal orientation does positively influence perceived service quality.

H_{03}:   Employee self-efficacy does not influence employee learning goal orientation.

$H3$:   Employee self-efficacy does positively influence employee learning goal orientation.

H_{04}:   Employee self-efficacy does not influence employee performance goal orientation.

$H4$:   Employee self-efficacy does positively influence employee performance goal orientation.

H_{05}:   Employee learning goal orientation does not influence perceived service quality as mediated by self-efficacy.

$H5$:   Employee learning goal orientation does influence perceived service quality as mediated by self-efficacy.

H_{06}:   Employee performance goal orientation does not influence perceived service quality as mediated by self-efficacy.

$H6$:   Employee performance goal orientation does influence perceived service quality as mediated by self-efficacy.

H_{07}:   Employee self-efficacy does not lead to greater perceived service quality.

$H7$:   Employee self-efficacy does positively lead to greater perceived service quality.

A Theoretical Framework (see Figure 1) was constructed showing the relationships of employee learning and performance goal orientations, employee self-efficacy and perceived service quality (see Figure 2). This model was studied from the perspective of the employee and how behaviors and attitudes affect service performance.

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework
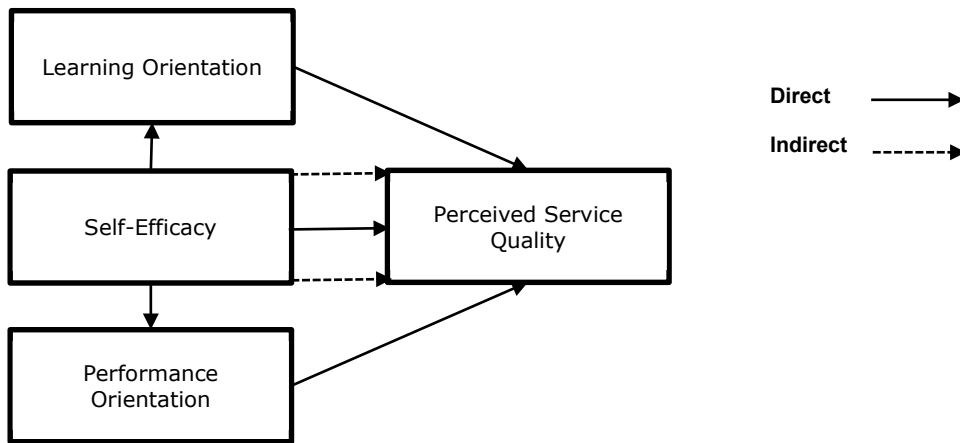
This Figure shows the theoretical model constructed and the direct or indirect relationships of the variables

Measurement instruments were assessed for both reliability and validity. All measures used in this study are taken from empirically proven, valid and reliable instruments from marketing, management, and psychology literature with alpha rating between 0.76 and 0.97 (Jones, 1986, Parasuraman et al., 1990, Sujan, 1994, Hartline and Ferrell, 1996 Ripley, 2003*)*. However to assess the construct validity, factor analysis was utilized to "confirm or refute" components of scale items (Churchill, 1979). Content and face validity was evaluated through the literature review and by a small sample of hotel service employees (Nunnally, 1978, 1994). Structure Equations modeling (SEM) was used to test the proposed model and taking into account that SEM analysis requires a large sample size (Bentler, 1990), a large chain 4-Diamond hotel was utilized to initiate the random sample within a seven day period in the fall of 2008. (N=225) two hundred and twenty- five hotel service employees were surveyed and the overall response yielded 184 (81.7%) responses that were coded and used for the data analysis.

RESULTS

The descriptive statistics of the service employee sample consisted of 79 (42.7%) males and 105 (56.8%) females. The results showed the majority of the respondents were females and males with a High School Diploma (see Table 1). In addition, 136 (73.5%) respondents reported to work full-time and 48 (25.9%) to work part-time. 50 (27%) were employed by the hotel less than a year, 95 (51.4%) were employed by the hotel 1-3 years, and 39 (21.1%) were employed by the hotel over 3 years. 20 employees (10.8%) were in the hotel industry less than a year, 100 (54.1%) were in the hotel industry 1-3 years, and 39 (21.1%) were in the hotel industry over 5 years. Further testing was performed to analyze the relationship between employee gender and the employees' position; it was found that the females largely held the positions of Front Desk/Customer Service/Management and Housekeeping, while the positions of Concierges/Bell Staff, Security & Maintenance were dominantly held by males (see Table 2).

Table 1: Descriptive of Employee Gender & Employees' Education

Gender	Sample All	Less High School	High School Diploma	College Degree	Graduate Degree
Female	79	10	60	27	3
Male	105	22	34	25	2
Total	**184**	**32**	**94**	**52**	**5**

This table shows the Descriptive break down of gender education of the employees. Sample All column indicates the full sample size without regards to education held.

Table 2: Descriptive of Employee Gender & Employees' Position

Gender	Sample All	Value 1	Value 2	Value 3	Value 4	Value 5	Value 6	Value 7
Female	79	26	20	19	10	5	0	1
Male	105	23	9	17	9	30	7	8
Total	**184**	**49**	**29**	**36**	**19**	**35**	**7**	**9**

This table shows the Descriptive break down of Gender against the particular employee positions. Sample All column indicates the full sample size without regards to position held. Value 1. Front Desk/Customer Service/Management, Value 2. Housekeeping, Value 3. Food/Beverage/Room Service, Value 4. Reservations/Sales, Value 5. Concierges/Bell Staff, Value 6. Security & Value 7. Maintenance

Prior to testing, the full structural model, a series of confirmatory factor analysis's (CFA) were performed separately to evaluate individual parameter, after assessing each construct individually and removing items that had large residuals and/or wanted to load on other constructs, resulted in a decrease of items. All items in the service quality construct had significant loading factors greater than 0.50 and were retained. The descriptive statistics: mean, standard deviations, ranges, and reliabilities all demonstrated good reliability. Reliability estimates for the final measurement model reported that each construct contains an acceptable internal consistency (i.e., 0.70 and above), (Nunnally, 1978). Outputs for distribution for each scale reported some degree of negatively skewed distribution, which was an indication that the sample offered positive responses.

To ensure that the constructs were not measuring the same concept or ideas, each construct was examined with one another, in pairs. To test for discriminant validity, two models were tested for possible pair of estimates constructs. The first model had the correlation parameter between each pair at 1.00 and the other had no constraints. Chi-Square (χ^2) values for both models were reported with the degrees of freedom. Table 3 indicates estimated correlations between the factors were not excessively high providing support for the discriminant validity. A significantly lower chi-square value for the second model indicates that discriminant validity has been achieved. It is important to indicate that with discriminant validity tests being conducted do not define the indirect and direct paths, but the relationships the constructs have on each other two by two. The results of the correlations generated were also not expected to be consistent with the actual model correlation results. Therefore, having some indication of correlation at this level was a positive sign that relationships do exist between the model's variables, although all possess discriminant validity.

Table 3: Discriminant Validity and Correlation Values

Construct	Correlation Value	χ^2 W/Corr. Fixed	Df	χ^2 W/Corr. Free	Df	Sig.
1-2	0.31	42.6	6	25.9	9	0.00
1-3	0.34	28.6	9	20.2	6	0.00
1-4	0.46	21.8	9	11.7	6	0.01
2-3	0.37	40.9	6	20.5	4	0.00
2-4	0.65	16.5	4	9.0	4	0.00
4-6	0.39	21.8	4	6.0	4	0.00

This shows the Discriminant Validity and Correlation Values estimates correlations between each other in pairs
* Learning Orientation = 1, Performance Orientation = 2, Self-Efficacy = 3 & Service Quality = 4 * p <0 .05, ** p <0.01, *** p<0.001

In addition, Maximum Likelihood estimation method was used in this study and known to be less sensitive to the violation of normal distribution assumptions, than other estimation methods. For SEM analysis, statistically significant large factor loadings indicate convergent validity. All constructs had relatively high loadings (statistically significant at p <0.05), ranging from 0.60 to 0.87, which supports the evidence of convergent validity.

The measurement model must be empirically satisfactory before proceeding to hypotheses testing (Muliak and James, 2000). This study presented the appropriate measurement model with a series of confirmatory

factor analyses. The full structural model was tested next including, both the appropriate measurement model, the hypothesized relationships among the latent variables, and the goodness-of-fit indices. Table 4 presents standardized direct, indirect, and total effects of all independent and dependent variables. As expected, most relationships were found to be direct. Most importantly, learning and performance orientations indicated significant indirect effects ($\beta = 0.456$ and $\beta = 0.367$), as well as, direct effects ($\beta = 0.176$ and $\beta = 0.118$) on service quality as mediated by self-efficacy. Learning and performance orientation also indicated direct effects on service quality without a mediating variable, although with performance orientation it was a negative outcome. Self-efficacy indicated significant direct effects on service quality ($\beta = 0.467$) and self-efficacy had a direct negative effect on performance orientation ($\beta = -0.376$).

Table 4: Standardized Estimate for Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects

Dependent Variable	Predictor	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect
Learning Orientation	Service Quality	0.244***	0.001	0.245
Performance Orientation	Service Quality	0.153***	0.00	0.153
Self-Efficacy	Learning Orientation	0.430***	0.03	0.460
Self-Efficacy	Performance Orientation	-.0376***	0.00	0.376
Learning Orientation	Self-Efficacy, Service Quality	0.176	0.456***	0.887
Performance Orientation	Self-Efficacy, Service Quality	0.118	0.367***	0.632
Self-Efficacy	Service Quality	0.467***	0.03	0.497

This table shows the Direct, Indirect and Total effects of all Independent and Dependent variables
* p <0 .05, ** p <0.01, *** p<0.001

The overall fit of the structural model was very good; the chi-square indicates that the model was not a good fit with the p-value (0.15) above 0.05. As mention previously, the Chi-square test has been known to be sensitive to sample size, which provides little guidance in determining the extent to which the model does not fit in studies where the sample size is large. Therefore, it was more beneficial to rely on other fit indices. All the other fit indices indicated that the proposed model fits well to the data. The values of all the fit indices were above the recommended values. $\chi2$ (122) = 348.20, p >0.01, $\chi2$ / df = 2.8, GFI = 0.91, AGFI =0.90, NFI = 0.91 and the SRMSR = 0.048.

After testing the proposed structural model, modifications were made to achieve a better fit to the data. The proposed model generated one non-supported hypothesis, this paths coefficients is *self-efficacy and performance goal orientation*. A revised structural model was constructed eliminating the non-supported path. A comparison of the outcomes were examined, there were only slight differences with the revised model and the proposed model. The paths of the revise model reported to have less effect on each other than the proposed model. The overall fit indices indicate that there was a good fit with all the fit indices and all were within the recommended ranges. A Chi-square differences test was used to compare the proposed and revised models (dropping one path). The results did not indicate a good fit and the p-value (0.18) was above the 0.05 threshold. Therefore, based on the results the proposed model had a better fit between the nested models.

In order to ensure validity of the revised model, an alternative revised model was presented. The revised model states that the goal orientation (i.e., learning and performance) of an employee to delivery service quality was mediated by an employees' self-efficacy. The alternative model tested whether the mediation variable of self-efficacy was necessary and then compared the results to the revised structural model. The alternate model had all constructs having direct relationships and eliminated self-efficacy as a mediating variable (the indirect variable between learning and performance goal orientation). The results demonstrated that by eliminating self-efficacy as a mediating variable, the relationships become weaker and therefore, did not produce a better fit. This suggests that the revised model was more efficient. The Chi-square test reported higher for the alternate model indicating not a good fit with a p-value (0.24) was

above the threshold of 0.05. However, the fit indices all showed to be strong and within acceptable levels. Therefore, the revised model was a better fit to the data than the alternate model.

This study failed to support one of the proposed hypotheses (i.e., hypothesis 4). The relationship between self-efficacy and performance orientation resulted in a significant negative direction. A revised model eliminated the paths of these hypotheses and was than tested for a better fit. The results indicated that there were not significant differences between the proposed model and the revised model, with both showing a strong fit with the data. Summary of Hypotheses (see Table 5).

Table 5: Summary of Tested Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Description	Results of Null Hypotheses
H1	Learning Orientation → Service Quality	Rejected
H2	Performance Orientation → Service Quality	Rejected
H3	Self-Efficacy → Learning Orientation	Rejected
H4	Self-Efficacy → Performance Orientation	Fail to Reject
H5	Learning Orientation → Self-Efficacy → Service Quality	Rejected
H6	Performance Orientation → Self-Efficacy → Service	Rejected
H7	Self-Efficacy → Service Quality	Rejected

This Table shows the results of the tested hypotheses

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Quality of service delivered to customer is critical to becoming or remaining successful. The attitudes and behaviors of service employees have been shown to strongly affect customer's perceptions of service (Bowen and Schneider, 1985). Given the interactive experience between the service, employee and the customer, organizations are struggling to provide exceptional service quality (Schneider and Bowen, 1999). Within the hotel industry, the intense competition and declining economy has led hotel organizations to improve strategies in their service delivery to gain a competitive advantage (Stevens et al., 2007). Kandampully (2002, p. 11) stated "of all the challenges facing the hospitality establishments today – including intense competition, globalization, and technological innovation – the single most pervasive and pressing challenge is the ever increasing demand of customers for service quality."

This study proposed a framework that identifies possible factors that are likely to influence service quality in a hotel setting. Four key constructs were determined to be components of the service delivery outcome: employee learning goal orientation, employee performance goal orientation, employee self-efficacy and perceived service quality. A series of confirmatory factor analyses revealed evidence of both convergent and discriminant validity between the proposed constructs. This was followed by the analysis of the proposed structural equation model and hypotheses. Validity and reliability were also tested and discussed. This study failed to support one of the proposed hypotheses (i.e., hypothesis 4). The analysis found that the relationship between self-efficacy and performance orientation resulted in a significant negative direction. A revised model eliminated the paths of these hypotheses and was than tested for a better fit. The results indicated that there were not significant differences between the proposed model and the revised model, with both showing a strong fit with the data. By analyzing a structural model, the influences of the service delivery process can be better understood.

It is critical for organizations and managers to recognize the important role that service employee have and devise strategies that will provide positive performance outcomes. This research concluded that understanding the perceptions and motivations of the service employee could improve the service quality outcome. Practitioners can identify learning and performance goal orientations of their employees and encourage better performance through the innovation of the work climate practices and procedures. It would be more advantageous for organizations to encourage a learning orientation and in turn, produce higher

levels of self-efficacy and service quality. Perceptions of the work climate results from the employees individual experiences of the internal functions of the organization (Schneider and White, 2004). Employee evaluations of the organizations procedures and expectations of the expected service quality delivery, depends on how the employee experiences the organizations internal and external functions. Therefore, this study provides important knowledge for organizations and managers, particularly in the hotel industry, to devise strategies, which can be used to develop and improve levels of service quality.

This research has also provided meaningful constructs in predicting service quality by integrating literature from psychology, organization behavior, and marketing fields. This synergistic perspective may contribute to the academic richness of the topics and allow for further expanded studies in these areas. This study established that service quality consists of attitudes, motivations, and behaviors of the service employee. Construct validity was established and strong correlations were found among the constructs, which offers insight to the service delivery process and the effects on learning and performance goal orientations, levels of self-efficacy and perceived service quality of the employee. Furthermore, there was strong support for the mediating role of self-efficacy and the relationship between learning and performance goal orientation and perceived service quality. This is meaningful in service marketing research, because it supports the argument that a mediating variable is appropriate when linking a relationship between motivational factors and performance outcomes.

Although every attempt was made to eliminate possible limitations, this study identifies that by having all respondent's working for the same hotel, makes the findings less generalized and poses a method bias, particularly, a phenomenon known as *common method error* (i.e., variance that is attributed to the measurement method rather than to the constructs the measures represent), (Fiske, 1982). *Common method error* tends to increase hypothesized correlations, rather than represent the true relationship (Podsakoff et al., 2003). By conducting research utilizing multiple hotel setting, would decrease the potential for measurement error. Furthermore, the questionnaires for the service employees were administered and collected by a select manager and thus, may have contributed to some potential social method bias. However, to try to minimize the potential social bias (socially desirable responses), each questionnaire was ensured strict confidentiality.

Future studies should be conducted to replicate the present research with multiple hotels, with a variety of class rating and in different tourist seasons. There may be significant management differences between high/low - price/quality service quality delivery systems and employee attitudes, abilities, and performance levels, hence having different outcomes. In addition, this study only used the one-sided perception from the employee on service quality. Future research should gather data from both the employee and customer perspectives. This dyadic view would gain a better understanding of the complex nature of the relationship. Finally, further research should consider extending the findings of this study to other service settings. Testing an individual's attitudes, motivations, and behaviors in a variety of service industries would be beneficial to determine how extreme these different context outcomes are from one another.

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