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## Service rewards and prosocial service behaviours among employees in four and five star hotels in Cappadocia

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Considerable research evidence has emerged demonstrating a link between aspects of organizational culture and employee behaviour. The present investigation examined the association of levels of service rewards perceived by service employees working in four- and five-star Turkish hotels to be provided by their organizations, and employees engaging in prosocial service behaviours. Data were collected from 241 employees working in 16 different hotels in Cappadocia, Turkey, using anonymously completed questionnaires, with a 60% response rate. Respondents rated both levels of prosocial service behaviours and levels of service rewards provided to them by their hotels as relatively high. Personal demographic characteristics were weak and inconsistent predictors of both prosocial service behaviours and perceptions of service rewards. Service rewards, controlling for personal demographics, were strong and consistent predictors of the three prosocial service behaviours studied here.

**Keywords:** prosocial behaviour; service reward; Cappadocia

### Introduction

According to World Tourism Organization (2012), tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing industries in the world over the last six decades. This fast growth has increased the competition among destinations and tourism businesses. Hence in increasing international competition, gaining competitive advantage and differentiation has become a critical issue for tourism businesses. Employees are one of the sources of differentiation and competitive advantage for tourism businesses. Customer satisfaction, service quality perceptions, and decisions to remain loyal or to switch service providers are significantly influenced by the behaviours of employees (Bitner, Booms, & Tetreault, 1990; Keaveney, 1995; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988; Schneider & Bowen, 1993). Employees' prosocial behaviours representing their behaviour towards customers' behaviour can be viewed as a customer-oriented service in the hotel industry (Lee, Nam, Park, & Lee, 2006) and has a significant effect on organizational effectiveness (George & Bettenhausen, 1990) and long-term success of hotels. Service rewards are important in guiding and eliciting these employee behaviours. Besides, service rewards are strong communicators of desired employee behaviours (Chung & Schneider, 2002). Researches have shown that employee behaviours are affected by conspicuous and specific compensation reward practices and programmes (Hartline & Ferrell, 1996; O'Connor & Shewchuck, 1995). Thus, employees who gain rewards are more likely to perform prosocial behaviour.

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This study examined the relationship of hotels' culture of rewarding high levels of service quality to customers and employees' prosocial service behaviours. The general hypothesis underlying the research would be that employees would be more likely to exhibit prosocial service behaviours, "go the extra mile" in providing service to customers, when the delivery of high-quality service is stressed and rewarded by their organization. Properties and respondents working in Nevsehir in the Cappadocia region of Turkey were selected to take part in this study.

### Prosocial service behaviours

Prosocial behaviours are defined as the helpful behaviours of employees directed towards other individuals, groups, or organization. These behaviours are part of the employee's organizational role and are performed with the intention to promote the welfare of the individual, group, or organization at which they are directed (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986). It can be thought as a form of helpful behaviour, which may or may not be rewarded or reinforced by the others in the organization (George & Bettenhausen, 1990). Behaviours such as helping, sharing, donating, cooperating, and volunteering are forms of prosocial behaviour (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986). There are different kinds of prosocial behaviour in the literature.

The first is functional or dysfunctional prosocial behaviours. Some prosocial behaviours are organizationally functional because they contribute to the accomplishment of organizational objectives such as cooperating with each other, acting to protect the organization from unanticipated hazards, speaking favourably about the organization to others, and so forth. These behaviours enhance the organization's ability to survive and reach its goals. Some prosocial behaviours are organizationally dysfunctional such as helping co-workers achieve personal goals that are inconsistent with organizational objectives, deliberately falsifying records to protect others from deserved organizational censure, and rendering services to customers in ways contrary to organizational interests. These behaviours do not contribute to organizational success (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986).

The second kind of prosocial behaviours are about targets. The target might be either a co-worker or a customer (Bettencourt & Brown, 1997; Brief & Motowidlo, 1986). The third kind of prosocial behaviours are role-prescribed behaviours, extra-role behaviours and cooperation (Bettencourt & Brown, 1997). *Role-prescribed prosocial behaviours* are organizationally specified as a formal part of the employees' role or job. In other words, role-prescribed prosocial behaviours are employees' expected behaviours derived from implicit norms in the workplace or from explicit obligations as specified in organizational documents such as job description and performance evaluation forms (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986). Exhibiting common courtesy, demonstrating accurate knowledge of policies and products, addressing customers by name, greeting and saying "thank you" to customers are examples of these prosocial behaviours. These behaviours also improve customer satisfaction, service-quality perception, loyalty, and sales performance (Bitner et al., 1990; George, 1991; Keaveney, 1995).

*Extra-role prosocial behaviours* refer to discretionary behaviour of contact employees that extends beyond formal role requirements (Bettencourt & Brown, 1997). Extra-role prosocial behaviours are positive social acts which are not formally specified role requirements, and they are not specifically assigned to individuals as activities to be performed as part of the job (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986). In other words, employees please customers by providing extra attention, spontaneous exceptional services, and little extras during the service encounter (Bitner et al., 1990). This includes specific service encounters

in which employees go “out of the way”, “beyond the call” (Bettencourt & Brown, 1997), or “go extra mile” for customers. Extra-role behaviours also provide the opportunity to surprise the customers. In other words, these behaviours are the “wow” factor in the service provided (Berry, Parasuraman, & Zeithaml, 1994). *Cooperation* refers to the helpful behaviours of employees to other members of the organization (Bettencourt & Brown, 1997). These are acts such as helping others who have been absent, orienting new people even though it is not required, and helping others who have heavy workloads. Cooperation behaviours might not only be job-related issues but may also include helping them with personal matters such as family problems, emotional upsets, or avoiding censure for committing errors or for breaking organizational rules (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986).

Prosocial behaviours are broadly linked with the socially desirable behaviours. There are some cultural beliefs that people should behave prosocially because it is socially desirable or correct in some sense (Baruch, O’Creey, Hind, & Vigoda-Gadot, 2004). This situation might be valid for organizations. Thus, prosocial behaviours of employees are important for organizational effectiveness (George & Bettenhausen, 1990).

### **Service rewards and prosocial behaviours**

Service rewards are defined as things given in recognition of service, effort, or achievement (Oxford Dictionaries, 2013). Rewards range from monetary incentives such as bonuses to non-monetary awards such as dinner gifts, praise, and plaque (Bartol & Srivastava, 2002). Service rewards play an important role in eliciting and guiding desired employee behaviour. Service rewards are an important component of an organization’s overall employee recognition efforts. They provide an opportunity to recognize an employee’s performance and allow the management to thank the employees for their performance. Rewards are also a communication tool through which management sends message to employees about what is important for them to do (Chung & Schneider, 2002).

According to the theory of social exchange, employees will direct their reciprocation efforts to the source of any benefit they receive. In other words, rewards generate reciprocity or equity-striving behaviour in employees. Thus, if employees feel that they have been rewarded by their organization (Organ, 1977; Organ & Konovsky, 1989), it is more likely that they should direct their prosocial behaviours towards the organization (McNeely & Meglino, 1994). Hence, if a service company wants the strongest service employees, it must reward and promote them. But rewards need to be linked to the organization’s vision and to outcomes that are truly important. For instance, if customer satisfaction and retention are viewed as critical outcomes, service behaviours that increase those outcomes need to be recognized and rewarded (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003).

There has been great attention given to prosocial behaviours in the psychology and education literature. Although prosocial behaviours are very important for organizational effectiveness, yet they traditionally have not received much attention from organizational researchers (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986). Studies on prosocial behaviours in organizations generally focus on defining and describing prosocial behaviours (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986), antecedents of prosocial behaviours (Ackfeldt & Wong, 2006; McNeely & Meglino, 1994), relationship between prosocial behaviours and workplace fairness (Bettencourt & Brown, 1997) or justice (Lee, 1995), job satisfaction (Bettencourt & Brown, 1997), job performance (Baruch et al., 2004; George & Bettenhausen, 1990),

organizational commitment (Hsu, Chang, Huang, & Chiang, 2011; O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986), organizational demography (Pelled, Cummings, & Kizilos, 2000), positive mood (George, 1991) or affect (Kelley & Hoffman, 1997), service quality (Kelley & Hoffman, 1997), and factors influencing prosocial behaviours (Baer, Goldman, & Juhnke, 1977; Lee et al., 2006). It has also been used by others in a variety of research projects (e.g., Choi, Baek, & Kang, 2013; Kim, Tavitiyaman, & Kim, 2009; Wang, 2012). However, the relationship between service rewards and prosocial behaviours of employees has not been empirically investigated. Thus, in this study, the impact of service rewards on prosocial behaviours of employees in the hotel businesses is investigated.

### **The tourism and hospitality industry in Cappadocia in Turkey**

Tourism and hospitality are major contributors to the Turkish economy and are growing in importance (Duman & Tosun, 2010; Gokovali, 2010). According to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (2013) of Turkey, Turkey had about 33 million tourist visitors in 2011, ranking sixth in the world according to World Tourism Organization (2012), and accounted for about \$US 28 billion in revenue, ranking 12th in the world. Figures for 2012 reported about 36 million tourist visitors and accounting for over \$US 29 billion in revenue (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2013). Cappadocia is one of the major cultural tourism destinations with its unique geological, historic, and cultural features in Turkey. With these features, Cappadocia serves cultural tourism in Turkey and attracts thousands of tourists for culture and nature each year. According to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Cappadocia had about 800,000 tourist visitors in 2011 (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2013). Thus, well-educated service staff resources in tourism are needed to serve tourists better. To meet the service staff needs of an important and growing industry, a number of school and university programmes were created (Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000; Okumus & Yagci, 2006).

The tourism industry in most countries is facing several challenges including a low-educated workforce, high turnover among hotel employees, low job satisfaction and low pay, poor working conditions such as very long hours, and autocratic and untrained supervision (Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000; Yesiltas, Ozturk, & Hemmington, 2010). Prosocial behaviours of employees are one possible avenue for addressing these challenges.

### **Methodology**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of service rewards on prosocial behaviours of employees in hotel businesses in Cappadocia. In line with the purpose of the study, a causal model consisting of prosocial behaviour as dependent variable and service reward as independent variable was offered and the model was tested with hierarchical regression analysis.

In the study, in order to investigate the impact of the service rewards on prosocial behaviours of employees in hotels, a survey research was conducted at four- and five-star hotels operating in Cappadocia. The questionnaire was designed with three major sections. The first part consisted of Prosocial Behaviour Scale developed by Bettencourt and Brown (1997). The second section of questionnaire consisted of Service Reward Scale developed by Lytle, Hom, and Mokwa (1998). A number of personal and demographic characteristics such as gender, age, level of education, marital status, and work situation characteristics such as organizational tenure, star of hotel, and types of

service reward offered by hotels were measured by single items in the last section of questionnaire.

Purposive sampling, also known as judgemental sampling, was used and employees of four (14) and five (4) star hotels in Cappadocia were included in the field research. Data were collected from hotel employees with the help of the questionnaire between September and November 2012 in Cappadocia. Hotel managers were contacted and asked for help in the distribution and administration of the questionnaires in Cappadocia. A total of 400 questionnaires were delivered to 18 hotels' managers who were responsible for distributing and collecting questionnaires in Cappadocia. Questionnaires were completed anonymously. In total, 241 usable questionnaires were returned with a response rate of 60%.

Table 1 shows the personal demographic and work situation characteristics of respondents. The sample contained more males (68%), and most of them were more likely to be single (55%). Most of the sample respondents were between 20 and 30 years of age (63%), had high school education (48%), worked 3 years or less at their current hotel (59%), and tended to work in four-star properties (61%).

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of sample.

Gender	<i>N</i>	%
Males	151	68.2
Females	88	36.8
Marital status		
Single	132	55.2
Married	107	44.8
Level of education		
Elementary	54	22.6
High school	118	49.4
Bachelor's degree	67	28.0
Star level		
Four-star	148	61.4
Five-star	93	38.6
Department		
Front office	71	29.5
Accounting	6	2.5
Food and beverage	106	44.0
Housekeeping	46	19.1
Other	7	2.9
Age		
20 or under	13	5.5
21–25	78	33.1
26–30	70	29.6
31–35	34	14.4
36–40	26	11.0
41 or over	15	6.4
Organizational tenure		
1 years or less	73	30.5
2–3 years	67	28.1
4–5 years	44	18.4
6–10 years	38	15.9
11 years or more	17	7.1

Note: Total *N* = 241. There are two missing values in gender, marital status, education and tenure, and five missing values in department.

## Measures

Personal demographic and work situation characteristics were measured by single items. These included: gender, age, level of education, marital status, organizational tenure, whether hotel was four or five star, and department.

### *Service rewards used in their hotels*

Two service reward items ( $\alpha = 0.94$ ) developed by Lytle et al. (1998) were used. One item was "This organization noticeably celebrates excellent service".

### *Prosocial service behaviours*

Three aspects of prosocial service behaviour were examined using scales developed and validated by Bettencourt and Brown (1997). *Extra-role customer service* was assessed by five items ( $\alpha = 0.86$ ). One item was "I help customers with problems beyond what is expected or required". *Role-prescribed customer service behaviour* was also measured by five items ( $\alpha = 0.81$ ). An item was "I perform all those tasks for customers that are required of me". *Cooperation* was assessed by five items ( $\alpha = 0.88$ ). One item was "I help other employees who have heavy workloads". In all the cases, responses were made on a five-point Likert scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, and 5 = strongly agree.

### *Types of service rewards offered by employing organizations*

Respondents were provided with eight types of rewards for service and were asked to pick the one most commonly used in their property. Alternatives included salary increase, bonus, profit sharing, a dinner, a vacation, a promotion, verbal recognition, and a plaque.

## Results

### *Descriptive statistics*

#### *Prosocial service behaviours*

Respondents indicated relatively high levels of prosocial service behaviours. The mean values for each were: extra-role,  $X = 4.2$ ,  $SD = 0.69$ ,  $n = 241$ ; role-prescribed,  $X = 4.2$ ,  $SD = 0.67$ ,  $n = 241$ ; cooperation,  $X = 4.2$ ,  $SD = 1.0$ ,  $n = 241$  (4 = agree). The three measures of prosocial service behaviours were also significantly and positively inter-correlated ( $p < 0.001$ ,  $n = 241$ ); extra-role and role-prescribed,  $r = 0.66$ , extra-role and cooperation,  $r = 0.66$ , and role-prescribed and cooperation,  $r = 0.66$ .

#### *Service rewards*

Respondents also indicated relatively high levels of service rewards as well ( $X = 3.6$ ,  $SD = 1.2$ ,  $n = 241$ ; 4 = agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree).

#### *Gender effects*

Male and female respondents were compared on five personal demographic items (age, marital status, level of education, organizational tenure, and star level of property), the three measures of prosocial service behaviours (extra-role, role-prescribed, and

cooperation), and service rewards. Males tended to be older ( $p < 0.10$ ) and have significantly longer organizational tenure ( $p < 0.001$ ).

*Star-level effects*

Respondents working in four- and five-star hotels were compared on five personal demographics, the three prosocial service behaviours and service rewards. Respondents working in five-star hotels had significantly higher levels of education ( $p < 0.001$ ), and significantly longer organizational tenures ( $p < 0.05$ ).

*Personal demographic predictors of prosocial service behaviours and service rewards*

The three measures of prosocial service behaviours, and the measure of perceived service rewards, were separately regressed on six personal demographics (see Table 2). The following comments are offered in summary. First, these personal demographics failed to account for a significant amount of explained variance ( $p < 0.05$ ) on these dependent

Table 2. Demographic predictors of prosocial service behaviours and service rewards.

Prosocial service behaviours	$\beta$	Significance
Extra-role behaviours ( $n = 236$ ) <sup>a</sup>		
Gender	0.02	NS
Age	0.09	NS
Marital status	-0.16	0.05
Education	-0.03	NS
Organizational tenure	0.09	NS
Star level	-0.02	NS
$R = 0.15, R^2 = 0.02, \Delta R^2 = 0.02, p = 0.05$		
Prescribed-role behaviours ( $n = 236$ ) <sup>a</sup>		
Gender	0.14	0.05
Age	0.16	0.10
Marital status	-0.07	NS
Education	-0.03	NS
Organizational tenure	0.09	NS
Star level	0.04	NS
$R = 0.22, R^2 = 0.05, \Delta R^2 = 0.05, p = 0.10$		
Cooperation ( $n = 236$ ) <sup>a</sup>		
Gender	0.06	NS
Age	0.14	NS
Marital status	0.02	NS
Education	-0.02	NS
Organizational tenure	0.04	NS
Star level	0.06	NS
$R = 0.19, R^2 = 0.04, \Delta R^2 = 0.04, p = NS$		
Service rewards ( $n = 236$ ) <sup>a</sup>		
Gender	0.04	NS
Age	0.04	NS
Marital status	0.03	NS
Education	0.13	NS
Organizational tenure	-0.03	NS
Star level	-0.07	NS
$R = 0.14, R^2 = 0.02, \Delta R^2 = 0.02, p = NS$		

Note: There are five missing values in these variables; NS = not significant.

<sup>a</sup>Total  $N = 241$ .



variables. One analysis involving prescribed-role behaviours tended to reach significance ( $p < 0.10$ ) with older respondents tending to engage in higher levels of prescribed service behaviours (again  $p < 0.10$ ). Thus, the personal demographics considered here were not found to be significant predictors of the four dependent variables.

### *Service rewards and prosocial service behaviours*

Hierarchical regression analyses were then undertaken in which the three measures of prosocial service behaviour were separately regressed on two blocks of predictors. The first block of predictors ( $n = 6$ ) consisted of personal demographic items (e.g., age, gender, level of education). The second block of predictors was the measure of perceived service rewards. When a block of predictors was accounted for a significant amount or increment in explained variance ( $p < 0.05$ ) on a given dependent variable, items within such blocks having significant and independent relationships with this dependent variable were identified ( $p < 0.05$ ). Table 3 presents the results of these analyses.

The following comments are offered in summary. First, consistent with the results presented in Table 2, personal demographics failed to account for a significant amount of explained variance in all three analyses. Second, and supportive of our general hypothesis, levels of perceived service rewards accounted for a significant increment in explained variance in all three analyses. Thus, front-line service workers perceiving higher levels of service rewards in their hotel cultures also engaged in higher levels of extra-role service behaviours ( $B = 0.41$ ), higher levels of prescribed-role service behaviours ( $B = 0.39$ ), and higher levels of cooperation ( $B = 0.47$ ).

### **Conclusion and implications**

Prosocial behaviours are helpful behaviours directed towards other individuals or organization. They may be expected behaviours defined by the job description (role-prescribed prosocial behaviours) or beyond job specification, discretionary or voluntary behaviours (extra-role prosocial behaviours). Prosocial behaviours of employees affect the success of organizations. Service rewards play an important role in eliciting and guiding these behaviours. In this study, in order to investigate the impact of service rewards on prosocial behaviours of employees, a survey was conducted in the hotel businesses in Cappadocia.

Table 3. Service rewards and prosocial service behaviours.

Prosocial service behaviours	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$	<i>p</i>
Extra-role behaviours ( $n = 236$ ) <sup>a</sup>				
Personal demographics	0.15	0.02	0.02	NS
Service rewards (0.41)	0.44	0.19	0.17	0.001
Prescribed-role behaviours ( $n = 236$ ) <sup>a</sup>				
Personal demographics	0.22	0.05	0.05	0.10
Gender (0.13)				
Service rewards (0.39)	0.44	0.20	0.15	0.001
Cooperation ( $n = 236$ ) <sup>a</sup>				
Personal demographics	0.19	0.04	0.04	NS
Service rewards (0.47)	0.50	0.23	0.19	0.001

Note: There are five missing values in these variables; NS = not significant.

<sup>a</sup>Total  $N = 241$ .

The results (see Table 3) provided support for the general hypothesis guiding this study. Service providers perceiving higher levels of service rewards in their workplaces engaged in more prosocial service behaviours. These prosocial service behaviours included filling and meeting expected job duties and responsibilities, going beyond expected job duties and responsibilities, and helping colleagues when they saw a need to do so. Employees from workplace cultures that valued and rewarded high levels of service delivery were more likely to “go the extra mile” in helping customers and co-workers. These on-the-job behaviours increase customer satisfaction, loyalty, and return business. Thus, managers who want to increase customer satisfaction, loyalty, business performance, or other organizational outcomes must vary the types of reward that they provide, reward and promote their employees, and increase prosocial behaviour of employees.

It seems that hotels have considerable room to improve their use of service rewards. Table 4 shows the types of service rewards currently seen as being available to front-line service workers. The two most common, in addition to others, were the use of informal recognition and offering a modest financial bonus contingent on delivering high-quality service to customers. Other researchers have offered suggestions on ways to use recognition and pay to affect front-line service workers attitudes and behaviours (e.g., Davies, Taylor, & Savery, 2001; Maxwell & Lyle, 2002; Ohlin & West, 1994; Sturman, 2006).

A range of human resource management policies and practices are relevant to creating a culture where service rewards are perceived. These include new employee orientation, training and development efforts, performance management and feedback, performance appraisal sessions, employee coaching, training and development of supervisors and managers, and work unit meetings where recognition for outstanding service delivery is publicly offered.

Since all research has limitations, this investigation is no exception. First, all data were collected using self-report questionnaires raising the limited possibility of response set consistency bias. Second, the sample, while reasonably large, may not be representative of all hotel employees in the Cappadocia region, or in Turkey as a whole. Third, all data were collected at one point in time making it challenging to untangle issues of causality. Finally, the hotels came from one region in Turkey and may not be representative of other four- and five-star hotels in Turkey or in other countries.

Several avenues of future research would add to our understanding of the role played by service rewards in the delivery of high-quality service. First, it would be informative to include other aspects of organizational culture, in addition to the measure of service rewards that we used, to flesh out other aspects of human resource management that would influence the value of service rewards. These would include managerial and leadership behaviours, the availability of adequate resources (e.g., the latest technology) to assist front-line employees in doing their best jobs, and the absence of job stressors of job

Table 4. Reward types offered by organizations.

Reward types	<i>N</i>	%
Recognition	83	34.9
Bonus	53	22.3
Promotion	9	3.8
Dinner	4	1.7
Vacation	2	0.8
Other	87	36.6

Note: Total *N* = 241. There are three missing values in this variable.

demands (e.g., excessive workload) that limit the ability of front-line employees in “going the extra mile”. Second, undertaking an audit of the rewards currently being employed in hotels and their perceived value by front-line workers would add a sense of reality to our understanding of rewards and service behaviours. It might be useful to have employees indicate the type of rewards that would be most valuable to them as well. Some rewards can actually de-motivate employees. Third, extending these studies to hotels in other regions of Turkey and to hotels in other countries would assess the generality of our findings. Fourth, undertaking longitudinal studies of the availability of service rewards and self-reported or appraised levels of job contribution would address the question of cause and effect. Fifth, undertaking and assessing interventions to monitor the effects of various rewards that are implemented would provide a more evidence-based understanding of the service reward–prosocial service behaviour link. Finally, research needs to address the issue of what organizational actions result in perceptions of service rewards being offered; likely a qualitative investigation.

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