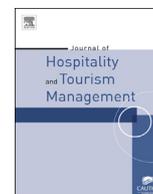


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## Effects of stress, LMX and perceived organizational support on service quality: Mediating effects of organizational commitment



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### ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to examine factors affecting the commitment level of hotel employees and its subsequent impact on the quality of services provided by them. Data for this study were collected from 36 small and medium hotels operating in the Delhi-NCR (National Capital Region), India. Data were analyzed using SPSS macro, i.e., PROCESS, a computational tool for path analysis. Results indicated that organizational commitment acted as a full mediator between the antecedents (job stress, leader–member exchange, perceived organizational support) and the consequence (service quality). Leader–member exchange and perceived organizational support both positively influenced organizational commitment, whereas job stress influenced organizational commitment negatively. Organizational commitment positively influenced service quality. Based on these findings, practical suggestions and directions for future research are discussed.

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### 1. Introduction

Global integration of the service sector has led to the glorification of the hospitality industry in developing economies. The hospitality industry, which includes lodging, food services, theme parks, entertainment, amusement, has been displaying consistent growth for the past two decades in the emerging economies like India. The Indian hotel industry has shown a rise of around 14 per cent in 2010–11 and has been forecasted to maintain the same rate of advancement in the coming years (Vardharajan & Rajan, 2013). Moreover, with the increasing arrivals of tourists, new hotels are being opened up and contributing to increased competition in the hotel industry as well.

Service is undoubtedly an essential aspect of the hotel industry. Valuable service influences tourist's opinion to revisit the hotel (Chen, 2013). Service quality in the hospitality industry has become an extensive field of research since late 1980s (Barrington & Olsen, 1987) and since then it has been able to captivate the concentration of academicians, researchers and practitioners (Lassar, Manolis, & Winsor, 2000). Delivering expected levels of service quality is one of the ongoing concerns in the hotel industry (Clark, Hartline, & Jones, 2009). Service quality has been well-established as an

unquestionable significant aspect of organizational performance in hospitality (Min, Min, & Chung, 2002; Pizam & Ellis, 1999) as well as in the extended business frame of reference (Bloemer, de Ryter, & Wetzels, 1998; Yavas & Yasin, 2001; Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996). The quality service attains customers' delight which leads to higher levels of customer sponsorship and business wealth (Chow, Lau, Lo, Sha, & Yun, 2007). Furthermore, quality service makes customers enthusiastic to endorse the organization in his or her societal chains (e.g., Danaher, 1997; Zeithaml et al., 1996).

Husin, Chelladurai, and Musa (2012) discussed that the workforce of an organization which remain involved in delivering services, to a large extent, is responsible for providing valuable services. Employee job approaches and service discharge are essential for realizing business aspirations along with sustaining competitive edges (Karatepe & Sokmen, 2006). The belief that human resources are the pillars of competitive gains, is majorly appropriate to service oriented businesses (Bowen & Ford, 2002) where customers' understanding about the organization get developed by entrusting the interactions with those employees who bring services (Husin et al., 2012). Therefore, staff members of such an organization are imperative for assuring favorable customers' viewpoint, since they are the ones eventually liable for serving a quality service that matches the predictions of customers (Zeithaml et al., 1996). Thus, this study aims to examine the factors which influence hotel employees' behavior and its subsequent

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impact on the understanding that customers develop about the service quality.

The present study has been conducted by being associated with small and medium sized hotels of Delhi-NCR (National Capital region), India. Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) play an essential role in the progress of the Indian economy through providing 40% of total exports and 45% of industrial output (Goyal, 2013). SME units are flourishing rapidly and employ the second largest manpower in the nation (IBEF, 2011). SME's contribution towards GDP has been reported approximately 17% in the year 2011 which is anticipated to reach to 22% by 2020 (Business Standard, 2011). Specifically, small and medium sized hotels continued its growth rate in the range of 6–7% in the year 2013 (ONICRA, 2013). In fact, when premium hotels are trying hard to generate profits due to the global economic recession, it has become easy for small and medium sized hotels to make profits due to their low operating costs and exploration of new domains (Stock Market Review, 2012). Moreover, a rise of above 65% in hotel rooms (approximately 52,000 new hotel rooms) is expected in total hotel industry by 2017. Out of the total anticipated hotel rooms' supply, small and medium sized hotels are likely to show the largest supply of 18,500 rooms where Delhi-NCR is expected to lead in the supply of such hotel rooms. In spite of a large number of leisure travel, hoteliers have been noticed to concentrate on business destinations, especially in Delhi-NCR along with other top cities of India (Cushman & Wakefield, 2014). Furthermore, it has been also reported that small and medium sized hotels have an adequate potential to evolve in Delhi (MSME-Development Institute, 2012). Thus, these statistics and information has become the impetus to take up this study in Delhi-NCR, India, where the small and medium sized hotel industry need to provide adequate services for fulfilling the diverse nature of tourist demands.

## 2. Theoretical foundation and hypothesis formulation

### 2.1. Organizational commitment

Howard Becker (1960) conceptualized the term 'commitment' in his proposed side-bet theory which proclaims that individuals show commitment towards their organization due to some valued investments that they have built by staying in an organization. Further, if an employee were to disregard the organization, the investments conserved by that employee would be lost. This was one of the primal efforts to forward the meaning of commitment that demonstrates a thoughtful viewpoint for employees' relation with their organization.

Later, more research on commitment was done and it was described as "the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization" (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979; p. 226). However, Meyer and Allen's approach (1991) which comprises affective, continuance, and normative commitment is extensively acknowledged and came as the superior one (Allen & Meyer, 1996; Gellatly, Meyer, & Luchak, 2006; Powell & Meyer, 2004). Amongst these three factors, affective organizational commitment exhibits the clear-cut effects on results just as turnover intentions and performance (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002; Tett & Meyer, 1993) and this is the measure which is the focal point of this work. Affective commitment is characterized as the existence of an employee's high regard towards his or her organization (Powell & Meyer, 2004). It prevails when individuals accept the values of an organization wholeheartedly and stay with organization willingly (Somers, 1995).

Business managers see organizational commitment (OC) as very essential for bringing, maintaining and motivating key individuals

(Michaels, Handfield-Jones, & Axelrod, 2001). Meyer and Allen (1991) have proclaimed that OC is the leading cause of employee perspectives such as turnover behavior and intentions, job satisfaction, etc. Moreover, OC is anticipated as to have enhanced favorable effects on advantageous work attitudes e.g. performance, helping behavior, organizational citizenship behavior (Organ & Ryan, 1995; Powell & Meyer, 2004).

Many researchers and academicians (Luo, Qu, & Marnburg, 2013; Namasivayam & Zhao, 2007; Subramaniam, McManus, & Mia, 2002; Yang, 2010) have been investigating OC in the hospitality industry. Luo et al. (2013) recommended that hotel employees should display more commitment towards their organization to reduce staff turnover and ultimately to improve the quality of service. Therefore, this study will focus on analyzing the factors which affect OC and its subsequent role in improving the Indian hotels' quality of service. The model as hypothesized is shown in Fig. 1.

#### 2.1.1. Factors affecting organizational commitment

Two forms of research on OC appear in the literature: antecedents of organizational commitment, and outcomes of organizational commitment (Marique, Stinglhamber, Desmette, Caesens, & De Zanet, 2012; Panaccio & Vandenberghe, 2009; Tellefsen & Thomas, 2005). A large number of factors influencing OC have been recognized which consist of organizational aspects, job aspects and personal aspects (Mowday et al., 1979). However, there is limited research work for determining the factors influencing the organizational commitment of hotel employees (Subramaniam et al., 2002).

Most of the past researches of OC used job characteristics, personal needs, role states, employees' job satisfaction, work experiences and mental health as antecedent variables (Kemp, Kopp, & Kemp, 2013). Leader–Member exchange (LMX) also has been considered as a valuable antecedent variable of OC (Joo, 2010). Moreover, the study of Li, Sanders, and Frenkel (2012) highlighted the importance of LMX for shaping employees' job attitudes and improving the service quality in the hotel industry. Therefore, LMX can be considered as an important factor in consideration to the hospitality industry. Amongst other factors, perceived organizational support (POS) is considered as a more influential source of OC (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; Rhoades, Eisenberger, & Armeli, 2001). Perception of support from organization leads individuals to feel obligated for making contributions to their organization (Eder & Eisenberger, 2008). Along with the feeling of obligation, individuals not only think about their organization's prosperity, but also fulfill their debt through showing

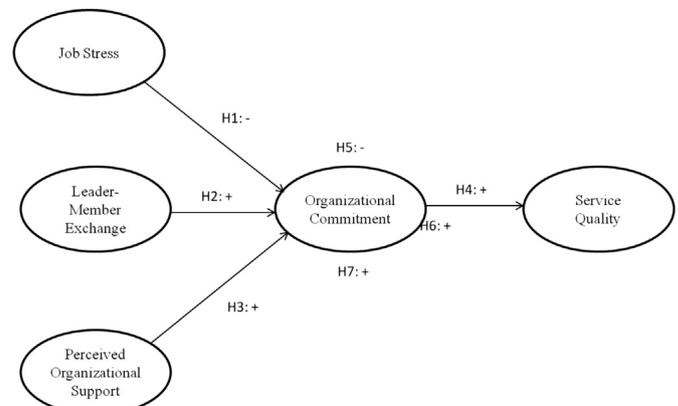


Fig. 1. Hypothesized model.

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