MEASURING EXTROVERSION PERSONALITY TRAITS OF HOTEL EMPLOYEES IN KENYA

Julie Makomere

Department of Hotel and Hospitality Management
University of Eldoret

Jacqueline Korir

Department of Hotel and Hospitality Management
Moi University

ABSTRACT

This paper examined the factors utilized to measure extroversion personality trait of employees in the hotel sector in Kenya. This objective was achieved through adopting modified scales from previous studies. Descriptive research design was employed and three hundred and eighty four employees formed the sample for the study. Closed ended questionnaires were used to collect data that was tested for reliability using Cronbach's alpha. Exploratory factor analysis was undertaken to find out factor structure of data. The findings demonstrated that, other than those in literature, novel indicators can be employed to measure extroversion personality trait. Consequently, the study concluded that social affiliation, social boldness and enthusiasm and expressiveness are important in measuring extroversion personality trait in the hotel sector.

KEY WORDS: Enthusiasm, Expressiveness, Extroversion, Personality Trait, Social Affiliation, Social Boldness

1. Introduction

Feshbach *et al.*, (1996) alluded that personality is a complex and diverse field which addresses the basic and fundamental question of what it means to be a functioning human being. Further according to Karama *et al.,* (2010) an individual could be understood and guided if his personality is identified since it has a strong influence on people's relationships, jobs and their entire lives. Cohen *et al.* (2014) defined personality as the characteristic pattern of a person's behaviour such as thinking, feeling and acting. In the hospitality sector, employees frequently encounter demanding and difficult customers which may not be a pleasant experience but this interaction is a central aspect of the hotel product and hospitality provided at any given time. This aspect of personality is crucial in hotels because customers may purchase from a competitor owing to better prices or better quality service.

George and Jones (1999) in the big five model explains that a personality trait of extroversion displays a person with positive feelings, enthusiastic towards issues, is active and social. This trait in an employee is likely to retain customers in that they may feel appreciated. Humphrey Fellows (2012) identified extroversion as one of the big five personality traits and noted that low scorers under this trait are employees who are; loners, quiet, passive and reserved and high scorers as; joiners, talkative, active, and affectionate. Many researchers argue that extroverts show positive emotions, higher frequency and intensity of personal interactions and higher need for stimulation (Bakker *et al.*, 2006).

Extroversion has also been described as a tendency of being outgoing, highly social, assertive, active, and excitement seeking. Extroverts always have high desire for recognition, position, control and power (McCrae and Costa 1987). Persons who are extraverts prefer interpersonal relations (Mooradian and Swan, 2006). Choi and Chu (2011) cited helpfulness and friendliness as attributes in extroverted persons.

Daft (2002) affirms that the dimension of extraversion includes traits and characteristics that influence behaviour in group settings, including being talkative, comfortable meeting new people, dominance, assertiveness, and self confidence. Self-confidence is described by Dubrin (2004) as being self-assured without being verbose. Barrick *et al.* (2003) suggest that extroversion is related to performance because of the tendency of extroverts to strive for status and that they have sensitivity to rewards at work. Research has proposed that extroverts draw energy from interaction with people, are capable of handling stressful situations and have a tendency to reappraise problems more positively than introverts (Bakker *et al.,* 2006; Costa and McCrae, 1992;). On the other hand, individuals low on extroversion (introverts) may find themselves in a role overload situation caused by excessive contacts with others. Judge *et al.* (1999) argue that extrovert individuals are likely to show lower level of emotional exhaustion than introvert while interacting with customers.

Kamran (2011) conducted a study entitled personality influence on customer attitudinal loyalty on services using two services credit cards services and mobile phone. Positive reliable support was found on the effect of extraversion on customer attitudinal loyalty among mobile phone and credit card users. According to Matzler *et al.* (2005) study, extraversion trait was found to correlate strongly with customer attitudinal loyalty and post purchase behavior. Also Faullant *et al.* (2005) supported a positive link between extroversion and customer attitudinal loyalty. They used sub-scales from the NEO-FFI questionnaire, capturing extraversion. In many organizations, extroverts actively try to gain other people's attention and develop wide social and professional networks. However, Bauer *et al.* (2006) posit that they tend to establish shallow and superficial affective bonds with those around them. The above reviewed similar studies

revealed varied results as some used different methods of analysis from the current study. Others investigated personality traits of customers and how they affect their own attitudinal loyalty. In view of the above, this study sought to establish the effect of employees' extraversion personality trait as a precursor to customer attitudinal loyalty. Therefore the main objective of this study was to examine the factors used to measure extroversion personality trait in hotels

2. Research Methodology

The study was conducted in eighteen hotels within Nairobi City in Kenya. Descriptive research design was adopted. The target population was 2622 customers from selected 3-5 star rated hotels. The sample size comprised 384 customers who were sampled using both stratified and systematic sampling techniques. The strata were the classified star-rated hotels whereas systematic sampling used room numbers to clearly identify the nth customer in each of the hotels on a daily basis. Questionnaires were used to gather information from the respondents. External, content and construct validity were undertaken to ensure legitimacy of both the questionnaire and questions. Reliability was tested using Cronbach's alpha at a significance of >0.7 . Exploratory factor analysis was done through principal component analysis, maximum likelihood, principal Axis Factoring and weighted Least Square.

Measurement of Variables

According to Luarm and Lin, (2005), it is prudent to adopt measurement items from prior researches because it enhances content validity of the scale used. Therefore survey items for extroversion personality trait were adopted and modified from Dion, (2013). Questionnaire items used to measure the extraversion were 10 as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Indicators of Extroversion Personality Trait

Social affiliation
Employees make friends easily
Employees consult each other when handling guest concerns
Employees in this hotel take control of problems
Employees are fun to be around with
Employees in the hotel are easy to approach and interact with

Social boldness
Employees receive guests warmly
Employees show interest and dedication to guests
Employees show concern to guests needs

Enthusiasm and Expressiveness
Employees interact with guests all the time
There is favourable interaction with employees of this hotel

Source: Modified from Dion (2013)

3. **Data Analysis**

The prevailing extraversion personality traits among hotel employees was examined using (10) to measure this trait among the hotel employees with responses elicited on a five (5) point Likert scale. Results showed that sampled hotel employees on average exhibited satisfying extraversion personality trait. Respondents also consistently agreed with all items on the scale because of the exhibited mean scores of approximately 4.00 with associated standard deviation scores of below 1.000.

In particular, respondents agreed that; employees receive guests warmly (B1), 147(47.7%); that employees make friends easily (B2), 121(39.4%); that employees show interest and dedication to guests (B3), 145(47.0%); that employees interact with guests all the time (B4), 123(39.9%); that employees show concern to guests needs (B5), 137(44.4%); that there is favorable interaction with employees of the hotel (B6), 138(44.8%); that employees in the hotel are easy to approach and interact with (B7), 140(45.4%); that employees in the hotel take control of guest problems (B8), 120(38.9%); that employees are fun to be around with (B9),120(38.9%); and that employees consult each other when handling guest concerns (B10), 108(35.0%).

Skewness and kurtosis values were found to lie in the recommended range of -1.96 and +1.96; –3 to +3 respectively. The distribution of response scores across extraversion personality trait was therefore adjudged to be normal as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Extraversion Personality Trait Descriptive Statistics

Statement	SD f/%	D f/%	NS f/%	A f/%	SA f/%	Mean	Std Dev
B1: Employees receive guests warmly	0	5(1.6)	12(3.9)	147(47.7)	144(46.7)	4.39	.643
B2: Employees make friends easily	5(1.3)	14(4.5)	52(16.1)	116(38.4)	121(39.4)	4.10	.896
B3: Employees show interest and dedication to guests	7(2.2)	12(3.8)	26(8.4)	145(47.0)	118(38.3)	4.15	.896
B4: Employees interact with guests all the time	8(2.5)	31(10.6)	67(21.7)	123(39.9)	79(26.1)	3.75	1.024
B5: Employees show concern to guests needs	3(0.9)	14(4.5)	20(6.4)	134(43.5)	137(44.4)	4.25	.830
B6: There is favorable interaction with employees of this hotel	12(4)	14(4.5)	47(15.2)	138(44.8)	97(31.4)	3.93	.983
B7: Employees in the hotel are easy to approach and interact with	8(2.5)	6(1.9)	38(12.3)	116(37.6)	140(45.4)	4.25	.814
B8: Employees in this hotel take control of problems	3(0.9)	20(6.4)	78(25.3)	120(38.9)	96(31.1)	3.90	.942
B9: Employees are fun to be around with	9(2.9)	20(6.4)	70(22.7)	120(38.9)	89(28.8)	3.90	.920
B10: Employees consult each other when handling guest concerns	4(1.2)	15(4.8)	90(29.2)	108(35.0)	91(29.5)	3.89	.906

Source: Research Data

4.1 Exploratory Factor Analysis

Extraversion personality trait was examined on a scale with ten (10) measurement items. Extroversion trait was subjected to a factor analysis and three components were extracted which cumulatively explained 68% of variance. When rotated using Varimax with Kaiser Normalization, five (5) items loaded on the first factor designated 'social affiliation'; that employees make friends easily (B2); that employees are easy to approach and interact with (B7); that employees take control of problems (B8); that employees are fun to be around with (B9) and that employees consult each other when handling guest concerns, (B10). Further three items which loaded on factor two renamed 'social boldness' were; that employees receive guests warmly, (B1); that employees show interest and dedication to guests, (B3) and; that employee's show concern to guest needs, (B5). Factor three designated 'enthusiasm and expressiveness' had the following items; that employees interact with guests all the time, (B4) and that there is favorable interaction with employees, (B6). The inference of the above results is that social affiliation factor explained customer attitudinal loyalty with the highest percentage (27%) of total variance, followed by 'social boldness' factor (24%) and lastly enthusiasm and expressiveness by 17% as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Extraversion personality factor structure

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.906
	Approx. Chi-Square	1395.097
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Df	45
	Sig.	.000

Total Variance Explained

Component	Eigen value	Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings	
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.695	26.952	26.952
2	2.401	24.008	50.960
3	1.733	17.330	68.290

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Exploratory factor analysis identified extraversion as a key personality trait measured by social affiliation, social boldness and enthusiasm. Specifically social affiliation as an indicator portrayed employees' ability to make friends easily and fun loving. Social affiliation characteristic was found to manifest itself in the manner in which employees' consult each other while handling guest problems and even in their ease of approach. The second indicator under extraversion trait; social boldness was defined by employees' warm reception, a show of interest, dedication and concern to customers. Customers are social human beings and when they are received warmly by the hotel employees, there is an element of feeling wanted thereby building mutual trust and ultimate loyalty.

Table 4: Factor Structure of Extraversion Personality Trait

Factor	Loadings	Eigen values	Cumulative variance explained
Sociability affiliation		2.695	26.952
B2: Employees make friends easily	0.521		
B7: Employees in the hotel are easy to approach	0.608		
B8: Employees in the hotel take control of problems	0.752		
B9: Employees are fun to be around with	0.630		
B10: Employees consult each other when handling guest concerns	0.815		
		2.401	50.950
Social boldness			
B1: Employees in this hotel receive guests warmly	0.830		
B3: Employees show interest and dedication to guests	0.686		
B5: Employees show concern to guest needs	0.719		
		1.733	68.290
Enthusiasm and Expressiveness			
B4: Employee interact with guests all the time	0.530		
B6: There is favorable interaction with employees of this hotel	0.899		
Kaise-Meyer-Olkin MSA	**0.906**		
Bartlett's test of Sphericity	$\chi^2 = 1395.097$		
	p< .001		

Source: Research data

Thirdly, extraversion trait was explained by enthusiasm indicator which showed favorable interaction between employees with their customers. Another perspective of enthusiasm was that; these kinds of employees are outgoing, easy to interact with, fun loving and friendly. This implied that employees who are generally easy going, warm to deal with and fun loving are likely to reduce boredom during customers' leisure time in hotels. Being passionate with customers may also encourage them to consistently increase their visitations. However, sociability and enthusiasm is also explained by acting impulsively and jumping into conclusions without much thought, it may annoy some customers hence reduce their level of loyalty. Therefore, hotel employees need to pay attention and understand customers' needs first before acting. In examining descriptive analysis results hotel employees portrayed high social affiliation, high social boldness and were high enthusiasm. The mean response rate averaged a score of 4 in most items, which reflected

agreements that employees make friends easily receive guests warmly and were highly interactive. The low standard deviation scores were close to the mean portraying consistency in the responses made. The interpretation of these results is that employees who receive guests warmly, those who make friends easily and those who show interest and dedication to guests have the potential of encouraging customers' repeat patronage.

Another perspective about the description of extraversion personality trait indicated that social employees who are also team players have the ability of making customers' feel wanted, appreciated and even loyal. The results from this study corroborates with those of Matzler (2005) who stated that extraversion trait correlates positively with customer attitudinal loyalty and post purchase behaviour. This was specifically in terms of social affiliation, social boldness and enthusiasm. Also Bing and Lounsbury, (2000); Judge *et al.*, (1999) in their studies indicated that extraversion was a valid predictor of customer attitudinal loyalty characterized by social interaction and which concurs with results of this study.

The implication of the findings is that hotel employees who embrace warm reception and interact easily with customers may decrease their ultimate repeat patronage. On the contrary, Tulin *et al.* (2011) in his study found out that there was no significant relationship between extraversion trait and customer attitudinal loyalty. In support of Tulin *et al.* findings, Bauer *et al.,* Erdogan, Linden and Wayne (2006) posit that extraverted employees more often than not tend to establish shallow and superficial interaction with those around them. Despite the fact that extraversion trait is defined by social affiliation, social boldness and enthusiasm; it needs to be exercised with caution. This could also be interpreted that customers may not be pleased with employees who portray high social affiliation, social boldness and high enthusiasm when interacting with them. It could also be interpreted that customers feel that extraverted employees' violate their space which may ultimately make them disloyal.

However results from this study revealed that the hotel sector focuses mostly on employees who possess sociable characteristics because the sector falls under service industry. It also came out clearly that introverted employees are normally placed in departments which have minimal contact with customers. This could therefore imply that the image and loyalty of a hotel is improved through employees' warm reception and high interaction with their customers.

Although there was agreement about social employees encouraging customers repeat visits, there is need to focus on the way employees consult with each other when handling guests concerns. Employees should be trained more on this aspect of handling guests' concerns as quite a number of customers showed little knowledge about the way customer complaints are handlings.

4.2 Reliability Test

Cronbach alpha (α) coefficient test of reliability was calculated based on a threshold of at least 0.7. The results on extroversion personality trait was 0.926 which was above the threshold of 0.7 thus the indicators used to measure extroversion were adequate and strong.

4. **Conclusion**

Extraversion personality trait exhibits a person who enjoys social affiliation, social boldness and enthusiasm with customers. Extraversion feature displays a person with positive feelings towards issues, is active, talkative and portrays high level of interaction with customers. Consequently when measuring extroversion in the hotel sector, the social aspect of the employee is most prominent.

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