

# Prosocial Behaviour of Front-Line Employees in the Jordanian Hotels Industry

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## Abstract

The Jordanian tourism industry has been booming swiftly in the last three decades. The development and sustainability of employees' prosocial behaviour in tourism and hospitality industry is becoming increasingly difficult to achieve in a competitive environment, and remains ambiguous regarding its underlying determinants. However, this study attempts to measure the influencing factors of prosocial behaviour of front-line employees in Jordanian tourism and hospitality industry as a whole. More specifically, the current study has been carried out in order to develop and validate a proposed model of predicting prosocial behaviour of the employees working in hotels. To measure the factors of prosocial behaviour as the objective of the study, there were five primary hypotheses developed to fulfil the objectives of this quantitative research, where a questionnaire was used for collecting the required data. A total of 180 respondents were taken as a sample for the current study. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) followed by the hypotheses testing was carried out to achieve the research objectives. The results show that, employee empowerment influences positively on self-efficacy and prosocial behaviour, but not on the organizational commitment. The organizational commitment and self-efficacy influence positively on prosocial behaviour in Jordanian tourism industry. Moreover, the current study would be evidently helpful for the academicians as well as the policy makers of Jordanian tourism and hospitality industry.

**Keywords:** Prosocial Behaviour, Tourism and Hospitality Industry, Jordan

## 1.1 Introduction

The word 'tour' originally has come from an old French word, 'tourn', which was firstly used in 1640s (Laws, Harper, Jones, & Marcus, 2013). The literal meaning of this word generally refers a turn, trick, circle, route, perimeter and/or doing a working shift. However, the word tourism is perceived as moving around from one place to another in general, or having a long trip or expedition along with an organized group under the leadership of a tour guide for the purpose of visiting a variety of sights one after the other (Laws et al., 2013). Having such a definition, tourism refers to a socio-economic events bringing with it social, economic and ecological development (Smallman & Moore, 2010). The word tourism is coupled with some basic notions like free or leisure time, fun, amusement, relaxation and hospitality, (Jiang and Tribe, 2009). Vitaly, the tourism is related to leisure, entertaining and recreational activities without any type of earning or remuneration purpose from within the place visited. Some definitions of tourism included the concept of earning through tourist activities. Such type of tourism is called business tourism, as some people are involved in providing infrastructures, goods and services to tourists and visitors. However, the word 'tourism' itself is associated particularly with the concept of leisure, fun and entertainment (Wahab et al., 2010).

However, a range of stakeholders for instance tour organizers, tour agencies, refreshment, transportation companies and souvenir shop owners contribute to the development of different culture and life of multi-ethnic groups as well as pro-social behaviour of tourism and hospitality sector's staff (Zerbe et al., 1998). More specifically, the front line staff members as the encounter of the hotels and hospitality industry play a pivotal role in forming the service consumers' opinions by means of their service delivery. For that reason the decision they tend to make while serving the customers affect their rapport with the customers. Sometimes, the decision can be made at the expense of violating the organizational rules and regulations and being involved with some risks. However, to have an expected return, the management of tourism and hospitality industry should ensure to provide equal opportunities to all the employees working in the industry With regard to the training and developmental dimension of the employees, it is essential all over the world to impart up to date training to all employees so that they may improve their exposure in providing services.

In the hotel industry, the interaction between the front line employees and their service consumers can be an antecedent of the front-line employees' prosocial behaviour. However, this study attempts to measure the influential factors of prosocial behaviour, especially of the front-line employees in Jordanian tourism and hospitality industry as a whole. More specifically, the current study has been carried out in order to develop and

validate a proposed model of predicting prosocial behaviour of the employees working in hotels. These employees not only fulfil the basic demand, conduct, and rules and regulations of the hotel industry, but also provide the services according to the demands and the satisfaction level of the customers in order to promote the tourism industry.

## 1.2 Research Methodology

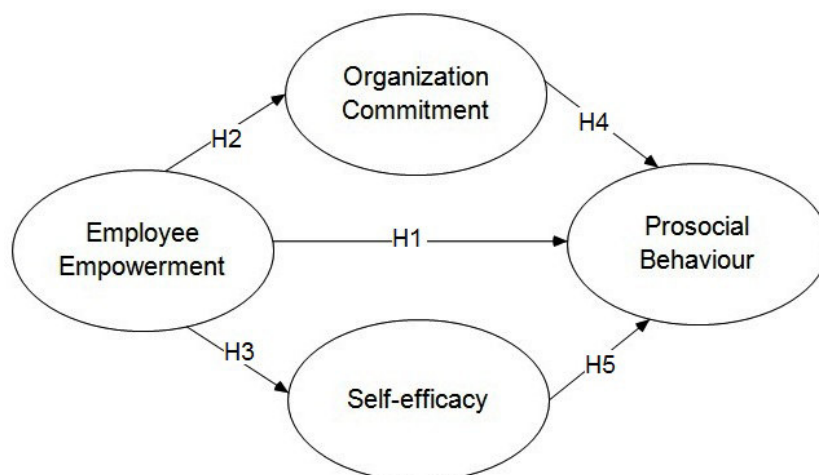
This is a quantitative research in order to identify the relationship between different variables. Specifically, a quantitative approach was followed in the study. According to Sheep and Nailing (2004), quantitative studies provide valuable and applicable information about variable relationships. For this purpose, a questionnaire was used to collect the data for this research. However, the fieldwork was conducted over a period of four months from 12th January to the end of April, 2014. This period was chosen as it came after many holidays such as Eid al-Adha, Eid al-Fitr, the Islamic New Year and Christmas celebrations, making it the busiest season for tourist market. Therefore, it was convenient for the researcher to meet the employees and get the questionnaire filled.

After a thorough study of related literature, a questionnaire was prepared (Hoinville et al., 1982; Kristensen, Kanji, & Dahlgaard, 1992). This questionnaire comprised of a structure-disguised and self-administered questions. However, the measurement instrument for constructs was designed to measure four main factors, which are (employee empowerment, self-efficacy, organization commitment and prosocial behaviour). In fact, the items were adapted from various sources with a 5 point recording pattern was made to evaluate the items, from level '1=strongly disagree' to '5=strongly agree'.

As regards the sample size for the current study, 300 respondents were selected through convenient sampling method (Hair et al., 2013). Out of 300 respondents, 216 respondents returned the questionnaire; therefore, the return rate was 72 percent. However, SPSS version 20 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL) was used for the analysis of the data. All the questionnaires were entered accordingly with all recorded information.

## 2.4 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is an analytical tool with several variations and contexts. It is used to make conceptual distinctions and organize ideas. This section will discuss the conceptual framework and hypotheses development. Fundamentally, the conceptual framework for this study was developed in the view of past literatures where there were some linkages of prosocial behaviour and some other factors. However, supporting from the precedent literatures as discussed above, this study draws a conceptual framework and formulates respective hypotheses as follows.



**Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework (Hypothesized Model)**

This conceptual framework was estimated from the literature support. The organization commitment, employee empowerment and self-efficacy were connected with procial behaviour of the front line employees of the tourism industry in Jordan. The employee empowerment was found as the independent variable for the procial behaviour as dependent variable, whereas organization commitment and self-efficacy were though as the mediating variables as literature supports in this regards. Observing the conceptual framework drawn above, there are five primary hypotheses can be developed, which are stated bellow.

H<sub>1</sub>: Employees empowerment is positively related with prosocial behaviour of front-line employees in Jordanian tourism and hospitality industry.

H<sub>2</sub>: Employees empowerment is positively related with organization commitment of front-line employees in Jordanian tourism and hospitality industry.

H<sub>3</sub>: Employees empowerment is positively related with self-efficacy of front-line employees in Jordanian

tourism and hospitality industry.

H4: Organization commitment is positively related with procial behaviour of front-line employees in Jordanian tourism and hospitality industry.

H5: Self-efficacy is positively related with procial behaviour of front-line employees in Jordanian tourism and hospitality industry.

### **1.3 Literature Review**

In today's global arena, organizations are hunting some distinctive features to surpass their competitors and win the market share. An imperative feature in a tight association with an organization's performance is staff's efficiency. However, the idea is mainly derived from the theory that yielding a position of authority to staff in order to decide whenever it is required and take an action they feel more self-assured, competent, and make every effort to work more efficiently. However, this literature review section includes the precedent academic and practical inputs for the prospective variables.

#### **1.3.1 Tourism and Hospitality Industry in Jordan**

Tourism and hospitality industry, as a source of business and economic development of a country, not only increases income and economic strength of the country, but also affects ecological, social, cultural, political values of its citizens. A yearly report of the World Tourism Organization (2013) shows that, tourism as a lucrative source of earnings contributes to a country's prosperity. For Jordan, tourism is a strategic industry. It is the largest sector in the economy, contributing over 16% of GDP. It is also the second largest earner of foreign exchange after remittances (generating \$3.6 billion in 2015) and is the largest generator of private sector employment in the kingdom (Jordan Tourism Development Project, 2015). Tourism and hospitality industry has a key role in the growth of Jordanian sustainable tourism.

#### **1.3.2 Employees Empowerment**

Employee Empowerment refers to the process of granting an authority to a person to think, act, and to be in charge of his action and decide autonomously. In other words, feeling self-empowered to decide about his or her own future. It is necessary to avoid taking 'empowerment' as something that someone does for another. This is one of the problems that organizations are confronted with when it comes to the concept of empowerment. It is generally assumed that someone should be empowered by another in a higher position, often a manger. Accordingly, the staff members expect to be empowered to take an action, while the managers wish the members act in empowered ways. Such differentiation in interpretation of the empowerment concept in many organizations resulted in unhappiness with this concept.

However, organizations should have a responsibility to provide stimulating and favourable environment in which their staff can develop their abilities and get encouraged to act in empowered ways. To this effect any barriers that limit the ability of staff to act in empowering ways need to be removed (Shahnawaz and Juyal, 2006). Regarding this, Gomez and Rose (2001) argue that, empowerment is allied with human psychology and can be described as a psychological empowerment; a motivational construct which underline "meaning, competence, self determination, and impact" (p.58). It measures the authority given the staff to take initiative and make decisions independently about their tasks they are responsible for (Clark, Hartline, and Jones, 2009). Staffs are encouraged to take initiative in responding to the customers' hotel services requests. Accordingly, they are appreciated and remunerated with incentives for their impressive performance (Cook, Bowen, Chase, Dasu, Stewart, & Tansik, 2002; Chow, Lo, Sha, & Hong, 2006).

In today's global arena, organizations are hunting some distinctive features to surpass their competitors and win the market share. An imperative feature in a tight association with an organization's performance is staff's efficiency. This has raised the question of how to improve the efficiency of the staff. There is a consensus that empowering staff would boost their efficiency. This idea is mainly derived from the theory that yielding a position of authority to staff in order to decide whenever it is required and take an action they feel more self-assured, competent, and make every effort to work more efficiently. However, the term empowerment needs to be clarified and defined. Empowerment means giving people accreditation and their true value by allowing them to take in decisions and planning process, by admiring them, and constantly providing them with sufficient feedbacks, training and support. When the staff is allowed to think autonomously and assist the company with the planning. Process, in return they make big efforts to do a better and efficient.

Finally, the empowerment helps the staff out with a better decision while they are offering the services and motivates them to guarantee the quality services to the customers. Empowerment stimulates a prompt response to a customer's request and generates some constructive ideas for satisfactory services, especially in the hotel and tourism industry. Such constructive ideas are significant where a decision needs to be made. Thus, this factor should be given priority in terms of Jordanian perspective, exclusively in the hotel and tourism industry.

#### **1.3.3 Employee Empowerment and Organization Commitment**

According to Watson (1986), employee empowerment is managerial perceptions that deal with the transition from the stage of 'control' to the stage of 'commitment'. Though this strategy is useful, it has some demerits.

Empowering the staff may diminish the organization's control over the empowered staff. Empowerment is related to staff's self control and commitment while rendering the quality services. This happens when the organization relinquishes its control and allows their staff to experience a sense of self controlling and commitment. Empowering strategy which has been facilitated by the organization's commitment encourages the staff to undertake more responsibility not only for the action, but also for the organization's development (Barry, 1993; El-Jardali, Jaafar, Dimassi, Jamal, & Hamdan, 2010; Laws et al., 2013). In addition, the tact and skills inherited to the staff from the organization can be of substantial assistance in improving the organization's output (Ripley & Ripley, 1992; Chee, 2008) and satisfying the customers (Hubrecht & Teare, 1993) and it can consequently raise the finance (Cotton, 1993; El-Jardali et al., 2010). Empowering strategy is also adjustable to the organization's lay-off and downsizing practice (Barry, 1993; Shirley, 1993; Chee, 2008). However, some organizations' efforts to gain the commitment of the staff overlap or interfere with empowerment process.

Some measurements and strategies can be carried out to gain the genuine staff's commitment and obligation. Such strategies include developing the staff's prosocial behaviour safeguarding their jobs and increasing their job satisfaction through some positive feedbacks. Some major changes in the job design through job improvement along with the staff's sincere engagement and participation can also develop the prosocial behaviour of staff. Kelly (1993) showed that building a close link between improving the staff's performance and their job satisfaction, as an effective strategy, was very simplistic but at the same time realistic. However, there are some other factors interact with and determine the greater commitments to the objectives of customer service quality and engendering the positive feelings among the staff. Kelly's (1993) study also suggests that any changes concerning pro-social behaviour are a matter of choosing and adopting strategies vigilantly and properly. However, Lashley (2000) claimed that the empowered staff might have shown better customer-oriented pro-social behaviour if they had learnt different skills, strategies to fulfil needs of customers. McGrath (2013) indicated that the service behaviours of the staff can be better modified to be in line with customers' requirements and perceptions of service quality. The pro-social behaviour of staff regarding the service encounter was appreciated by customers while gauging the service quality, therefore the staff's pro-social behaviours play a key role in the whole service delivery process (Lashley 1995; Lashley, 2001).

Accordingly, the empowered staff would display proper and flexible pro-social behaviours towards the customers in service encounters, and service behaviours of customer-contact staff might give the customers a better impression of service quality and change their perceptions. However, the above stated claims require more empirical research on the pro-social behaviour in relation with staff empowerment and staff quality (Tsaur, Cheng & Wu, 2004). More specifically, the mediatory role of service behaviour in such a relation needs to be examined. Some researchers (Lashley, 1999; Gazzoli et al., 2010; Tag-Eden & El-Said, 2011) claim that the positive service behaviour of the empowered staff may positively affect the customers' perception of service quality. Conversely, some factors such as feelings of unreliability between the employers and staff may destroy the relationship between staff empowerment and service quality (Tsaur et al., 2004). In tourism and hotel industry, hotel management lays considerable stress on the staff's empowerment, pro-social service behaviour, and service quality to increase customers' level of satisfaction. Owing to such an emphasis, the pro-social behaviour of staff in hotels and hospitality industry is the focus of the present research.

## 1.4 Research Findings

### 1.4.1 Participant Characteristics

A total of 190 frontline respondents were obtained from employees drawn from various hotels in Jordan participated in the survey of which 10 respondents were screened out because of missing data and bias-error issues. However, the study revealed a diversify working experiences of the respondents in which the lowest percentage of the respondents have 15 Years and above in services while the highest percentage of the respondents have just 5 years of working experience. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of valid cases (180) and valid percentages for the demographic variables.

**Table.1: Participants characteristics (N=202)**

Characteristics	Classification	N.	Percentage%
<b>Gender</b>	Male	71	39.44
	Female	109	60.56
<b>Years of service in current company</b>	less than 5	78	43.33
	5 to less than 10	55	30.55
	>10 to less than 15	37	20.55
	15 and more	10	5.57

### 1.4.2 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Since this research is investigating the factors influencing the prosocial behaviour, thus, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is the most suitable approach to figure out the influential factors. Despite the importance of using exploratory factor analysis (EFA) analysing validity (Conway & Huffcutt, 2003) and checking dimensionality of

the variables within the different population and different study site (UCLA, 2014), the present study adapted measurement instrument that is already developed and validated in previous studies. However, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) usually does principal components analysis (PCA) with Varimax method which attempts to minimize the number of variables that have high loadings on each factor (Pallant, 2010). Moreover, the items with only loading 0.400 or greater were consider as acceptable as suggested by (Hair et al., 2013). The following sections will present the EFA test for the variables under the focus of current study.

#### 1.4.2.1 Prosocial Behaviour

The use of principal component analysis as the mean of extracting the prosocial behaviour is shown in Table 2. While the KMO score of 0.800 gave good sampling adequacy, the total variance accounted by one factor by 62.91% indicates good component validity.

**Table 2: Factor Analysis for Prosocial Behaviour**

Items	Loading
Q3	0.779
Q4	0.839
Q5	0.709
Q6	0.808
Q7	0.824
KMO	0.800
Variance	62.91
Approx. Chi-Square	444.278

#### 1.4.2.2 Employee Empowerment

The questionnaire items for Employee Empowerment demonstrated good component validity when EFA of the four basic dimensional items (Impact, Self-determination, Competence, and Meaning) was processed in the questionnaire; additional four factors were generated with all items loaded on their respective dimension except Q8 which was purposely deleted for having high cross loading value with another dimension. Loadings for remain items and KMO score of 0.846 with total variance accounted for by the three factors was 76.54% which indicated a good sampling adequacy as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Factor Analysis for Employee Empowerment**

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Q9 Impact	0.821			
Q10	0.815			
Q11 Self-determination		0.797		
Q12		0.759		
Q13		0.731		
Q14 Competence			0.800	
Q15			0.805	
Q16			0.770	
Q17 Meaning				0.779
Q18				0.795
Q19				0.812
KMO			0.846	
Variance			76.54	
Approx. Chi-Square			1023.721	

#### 1.4.2.3 Organization Commitment

In the case of organization commitment, the result obtained by EFA using principal components as means of extraction, indicate a very good adequacy as shown in Table 4 with 0.821 KMO score. The total variance accounted by one factor was 72.91% indicating good component validity.

**Table 4: Factor Analysis for Organization commitment**

Items	Component
Q40	0.784
Q41	0.892
Q42	0.862
Q43	0.878
Q44	0.850
KMO	0.821
Variance	72.91
Approx. Chi-Square	677.142

**1.4.2.4 Self-efficacy**

For Self-efficacy determination, Table 5 shows the result of the EFA carried out using principal component to extract 10 items into one dimension, revealed a very good sampling adequacy with KMO score of 0.937. Good component validity is obtained as a result of the total variance contributed by one factor was 60.31%.

**Table 5: Exploratory Factor Analysis for Self-efficacy**

Items	Component
Q45	0.769
Q46	0.765
Q47	0.766
Q48	0.819
Q49	0.771
Q50	0.720
Q51	0.783
Q52	0.788
Q53	0.792
Q54	0.787
KMO	0.937
variance	60.31
Approx. Chi-Square	1181.486

EFA conducted on the present data to checked the dimensionality of the constructs after deleting six items (Q8, Q20, Q21, Q29, Q31, and Q38), revealed that; while each one of these constructs is unidimensional (Prosocial behaviour, Organization commitment, and Self-efficacy), both constructs (Employee Empowerment, and HRM Practises) are multidimensional constructs and will be modelled in further analysis as Higher-order construct (HOC). However, the current study tested the five hypotheses from the output found from the analysis to examine the relationships among variables. Table 6 exhibits the results of hypotheses testing.

**Table 6: Hypotheses testing results**

H. No	Hypotheses	Path Coefficient	Standard Error	t value	Decision
H <sub>1</sub>	Employee Empowerment → Prosocial behaviour	0.193	0.054	3.553***	Supported
H <sub>2</sub>	Employee Empowerment → Organization commitment	0.123	0.076	1.625	Not support
H <sub>3</sub>	Employee Empowerment → Self-efficacy	0.391	0.077	5.093***	Supported
H <sub>4</sub>	Organization commitment → Prosocial behaviour	0.434	0.096	4.515***	Supported
H <sub>5</sub>	Self-efficacy → Prosocial behaviour	0.152	0.076	2.006*	Supported

\*  $p < 0.05$  when  $t\text{-value} \geq 1.645$  one-tail test,

\*\*  $p < 0.01$  when  $t\text{-value} \geq 2.326$  one-tail test,

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$  when  $t\text{-value} \geq 3.091$  one-tail test

The first hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>) was supported stating that, Employee Empowerment influences positively on prosocial behaviour. Hypothesis testing infers any increase in Employee Empowerment will significantly increase prosocial behaviour. The path coefficient between Employee Empowerment and Prosocial behaviour is significant ( $\beta = 0.193$ ) at level of  $p\text{-value} = 0.001$ .

The second hypothesis (H<sub>2</sub>) stated that, Employee empowerment does not influence positively on

organizational commitment. The hypothesis was not supported ( $\beta= 0.123$ , p-value  $>0.05$ ) and shows that any increase of Employee empowerment will not significantly increase Organization commitment. Besides, the third hypothesis ( $H_3$ ) which stated that, Employee empowerment influences positively on self-efficacy. The hypothesis was supported ( $\beta= 0.391$ , p-value  $<0.001$ ) and shows that any increase of Employee empowerment will significantly increase self-efficacy. The present finding consistent with other research of Scott and Bruce, 1994 who found that Empowerment is a precursor of self-efficacy. For instance, empowerment enhances the self-efficacy of employees as discretion allows them to decide the best way to serve customers.

The fourth hypothesis ( $H_4$ ) was supported ( $\beta= 0.434$ , p-value  $<0.001$ ) telling that, Organization commitment influences positively on Prosocial behaviour. The last hypothesis ( $H_5$ ) was also supported ( $\beta= 0.152$ , p-value  $<0.05$ ) which stated that, Self-efficacy influences positively on Prosocial behaviour.

### 1.5 Conclusion

The results achieve from the findings are helpful to rationalize the current phenomena in the hotel and hospitality industry in Jordan. Fundamentally, the organisational commitment has been an interesting research topic as employee commitment is recognized as one of the major determinants of organizational effectiveness, higher levels of job performance, and of lower turnover. However, it might be illustrated from the findings that the importance of employees being flexible is the key to the prosocial behaviour, and thus, they need to be able to recognize customers' needs and inappropriate or inadequate treatment in such situations can result in dissatisfaction. Consequently, it is important for employees to adequately display their role-prescribed and extra-role service behaviours depending upon what customers require in service encounters. Besides, the customer-contact employees must control the quality of the service at the time it is produced. Whether that same contact employee has the ability and willingness to be immediately aware of changes in consumer wants and needs is essential to the success of service companies. In summary, besides the requirement of positive service behaviour, the frontline employees also need to possess the ability to provide good service for customers.

The employee empowerment improve the Prosocial behaviour of front line employee in hotels in the way that they act to benefit others customers. Frontline employees have a better sense of what the customer desires from the hotel than the hotel administration itself. Therefore, when the employee receives the authority and power from hotel administration, they will behave better and go beyond their job description without any indecision, while they will be reluctant to perform well when they do not have the empowerment from hotel administration.

Prosocial behaviour in the workplace is sometime known as good citizenship behaviour or extra-role behaviour (1986; Organ, 1988). These behaviours consist of: helping, cooperating, sharing, and volunteering; their function is to create or preserve the well-being of others. According to Cameron et al., (2003) prosocial behaviours are an aspect of positive organizational behaviour; however, these behaviours can be considered functional or dysfunctional. Functional prosocial behaviour is contributes to the accomplishment of the organization's mission or goals, and dysfunctional prosocial behaviour diverts from the organization's ability to attain goals.

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