




THE EFFECT OF PROACTIVE PERSONALITY ON CUSTOMER-ORIENTED BEHAVIORS: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF EMPLOYEE CREATIVITY

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Abstract

Purpose - The study explores creativity as a mediator in the impact of proactive personality on customer orientation in light of Allport's trait theory, 1961.

Methodology/Design - The study was conducted in four- and five-star hotels in a destination resort, Cesme, Izmir. The data was obtained via a questionnaire. 194 valid questionnaires were subjected to reliability and validity test. The hypothesized relationships were tested by regression.

Findings - The results show that although proactive personality increases hotel employees' creativity, proactive personality decreases their customer-oriented behavior. In addition, the results show that employee creativity has a partial mediating effect on the relationships between proactive personality and customer orientation.

Originality of the research - The results can contribute to the literature on customer orientation in the hospitality industry and assist hoteliers in hiring the right employee. They offer practical implications to encourage the proactive and creative tendencies of their current employees.

Keywords proactive personality, creativity, customer orientation, hotels

INTRODUCTION

The concept of customer orientation has drawn great attention of researchers in tourism (Grisseemann et al. 2013; Li Sa et al. 2020; Zhang et al. 2021; Tajeddini 2010). In today's competitive business environment, hotels are supposed to find ways to promote service innovation and improvement in order to create customer value (Tang 2014). Being guest centric in business strategies and decision-making process is important for the success of hotels (Grisseemann et al. 2013). It benefits hotels in terms of innovativeness, financial performance, reputation, and guest retention (Grisseemann et al. 2013). In hospitality industry, both customers and service providers relationship impact a hotel's innovation skills and successful performance (Tajeddini and Trueman 2012). Therefore employees' understanding the needs of customers and serve accordingly with enjoyment are two important issues of customer focus (Brown et al. 2002).

The self-confidence, self-efficacy, and intrinsic motivation of proactive employees lead them to exert more effort in the process of achieving customer satisfaction goals, and

thus, it is possible to reach a higher level of customer focus (Yan et al. 2021). Active, future- oriented proactive employees that act in advance with an intended impact can handle the emotional demands of customer- service provider interaction at the hospitality industry (Loi et al. 2016) and place greater emphasis on customer satisfaction and show less corner-cutting behaviors (Yan et al. 2021). Kim et al. (2010) suggest that proactive personality is also linked to employee creativity which results in innovation. An intrinsically motivated employee with a proactive personality shows a highly creative behavior (Horng et al. 2016). Creativity of front-line employees at hotels promotes customer-oriented boundary spanning behaviors, including external representation, internal influence, and service delivery (Chien et al. 2021).

The study aims to identify the proposed relationships via drawing on the Trait Theory by Allport (1961). The theory suggests that the human itself was purposive, future oriented, goal striving, and self- directing (Pervin 1994). It also emphasizes that traits are expression of personality and shape human behavior. They are comparably stable over time and show individual characteristics (Novikova 2013). With appropriate stimuli behaviors, the true nature of the person can emerge. Based on Trait Theory, personality traits of an employee potentially influence the behaviors in the organization (Hee and Johari 2014). Personality matters as a predictor of various work behaviors (Barrick 2005). Accordingly, Brown et al. (2002) suggest that employee's degree of customer orientation is influenced by the personality traits. Kuşluvan and Eren (2011) indicate that the service habits of employees are related to their personality traits. Proactivity as a personality trait therefore can drive the behavior of creativity (Du et al. 2021, Horng et al. 2016) and then customer orientation (Hee and Johari 2014).

The study generally aims to examine creativity as a mediator in the impact of proactive personality on customer-orientation in the light of trait theory by Allport (1961). The specific aims are: (1) to examine the effects of proactive personality on creativity; (2) to test the effects of creativity of the employees on their customer-oriented behaviors.; (3) to test the effects of the proactive personality of employees on their customer-oriented behaviors: (4) to test the mediation effect of creativity of employees between proactive personality of employees and their customer-oriented behaviors. The study takes place in Turkey where tourism industry is of immense importance. Based on the results of World Economic Forum Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index 2019 Turkey ranks 71st among 140 countries in terms of degree of customer orientation (WEF 2019). Therefore, it is crucial to understand the concept of customer-orientation behaviors of the employees and its antecedents from the point of trait theory at Turkish hotels as employees are placed more important in competitive differentiation (Bettencourt et al. 2001). Thus, the results can expand the hospitality literature on customer orientation and guide the hoteliers in the hiring process of the right employee and offer practical implications to foster the proactive and creative tendencies of their current employees.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. 1. Proactive Personality

Proactive personality, first defined by Bateman and Crant (1993), is a behavioral phenomenon that affects the individual and his/her environment by leading to change. Bateman and Crant (1993) stated that those with proactive personality are individuals who foresee the future, act against potential problems and opportunities and create meaningful change. On the other hand, non-proactive individuals act exact opposite of these behaviors (Crant 1995). Proactive behavior of their employees is important for businesses in today's rapidly changing business world. Because it includes self-initiated future-oriented behaviors for change in subjects such as taking responsibility, proactive problem solving, using personal initiative, arranging work, and providing feedback to improve individuals' working methods (Parker et al. 2011). Fuller and Marler (2009) in their meta-analysis, found that employees with proactive personalities provide higher positive output in the workplace both individually and organizationally. The studies also show that proactive personality has positive relationship with performance in the workplace (Bakker et al. 2012), creativity (Kim et al. 2010), career success (Fuller and Marler 2009), work dedication (Yang et al. 2017) and learning motivation (Vignoli and Depolo 2019). Due to the labor-intensive nature of the hospitality industry, quality service provision is largely linked to the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the employees. Attitudes and behaviors of employees have a positive effect on customer satisfaction (Nunkoo et al. 2020), while personnel quality can increase the competitiveness of the business (Chen 2013). At this point, proactive employees are important for hotel businesses. Quality service delivery requires employees to establish, develop and maintain positive relationships with colleagues and customers (Chen 2016). The contact that proactive employees establish with their environment has a positive effect that accelerates their achievement of performance goals (Thompson 2005). In addition, employees with this qualification tend to do whatever is necessary for greater performance (Bergeron et al. 2014) and improve (shape) their work environment by participating in personal development activities (Shea-Van Fossen and Vredenburg 2014). At this point, hotels, which must cope with the increasing competition brought by technological developments and constantly changing customer demands, increasingly need proactive employees.

1.2. Employee Creativity Behaviors

With increasing national and global competition, the dynamic market structure brings along a steady and forward-looking innovation demand. Thus, the concept of creativity has drawn attraction in literature as a critical issue in developing innovation. Today, managers expect employees to be more creative in the workplace. Amabile (1988) defined creativity as new and useful (profitable) ideas that generated by an individual with other individuals or groups who works together. Creativity depends on the individual's creative thinking, specialization, skills, and experience. Employee creativity requires a high level of intellectual knowledge and experience (Shafi et al. 2020). Curiosity, on the

other hand, supports creative behavior and idea generation as a source of motivation (Chang and Shih 2019). Individuals with personality traits associated with creativity are likely to perform better and produce new products (Oldham and Cummings 1996). However, it is not possible to limit creativity only to the personal characteristics of employees. Creativity is a result of personal characteristics as well as organizational factors and the interaction between these two component (Shalley et al. 2004). Apart from personal characteristics, job design (Oldham and Baer 2012), stress (compelling and disabling stressors) (Hon et al. 2013), leadership (Amabile et al. 2004; Hughes et al. 2018), reward (Eisenberger and Byron 2011), conflict in the workplace (Pitafi et al. 2020), organizational support (Tsai et al. 2015) are factors associated with creativity. An individualized and selective management approach should be adopted to increase creativity in the workplace (Oldham and Cummings 1996). Creativity in the tourism and hotel industry can be developed by hiring passionate and talented individuals, supporting new ideas, and providing a physical environment and working conditions that encourage creativity (Horng et al. 2016).

1.3. Customer Orientation

The concept of customer orientation took place in the marketing literature with Levitt (1960) seminar paper called marketing myopia. In his paper Levitt criticized the fact that businesses are in a position to provide products and product-oriented to customers rather than serving them and based on the marketing concept of Drucker (1954). He separated the marketing function from the sales function. Levitt's work was incomplete in terms of applications for the service sector. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) (Buttle 2008), which has a strategic approach and focuses on technology-supported functional practices (Payne and Frow 2006), could be a step towards filling this deficiency (Duffy et al. 2020). According to Narver and Slater (1990) customer focus is defined as "the sufficient understanding of one's target buyers to be able to create superior value for them continuously". Two different dimensions of customer focus can be mentioned, the first is the "needs" dimension, which includes understanding the needs of customers and the willingness to fulfill them, and the second is the "enjoyment" dimension, which conveys the pleasure of the employees in dealing with the customer (Brown et al. 2002).

Although customer orientation is different from "customer-led" and "market orientation" in terms of definition and concept, it is often used interchangeably in practice. Market orientation includes the adoption of a strategic approach focused on long-term needs and desires and profitability in the decision-making process and is explained together with behavioral components such as customer orientation, competitor orientation, inter-functional orientation (Duffy et al. 2020; Narver and Slater 1990).

Employees working on the frontline and in-service positions in the service sector often have improvised and unpredictable relationships. This situation emphasizes the importance of the personality structure of the employees. This study assumes that creative and proactive personality structures influence customer orientation. Creative personalities of employees play an important role in establishing these relationships

correctly and reducing customer complaints (Hochschild 1983). According to Moon et al. (2019), there is a positive relationship between creativity and customer-orientation. Also to the proactive motivation model, proactive personality structure can affect employees' behavior (Parker et al. 2010). Yan et al. (2021) pointed out that proactive employees can be more customer-oriented and avoid negative behaviors thanks to their high sense of self-efficacy (Seibert et al. 1999) and commitment to their goals (Newman et al. 2017).

2. HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Trait Theory assumes that a person's behavior will be formed in a way that is consistent with their own personality traits (Allport 1961). The tendency of employees to serve is related to their personality traits (Kuşluvan and Eren 2011). Empirical studies suggested that personality traits are related to customer-oriented behaviors (Barrick 2005; Brown et al. 2002; Chu-Mei and Kuang-Jung 2006). Employees with proactive personality traits tend to maintain control over their work and create circumstances for individual effectiveness (Valls et al. 2020). Therefore, the main underlying reason is that proactive personality directs employees to identify customers' needs and better meet each customer's needs in order to ensure customer satisfaction and maintain control over their work (Brown et al. 2002). We thus predict the following:

H1. Proactive personality of employees positively affects their customer-oriented behaviors.

There are some studies explaining creativity with personality traits (Baas et al. 2013; Batey and Furnham 2006). One of these personality traits is the proactive personality. Proactive personality refers to active role tendencies of individuals, such as initiating change and influencing their environment (Bateman and Crant 1993). Proactive people initiate change, take risks, and persevere to achieve their goals (Crant 2000); they seek new information and applications to improve their performance (Bateman and Crant 1993). Employee creativity helps organizations gain competitive advantage, be successful in the long run, and survive (Oldham and Cummings 1996). Creativity of employees is explained as creating value, developing new , ideas, goods and services, methods, and processes by employees working together in a complex social system (Woodman et al. 1993). Early studies have focused on the antecedents of creativity and found out that it is particularly affected by personality traits (Oldham and Cummings 1996; Zhou 2003). Kim et al. (2009) and Kim et al. (2010) indicated that proactive personality is associated with employee creativity. Based on the explanations and empirical research results, H2 is recommended.

H2. Proactive personality of employees positively affects their creativity.

Customer-oriented behavior is the ability of employees to help customers by displaying extra role behaviors to increase customer satisfaction (Stock and Hoyer 2005). Employees who are committed to the values of the organization tend to show customer-oriented behaviors to achieve the goals of the organization (Chien et al. 2021). In order to do this,

they use their talents, skills, knowledge, experience and creativity to increase customer satisfaction (Keh et al. 2013). For this reason, employees with creative features are expected to show customer-oriented behaviors. We thus predict the following:

H3. Creativity of employees positively affects their customer-oriented behaviors.

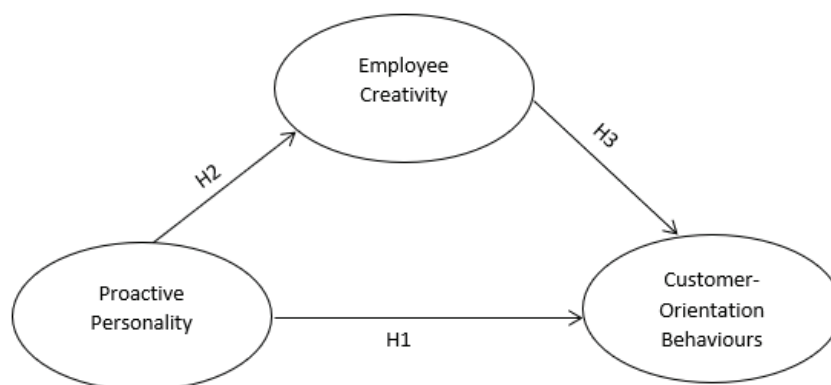
Creative behaviors go beyond familiar practices in solving customer problems and meeting their needs, allowing employees to take initiative and try different methods. For this reason, the creative behaviors of the employees in hotel businesses are accepted as an important input for increasing customer satisfaction and organizational efficiency. Proactive individuals can be open to changes positively (Parker et al. 2006). These individuals attempt to identify growth opportunities and make meaningful changes (Crant 2000). Therefore, proactive people take responsibility by displaying creative behaviors to solve problems and develop new procedures.

From the perspective of the trait theory, it is accepted that employees with proactive personality traits have a high tendency to serve. Proactive employees strive to positively affect customer experiences in their organizations. This results in customer-oriented service delivery in hotel businesses. The proactive behavior characteristics of employees are to strive to shape the future instead of showing instant trouble shooting behaviors. Employees with these characteristics prefer to engage in regulatory activities to increase customer satisfaction, rather than trying to fix the negative impacts of low customer satisfaction.

Creativity is accepted as a personality trait that enables employees to try the untested and develop novel solutions and processes. In addition, creative workers are motivated to create new ideas for business processes (Parker and Collins 2010). Creativity towards customers also provides an increase in customer-oriented behaviors. In summary, employee creativity acts as a mediator in the customer-focused behavior of proactive employees. Thus, we hypothesize the following:

H4. Creativity of employees mediates the relationship between proactive personality of employees and their customer-oriented behaviors.

Figure 1: Hypothesized model



3. METHOD

3.1. Measures

The self-reported questionnaire in the study consisted of multi-item three scales (proactive personality, employee creativity, customer orientation) and demographic questions. The nine-item proactive personality scale ($\alpha = 0.87$) by Bateman and Crant (1993) validated in Turkish by Akgunduz et al. (2017) was used to test employees' proactive personality traits. The employee creativity scale ($\alpha = 0.87$) developed by Jaiswal and Dhar (2015) had 4 statements based on the self-reports of employees' own creativity. The validated Turkish form by Akgunduz et al. (2017) was used in the study. For customer orientation scale ($\alpha = 0.96$), three items were adopted from Dean (2007). The responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). In the last part of the survey instrument the employees were asked to share their demographic features such as age, gender, education, department, and job experience. Before the application of the questionnaires to the target respondents, a pilot test was conducted with a different sample of seventy-nine hotel employees and the results showed that the statements in the questionnaires were clearly understood.

3.2. Sample and Procedures

The universe of the study was hotel employees working in Cesme, Izmir, Turkey. Firstly, in order to get the formal approval from hotel human resources managers, the aim and scope of the study was shared with the parties. After approval, 250 questionnaires were distributed to hotel employees by their human resources supervisor due to the COVID-19 precautions and received two weeks later. In the data collection period convenience sampling was used. 194 fully completed questionnaires were taken into data analysis after the elimination of the invalid ones. Regarding the demographics of the participants 117 were male (61%) and 75 were female (39%). 94 had university degree (49%), most were aged between 25 and 34 years (44%). 107 participants had 5 years and above sector experience (Table 1).

Table 1: Demographic profile of participants (n = 194)

<i>Gender</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Male	117	60.9	12 Years	54	28.1	18-24	60	30.9
Female	75	39.1	Associate Degree	45	22.9	25-34	86	44.3
			Bachelor's Degree	89	46.4	35-44	35	18
			Postgraduate	5	2.6	45-54	9	4.6
						54 or above	4	2.1

<i>Department</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Work Experience</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
F&B	54	27.8	Less than one year	18	9.3
Management	39	20.1	1 – 5 years	68	35.2
Rooms	72	37.1	More than 5 years	107	55.4
Engineering & Maintenance	11	5.7			
HR	4	2.1			
Missing	14	7.2			

3.3. Data Analysis

In the analysis, the data set met the assumptions of parametric tests except customer orientation scale. Logarithm (Lg10(b-x)) transformation type was used to obtain normal distribution. All skewness and kurtosis test values are within acceptable limits (Brown 2006). Exploratory factor analysis was used to determine the factor structure of the scales via principal component analysis and direct oblimin rotation technique with an eigenvalue statistic greater than one. Correlation analysis was used to determine the relations between the study constructs and regression analysis was used for the direction of the effect between constructs. The Cronbach Alpha value was used as a criterion in the reliability analysis of the study.

4. RESULTS

Table 2 shows the factor analysis results for the scales in the study. Five items of the proactive personality scale were excluded because the assumption that each dimension consists of at least three items, item factor loads are at least 0.40 and the load difference between the overlapping items is 0.10 was not met (Hair et al. 2010). These items are “I am constantly on the lookout for new ways to improve my live.”, “Nothing is more exciting than seeing my ideas turn into reality.”, “I excel at identifying opportunity long before others can happen.”, “I am always looking for better ways to do things.”, and “Wherever I have been, I have been a powerful force for constructive change.” respectively.

To EFA results, the scales’ KMO and Bartlett’s test of sphericity values were significant. Total explained variance of employee creativity was 46%. The mean was 4.618. The mean scores show that employees evaluate themselves creative. Factor loadings ranged from .923 to .766. Total explained variance of proactive personality was 14%. The mean was 4.044 demonstrating that the participants rated themselves as proactive. Factor loadings ranged from .880 to .593. Total explained variance of customer orientation was 13%. The mean was 4.494 demonstrating that the participants rated themselves as customer oriented. Factor loadings ranged from .893 to .829.

Table 2: EFA Results

<i>Scale Items</i>	<i>Item Loadings</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Eigenvalues</i>	<i>Variance (%)</i>	<i>α</i>	<i>P</i>
Employee Creativity (EC)		4.168	5.091	46.278	.887	.000
I generate novel, but operable work-related ideas	.923					
I seek new ideas and ways to solve problems	.890					
I identify opportunities for new ways of dealing work	.796					
I demonstrate originality in his/her work	.766					
Proactive Personality (PP)		4.044	1.552	14.106	.808	.000
No matter what the odds, if I believe in something I will make it happen	.880					
If I believe in an idea, no obstacle will prevent me from making it happen	.876					
I love being a champion for my ideas, even against others' opposition	.759					
If I see something I don't like, I fix it	.593					
Customer Orientation (CO)		4.494	1.401	12.737	.876	.008
The organization, understands my needs	.893					
The organization, maintains a high level of commitment to me, as a customer	.872					
The organization, constantly creates value for me	.829					

Factor Extraction Method: Principal Components, Direct Oblimin

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin = .858 (p<0.001)

Bartlett's test of sphericity $\chi^2 = 1165.814$ (p<0.001)

Total AVE= %73.122

The relationship between dependent and independent variables (PP, EC, and CO) was tested with correlation analysis. According to the results in Table 3, all study variables were significantly related ($p < 0.01$) to each other. The highest relationship was between proactive employee and employee creativity ($r = 0.447$ $p < 0.01$) showing a moderate value. In the analysis with the untransformed original data, the degree of correlation coefficient values among variables remains the same but the relationships between PP and CO – EC and CO were direct (increasing) linear.

Table 3: Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations of the Constructs

	<i>PP</i>	<i>EC</i>	<i>CO</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std Deviation</i>
PP	<u>1</u>			4.044	0.7623
EC	.447**	1		4.167	0.7231
CO	-.404**	-.453**	1	.1361	0.1619

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Regression and Sobel (1982) test was carried out to test the research hypotheses (Table 4). Bivariate Regression analysis between proactive personality and customer orientation was conducted in the first step. In the second step, bivariate regression analysis between proactive personality and employee creativity was tested. Based on the results, proactive personality predicted customer orientation $F(1,192) = 37.353$ $p < 0.001$ and explained 16% of the variance in the customer orientation. Proactive personality predicted employee creativity $F(1,192) = 47.839$ $p < 0.001$ and explained 20% of the variance in the employee creativity. In the third step, multiple regression with proactive personality and employee creativity was conducted as predictors of customer orientation. Proactive personality and employee creativity predicted customer orientation $F(2,191) = 32.850$ $p < 0.01$ and explained 25.6 % of the variance. Next, the relationship between employee creativity and customer orientation was tested. Employee creativity predicted customer orientation $F(1,192) = 49.630$ $p < 0.001$ and explained 20% of the variance in the customer orientation. H2 was supported while H1 and H3 hypotheses were not supported.

Table 4: Regression Analysis

		<i>Unstandardized coefficients</i>		
<i>Variables</i>		<i>B</i>	<i>Std. error</i>	<i>t</i>
Customer orientation	<i>Constant</i>	.483	.058	8.365
	<i>Proactive Personality</i>	-.086**	.014	-6.112

Note(s): $R = .404$, $R^2 = .163$, $\Delta R^2 = .159$ $F = 37.353$, $Sig. = .000$ ($p < .001$)

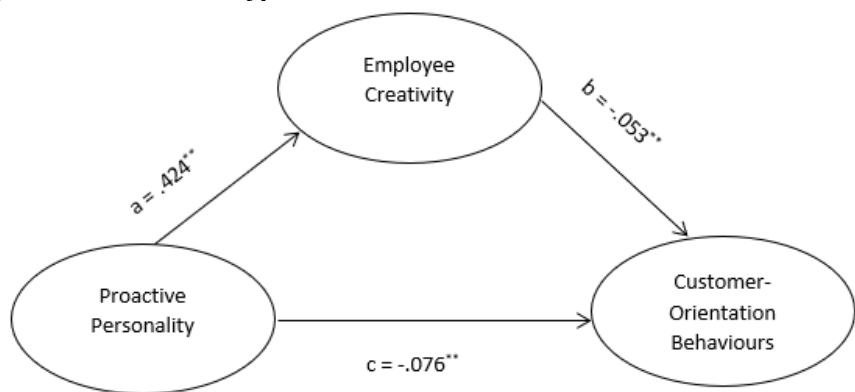
Creativity	<i>Constant</i>	2.455	.252	9.738
	<i>Proactive Personality</i>	.424**	.061	6.917
Note(s): R = .447, R ² = .199, ΔR ² = .195, F = 47.839 Sig. = .000 (<i>p</i> < .001)				
Customer Orientation	<i>Constant</i>	.559	.061	9.175
	<i>Creativity</i>	-.102**	.014	-7.045
Note(s): R = .453, R ² = .205, ΔR ² = .201, F = 49.630 Sig. = .000 (<i>p</i> < .001)				
Customer Orientation	<i>Constant</i>	.670	.067	10.051
	<i>Proactive Personality</i>	-.076**	.016	-4.888
	<i>Creativity</i>	-.053**	.015	-3.602
Note(s): R = .506, R ² = .256, ΔR ² = .248, F = 32.850 Sig. = .000 (<i>p</i> < .001)				
** <i>p</i> < 0.01				

Figure 2 shows the results of the hypothesized model. In order to test the indirect effect for significance Sobel test was used (Table 5). It was significant at $p < 0.05$ level. The indirect effect was 0.043. This shows that employee creativity is a partial mediator of the direct effect of proactive personality on customer orientation (Hayes 2013). Thus, H4 was also supported.

Table 5: Sobel Test

<i>Input</i>		<i>Test Statistics</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>P-value</i>
a .424	<i>Sobel test</i>	3.14974051	0.00713456	0.00163416
b .053	<i>Aroian test</i>	3.12415255	0.00719299	0.00178318
s _a .061	<i>Goodman test</i>	3.17596767	0.00707564	0.00149338
s _b .015				

Figure 2: Results of the hypothesized model.



note: ** $p < 0.01$

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The first aim of this paper was to examine the effects of proactive personality on creativity. Due to the research results employees see themselves as proactive and creative. Due to the correlation analysis the highest relationship is between EC and PP. A proactive employee's behaviors starts a creative process. Proactive person taking risk of other people's disapproval and barriers on the work process can go on with their beliefs patiently (Crant 2000). This leads them to search for new ways of doing their job and create unique process in the organization. The research findings correspond with those of previous similar studies (Bateman and Crant 1993; Bergeron et al. 2014; Chien et al. 2021).

Second, the study focuses on testing the effect of creativity of the employees on their customer-oriented behaviors. Apart from the studies of Chien et al. (2021) and Moon et al.'s (2019) the study doesn't support the empirical evidence of a positive relationship between employee creativity and customer orientation. On the contrary, the employees' creativity let them to be less customer oriented. This may be due to the flow of employees' creative energy not to customers. Being equipped with particular skills needed for creativity may be more than serving customers only such as professional growth, etc. If employees are not given any chance for growth, customer service may not make any sense to those creative employees. Therefore employees are needed to be involved in creating new processes requiring responsibility on employees to be flexible, voluntary to try to develop new ways of doing the job in providing excellent service (Ek Styvén et al. 2022). Next, being less customer-oriented may result from the change in creativity across cultures (Cabra and Guerrero 2022). Creativity in eastern cultures is taken as a self-actualization of the one rather than focus on the outcome (Lubart 1999 as cited in Cabra and Guerrero (2022).

Furthermore, the findings of the research confirm that employee creativity has a mediation effect between proactive personality and customer orientation. This result implies that proactive employees' strong relations with their supervisors, resulting in more autonomy and entrustment of the work to be done can lead to creativity, but reduce customer-oriented behaviors. The way from proactivity to creativity may boost stress at work (Bolino et al. 2013). Therefore, employees may rethink pros and cons of the required tasks at work they reduce being guest centric which puts high pressure on mental and physical resources.

Third, the study tests the effects of the proactive personality of employees on their customer-oriented behaviors. Prior research in the management literature suggests proactive persons have sense of self-efficacy (Seibert et al. 1999) and are committed to their targets and inherently motivated (Newman et al. 2017). Moreover, this personality trait avoiding negative behaviors and contributes to positive work environment (Yan et al. 2021). However, the study failed to support the positive relationship between proactive personality and customer orientation. The reduction in customer orientation may stem from leader (Spychala and Sonnentag 2011), co-worker (Sun et al. 2021) or/ and organizational factors rather than the personality trait itself. Spsychala and Sonnentag

(2011) revealing opposite relationships of distinct types of proactive work behavior with a work-related outcome showed that proactive work behavior might also be affected the involvement of the employee's supervisor or colleagues resulting a different work-related behavior.

The study has some important implications for practice. First, businesses may need to take the necessary steps to identify candidates who act proactively for creativity in personnel selection. The hotels should decide their priorities during recruitment process. The proactive and creative personalities are not determiners of high customer-orientation. So, if the businesses need is customer-oriented employees besides personality traits they should focus on organizational factors as well. Employers should reconsider the tasks and autonomy given, responsibilities shared, perks and satisfying salaries which are important in keeping employees engaged and enthusiastic. Personnel training, reward systems, clear career path that employee feel confident about and determining the strategic goals of businesses are also essential. Considering the enjoyment and needs dimensions of customer orientation, it is also important to create and preserve the suitable workplace environment.

Limitations

The study is subject to some limitations. The study failed to support that personality traits result in positive work outcomes. This may be due to the cultural and organizational structure of the hotels in Turkey. The results need further clarification in other regions. The study was also conducted in coastal hotels of which employees which are mostly temporary in Cesme, Izmir, Turkey. The empirical results should be tested in different types of hotels. The customer-orientation was self-evaluated and was based on the perceptions of hotel employees. Further research may use supervisor /customer- rated evaluations. The study failed to test the proposed relations with SEM. The data set did not fit the model via SEM. Finally, because this study was cross-sectional, future research should incorporate repeated observations of the linkages to see if the associations between the constructs evolve.

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