



Article Title

Turning Hotel Employees into Brand Champions: The Roles of Well-Connected Leaders and Organizational Identification

Citation

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Abstract

Employees' positive word of mouth (WOM) about hotel brands has a profound impact on customer choice and hotel effectiveness. On the basis of social identity theory and social information processing theory, we posit a moderated mediation model wherein hotel supervisors' organizational identification (OI) increases their subordinates' engagement in positive WOM behavior by enhancing subordinates' OI. This relationship is moderated by supervisors' upward-exchange relationships with their bosses (i.e., leader-leader exchange). Data from a two-wave survey conducted in a hotel in China indicate that employees working under supervisors with high levels of OI better identify with the hotel and engage in more positive WOM behavior. This is particularly the case when supervisors engage in high quality leader-leader exchange and are well connected with their bosses. The article concludes with theoretical and practical implications highlighting the importance of cultivating employees' organizational identification and positive WOM behavior in the hospitality sector.

Conclusion

To conclude, this study sheds new light on a key topic of hospitality research by examining strategies for use by hotel leaders to turn their followers into brand champions. Our findings show that employees' positive WOM is cultivated through the cascading effect of OI from hotel supervisors to their subordinates. Employees' positive WOM regarding hotel brands plays an important role in helping hotels to attract not only customers but also potential employees. We thus hope that our study will stimulate further research to enrich the current knowledge of the antecedents of employees' positive WOM and other brand building behaviors in the hospitality industry.