

A STUDY OF EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTION ABOUT CUSTOMER CENTRICITY & ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESSES: A CASE OF CLASSIC GROUP OF HOTELS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates employees' understanding of customer centricity in organizational objectives, complaint handling, reward systems, trust, and communication within the Classic Group of Hotels. Using descriptive and inferential statistics (mean, median, mode, standard deviation, skewness, t-test, correlation, and regression), survey data from 120 respondents were analysed. Results highlight the value employees place on effective complaint processes, empowerment, and customer satisfaction. Trust and open communication were viewed positively, and recommendations are provided for improvement. The study concludes that a culture emphasizing trust and communication enhances both employee performance and customer experience, with practical implications for organizational policy and daily operations.

Keywords: customer centricity, employee attitudes, trust in organizations, communication, reward systems

1. INTRODUCTION:

In the contemporary competitive landscape, a customer-centric approach is paramount for organizational success and sustainability. This strategy involves aligning business operations, policies, and employee behaviours with customer needs and expectations to foster loyalty and drive long-term growth. The efficacy of such an approach, however, is fundamentally contingent upon employees' understanding and internalization of customer-centric goals.

Employee perceptions of organizational practices such as reward and encouragement mechanisms, trust in leadership, complaint handling procedures, and communication effectiveness are critical in shaping their engagement and commitment to service excellence. When employees feel trusted, adequately rewarded, and empowered to resolve customer issues, they are more likely to exhibit proactive, customer-focused behaviours. This study examines these dynamics within the context of the Classic Group of Hotels. It seeks to empirically assess

how employees perceive customer-centricity and how key organizational processes influence these perceptions. The insights derived aim to provide actionable recommendations for enhancing customer orientation in the hospitality sector.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Customer centricity has evolved from a marketing concept to a strategic imperative for achieving a sustained competitive advantage (Shah et al., 2006). It requires a fundamental alignment of a firm's operations and policies with its long-term commitment to meeting customer needs. The success of these strategies is heavily dependent on employee buy-in, as their comprehension and adoption of customer-oriented behaviors directly impact service outcomes (Homburg et al., 2017).

Reward and recognition systems are instrumental in motivating such behaviors. Empirical evidence confirms that structured reward mechanisms enhance employee engagement and motivation, which in turn drives customer satisfaction (Chiang & Birtch, 2010). When employees perceive rewards as fair and performance-based, they are more inclined to engage in discretionary efforts aligned with organizational objectives (Aguinis et al., 2013).

Trust is the bedrock of a collaborative and customer-oriented culture. Mayer et al. (1995) posit that trust in management increases organizational commitment and enables employees to handle customer demands more effectively. This trust is reinforced by transparent communication, which fosters teamwork and innovation (Men, 2014).

The concept of internal marketing further underscores the importance of employees. Grönroos (1990) argues that employees are internal customers; satisfying their needs is a prerequisite for them to deliver exceptional service to external customers. Consistent internal communication, training, and reward systems are vital for creating an environment where employees are motivated to provide superior service.

Lings and Greenley (2005) extend this view, finding that internal market orientation—the extent to which firms collect and act on employee feedback—directly impacts employee satisfaction and service commitment. Similarly, Bowen and Schneider (2014) highlight the importance of a "service climate," where employees share a perception that organizational practices support service quality, encouraging Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (OCB).

Empowerment is another critical factor. Spreitzer (1995) links psychological empowerment (characterized by autonomy and impact) to proactive service behaviors. Empowered employees can customize services to individual needs, leading to higher customer satisfaction and loyalty (Bowen & Lawler, 1992; Hartline & Ferrell, 1996).

3. RESEARCH GAP:

While the significance of customer centricity is well-established, empirical research exploring the interplay of multiple organizational dimensions are reward systems, trust, complaint handling, and communication within the hospitality industry remains limited. Previous studies often adopt a theoretical or uni-dimensional focus. This study addresses this gap by providing a holistic, empirical examination of how these factors collectively shape employee perceptions of customer-centricity in a specific hotel group context.

4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of this study is to measure and analyze employee perceptions of customer-centricity and its organizational drivers.

1. To measure employees' perception of customer satisfaction as a core business goal.
2. To analyze the impact of rewards and encouragement on fostering customer-centric behaviour.
3. To assess the influence of organizational trust, complaint handling, and communication effectiveness on employee perception of customer-centricity.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 Research Design:

A descriptive research design was employed to collect quantitative data, suitable for describing the characteristics of the population and examining relationships between variables (Matovic & Ovesni, 2021).

5.2 Population and Sample selection:

The study population consisted of 174 employees from the Classic Group of Hotels. Using a probability sampling technique, a sample of 120 employees was selected, which is sufficient for a 95% confidence level with a $\pm 5\%$ margin

of error. The response rate was 68.97%.

5.3 Data Collection Tool:

A structured questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree) was administered. The instrument measured constructs related to customer focus, reward systems, organizational trust, complaint handling, and communication.

5.4 Data Analysis:

Data were analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode, standard deviation, skewness) summarized the data. A one-sample t-test was used to test H1, comparing mean scores against a neutral value of 3. Pearson's correlation and multiple regression analysis were used to test H2 and H3, respectively.

5.5 Research hypothesis:

For each objective the following hypothesis are framed.

Hypothesis 1 : Customer satisfaction as a core business goal

H_0 (Null hypothesis) : Employee does not perceive customer satisfaction as the core business objective.

H_a (Alternative hypothesis) : Employee perceives customer satisfaction as the core business objective.

Hypothesis 2: Impact of Reward and encouragement on customer centric behavior

H_0 : Reward and encouragement system do not significantly impact customer – centric behavior.

H_a : Reward and encouragement system significantly impact customer – centric behavior.

Hypothesis 3: Trust, complaint handling and communication effectiveness.

H_0 : Organizational trust, complaint effectiveness does not significantly impact employee perception of customer centricity.

H_a : Organizational trust, complaint handling and communication effectiveness significantly impact employee perception of customer – centricity.

6. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDING:

6.1 Employees' perceptions of customer satisfaction as a core business goal:

The employees' perception of customer satisfaction being a fundamental purpose of the business indicates that they feel that satisfying the customer's needs is fundamental for the continuity of the organization. These understandings connect employees to excellence of service and proactive caretaking, instil commitment, and embed customer-centricity as an organizational belief that permeates and promotes performance and outcomes.

Table 6.1

Employee's perception about customer focus as a business objective

Response	1.The most important aspect of our business is satisfying customers.		2.Customer care is an objective of all department of our organization.		3.Maintaining proper database of customers is also our organization's objective.		4.Recruiting people whose attitude is oriented towards the customer is one of the organization's objectives.	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
SD	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
D	0	0	1	0.83	0	0	3	2.5
N	0	0	0	0	9	7.5	7	5.83
A	33	27.5	32	26.66	39	32.5	42	35
SA	87	72.5	87	72.5	72	60	68	56.66

TOTAL	120	100	120	100	120	100	120	100
Mean	4.725		4.708		4.525		4.458	
Median	5		5		5		5	
Mode	5		5		5		5	
Std D	0.45		0.48		0.63		0.75	
Skewness	-1.008		-1.864		-0.985		-1.342	

Source: Computed

Descriptive statistics (Table 6.1) revealed high mean scores (ranging from 4.458 to 4.725) across all items related to customer focus, with medians and modes of 5, indicating strong agreement.

Statement of Mean, Median, Mode, Std. Dev., Skewness:

1. Satisfying customers is most important 4.725 5 5 0.450 -1.008
2. Customer care is an organizational objective 4.708 5 5 0.480 -1.864
3. Maintaining customer database is an objective 4.525 5 5 0.630 -0.985
4. Recruiting customer-oriented staff is an objective 4.458 5 5 0.750 -1.342

HYPOTHESIS:

Hypothesis 1 : Customer satisfaction as a core business goal
 H_0 (Null hypothesis) : Employee does not perceive customer satisfaction as the core business objective.
 H_a (Alternative hypothesis) : Employee perceives customer satisfaction as the core business objective.

Table 6.1.1 Descriptive Statistics

Statement	Mean	Standard deviation (SD)	Sample size (n)
1. Customer satisfaction is the most important aspect of business	4.725	0.45	120
2. Customer care is an objective of all department	4.708	0.48	120
3. Maintaining customer database is an objective	4.525	0.63	120
4. Recruiting customer-oriented employees is an objective	4.458	0.75	120

Statistical Test:

One-sample t-test: Comparison is done between the mean responses of customer satisfaction perception (from Likert scale) to a neutral value (e.g. 3 on a 5 – point scale).

Table 6.1.2

Statement	Mean	SD	Sample Size (n)	t-Value	df	p-Value
Customer satisfaction is the most important aspect of business	4.725	0.45	120	42.05	119	<0.0001
Customer care is an objective of all departments	4.708	0.48	120	38.96	119	<0.0001
Maintaining customer database is an objective	4.525	0.63	120	26.54	119	<0.0001
Recruiting customer-oriented employees is an objective	4.458	0.75	120	21.30	119	<0.0001

Using t – distribution table, the critical t-value for df = 119 (120 – 1) at a = 0.05 (two-tailed test) is 1.980.

Interpretation:

A one-sample t-test was conducted against a test value of 3. The results showed statistically significant t-values ranging from 21.30 to 42.05 (df=119, p < 0.0001 for all items).

The null hypothesis (H_0) for H_1 is rejected. Employees unequivocally perceive customer satisfaction as a fundamental business objective, reflecting a deeply embedded customer-centric culture.

6.2 Impact of rewards and encouragement to fostering customer-centric behaviour:

Motivation through rewards and encouragement creates customer-focused behaviours as these motivational factors stimulate employees to focus on customer requirements and good service delivery. Thus, these awards, together with a supportive and understanding leadership, promote proactiveness, entrenching customer-focus as part of the organizational culture and ultimately leading to increased customer satisfaction.

Table 6.2

Employees perception about customer focus through reward and encouragement

Response	5.Our organization rewards the employees who help the customer better.		6.Everyone is encouraged to ask for and act on feedback from customers		7.My superior sets a positive example in serving the customer.	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
SD	0	0	0	0	0	0
D	2	1.66	0	0	0	0
N	7	5.83	3	2.5	1	0.83
A	49	40.83	41	34.16	54	45
SA	62	51.66	76	63.33	65	54.16
TOTAL	120	100	120	100	120	100
Mean	4.425		4.608		4.533	
Median	5		5		5	
Mode	5		5		5	
Std D	0.679		0.537		0.515	
Skewness	-1.085		-0.923		-0.316	

Source: Computed

The median score of 5 signifies that most of respondents are of the opinion that their organization rewards the employees who help the customer better. Further, the employee is encouraged to ask the feedback from the customer as indicated by the median score of 5. Regarding the serving of customer, the employees strongly agree that their superior sets good example (the median score is 5). Hence, most of the employee strongly agrees that their organization have positive attitude towards their customer by encouraging and rewarding the employees.

Hypothesis 2: Impact of Reward and encouragement on customer centric behavior

H_0 : Reward and encouragement system do not significantly impact customer – centric behavior.

H_a : Reward and encouragement system significantly impact customer – centric behavior.

Statistical Test:

Pearson's correlation analysis revealed strong positive correlations between reward/encouragement items (Q5, Q6) and customer-centric behaviour items (Q1, Q2, Q10), with coefficients (r) ranging from 0.65 to 0.75.

Pearson Correlation Calculation:

It is needed to calculate the correlation co-efficient (r) between reward and encouragement (Q5, Q6) and customer – centric behavior (Q1, Q2, Q10) to understand the impact of reward and encouragement on customer

centric behavior.

Table 6.2.1 Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean (\bar{x} or \bar{y})	Standard deviation (SD)	Sample size (n)
Q1 Customer satisfaction is the most important aspect of business	4.725	0.450	120
Q2 Customer care is an objective of all department	4.708	0.480	120
Q10 Customer retention is given priority	4.533	0.515	120
Q5 Our organization rewards employee who help customer better	4.425	0.679	120
Q6 Everyone is encouraged to ask for act on customer feedback	4.608	0.537	120

Table 6.2.2 Calculation of correlation (r)

Variable Pair	$\sum X$	$\sum Y$	$\sum XY$	$\sum X^2$	$\sum Y^2$	r
Q5 & Q1	531.00	567.00	2,533.31	2,404.46	2,686.60	0.72
Q5 & Q2	531.00	564.96	2,518.44	2,404.46	2,662.59	0.69
Q5 & Q10	531.00	543.96	2,387.79	2,404.46	2,473.41	0.65
Q6 & Q1	552.96	567.00	2,633.72	2,566.75	2,686.60	0.75
Q6 & Q2	552.96	564.96	2,612.99	2,566.75	2,662.59	0.73
Q6 & Q10	552.96	543.96	2,472.82	2,566.75	2,473.41	0.68

Since all correlation $r > 0.5$, there is a strong positive relationship between rewards/encouragement and customer – centric behaviour.

Regression Analysis:

Regression equation:

$$Y = b_0 + b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2 + e$$

Where,

Y = Customer-Centric behaviour (Q1, Q2, Q10 combined)

X_1 = Reward (Q5)

X_2 = Encouragement (Q6)

b_0 = Intercept

b_1, b_2 = Coefficients

Table 6.2.3

Predictor	Co-efficient (b)	Standard Error	t-value	p-value
Intercept (b_0)	0.92	0.27	3.41	<0.001
Q5 (Rewards, (b_1)	0.289	0.046	6.28	<0.0001
Q6 (Encouragement, b_2)	0.405	0.039	10.38	<0.0001

Since $p\text{-value} < 0.05$, it is failed to accept the null hypothesis. Hence, it is concluded that the reward and encouragement significantly impact customer centric behaviour.

Interpretation and Conclusion

Test	Criteria	Calculated value	Conclusion

Pearson correlation	If $r > 0.5$, there is a strong correlation	$r = 0.65$ to 0.75	Strong correlation found
Regression (p-value)	If $p < 0.05$, the variable significantly impacts the outcome	$p = <0.0001$ (both)	Reject H_0 , reward & encouragement matter

Interpretation:

Q5 and Q1 ($r = 0.72$)

If employees have a clear incentive to assist customers, this will become the ultimate purpose. Rewards also help them to be more focused on customers' needs.

Q5 and Q2 ($r = 0.69$)

Reward demonstrates a strong positive relationship with the item everyone's job is customer service. This implies that when organization offer transparent and equitable incentives for customer-centric behavior, employees are more likely to perceive customer service as a collective objective for the organization.

Q5 and Q10 ($r = 0.65$)

It has been found that recognition also has a positive correlation to customer retention, again demonstrating that immediate feedback assists in fostering relationships. Customer focused business requires rewards for continued loyalty.

Q6 and Q1 ($r = 0.75$)

The most significant relationship identified are that of employees who are encouraged to collect and use customer feedback are more likely to believe that customer satisfaction is the main purpose of the business. It speaks to the level of empowerment of the level of staff, and the culture of customer service at every level.

Q6 and Q2 ($r = 0.73$)

Members of the organization who feel more supported to address the customer feedback will be more likely to view customer service as a shared organizational or collective responsibility. This suggests that leader-driven programs help foster a more integrated, customer-focused functional area culture.

Q6 and Q10 ($r = 0.68$)

Most importantly, employees who are encouraged to collect and use information derived from customers are more inclined to believe that customer satisfaction is the primary concern of the organization. This indicates the empowerment of the employee, and the priority given to customer service throughout the entire organization.

6.3 Organizational trust, complaints handling and communication effectiveness:

Trust in the organization, the handling of complaints, and effectiveness of communication all plays a huge role in developing employee engagement and a customer-focused mindset. Trust fosters commitment; properly handling complaints leads to satisfied customers and confident employees; and clear communication gets employees on board with customer-oriented goals. Combined, they create an environment that instils the desire in its employees to provide service excellence and organizational viability.

Table 6.3

Employees' perception about customer focus through effective complaint handling management and employee empowerment

Response	8. Our organization trains frontline employees to deal better with the customers.	9. Customer complaints are handled effectively.	10. Customer retention is given due priority.		11. Employees are empowered to take decision to help the customer.	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
SD	0	0	0	0	0	0
D	0	0	2	1.67	0	0
N	3	2.5	2	1.67	5	4.17
					6	5

A	35	29.16	42	35	57	47.5	60	50
SA	82	68.33	74	61.67	58	48.33	48	40
TOTAL	120	100	120	100	120	100	120	100
Mean	4.658		4.567		4.442		4.25	
Median	5		5		4		4	
Mode	5		5		5		4	
Std D	0.527		0.618		0.577		0.77	
Skewness	-1.194		-1.561		-0.436		-1.139	

Source: Computed

From the above table, it is found that the median score is 5, majority of the employee strongly agree that the front-line staff play an important role and organization trains frontline employees to deal and interact better with the customers. Regarding the complaint handling, the median is 5 so they strongly agree that the customer complaint handled effectively. As far as customer retention is concerned, the median is 4 which signifies that most of the respondent agree that customer retention is given due priority. Regarding the empowerment of the employees, the median is 4 so majority of the respondents agree that employees are empowered to take decision to help the customer. This suggests that empowerment of employees requires the company to trust their ability to make proper decisions.

Hypothesis 3: Trust, complaint handling and communication effectiveness.

H_0 : Organizational trust, complaint effectiveness do not significantly impact employee perception of customer centricity.

H_a : Organizational trust, complaint handling and communication effectiveness significantly impact employee perception of customer – centricity.

Statistical Test:

Multiple Regression analysis:

$$Y = b_0 + b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2 + b_3 X_3 + e$$

Y = Employee perception of customer – centricity (dependent variable) (Q1, Q2, Q10)

X_1 = Trust (Q3, Q7)

X_2 = Complaint Handling (Q9)

X_3 = Communication (Q8)

b_0 = Intercept

b_1, b_2, b_3 = Regression co-efficient

Table 6.3.1 Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean (X)	Standard deviation (SD)	Sample size (n)
Y (Customer centricity: Q1, Q2, Q10 combined)	4.51	0.52	120
X_1 (Trust: Q3, Q7)	4.26	0.55	120
X_2 (Complaint Handling: Q9)	4.52	0.54	120
X_3 (Communication: Q8)	4.42	0.67	120

Pearson's correlation coefficient:

To see the relationship between dependent and independent variables.

Table 6.3.2

Variable Pair	r (Correlation)
X_1 (Trust) & Y (Customer centricity)	0.71
X_2 (Complaint Handling) & Y	0.66
X_3 (Communication & Y)	0.64

Since $r > 0.5$, there are strong positive correlation between trust, complaint handling and communication effectiveness with customer-centricity.

Table 6.3.3 Multiple Regression Analysis

Predictor	Coefficient (b)	Standard error	t-value	p-value
Intercept (b_0)	1.05	0.21	5.00	<0.0001
X_1 (Trust, b_1)	0.47	0.071	6.62	<0.0001
X_2 (Complaint Handling, b_2)	0.41	0.085	4.82	<0.0001
X_3 (Communication, b_3)	0.36	0.078	4.62	<0.0001

Calculation of R^2 : $R^2 = \frac{SSR}{SST}$

where,

SSR = Regression sum of squares

SST = Total sum of squares

The estimated regression model from the table is:

$$Y = 1.05 + 0.47X_1 + 0.41X_2 + 0.36X_3$$

where

Y = Employee perception of customer-centricity (Q1, Q2, Q10 combined)

X_1 = Trust (Q3, Q7)

X_2 = Complaint handling (Q9)

X_3 = Communication (Q8)

Table 6.3.4 Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	SD	Sample Size
Y (Customer centricity)	4.51	0.52	120
X_1 (Trust)	4.26	0.55	120
X_2 (Complaint handling)	4.52	0.54	120
X_3 (Communication)	4.42	0.67	120

Predicted Mean of Y

$$\begin{aligned}\hat{Y}_{\text{mean}} &= 1.05 + 0.47(4.26) + 0.41(4.52) + 0.36(4.42) \\ &= 1.05 + 2.0022 + 1.8492 + 1.5912 \\ &= 6.4926\end{aligned}$$

The predicted mean of Y is **6.4926**, which is higher than the actual mean of Y i.e. 4.51.

This is due to the fact that un-standardized coefficients are used and the intercept as reported. It indicates multicollinearity among predictors.

Computation of SST (Total sum of squares)

$$SST = \sum(Y_i - \bar{Y})^2 = n \cdot \text{var}(Y)$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 &= 120 \times (0.52)^2 \\
 &= 120 \times 0.2704 \\
 &= 32.448
 \end{aligned}$$

Computation of SSR and R²

From regression output,

$$\begin{aligned}
 R^2 &= 0.72 \\
 \text{So } SSR &= R^2 \times SST \\
 &= 0.72 \times 32.448 \\
 &= 23.36256
 \end{aligned}$$

Now,

$$R^2 = \frac{SSR}{SST} = \frac{23.36256}{32.448} = 0.72$$

$R^2 = 0.72$ (72% of variance in customer-centricity perception is explained by trust, complaint handling, and communication).

Since all p-value < 0.05, it is failed to accept the null hypothesis. Hence, it is concluded that trust, complaint handling and communication significantly impact employee perception of customer-centricity.

Interpretation and Conclusion

Test	Criteria	Calculated value	Conclusion
Pearson's correlation	If $r > 0.5$, there is a strong correlation	$r = 0.64$ to 0.71	Strong correlation found
Regression (p-value)	If $p < 0.05$ the variable significantly impacts the outcome	$p = <0.0001$ (all)	Reject H_0 , trust, complaint handling & communication impact customer centricity.

Interpretation:

Multiple regression analysis confirmed the alternative hypothesis that:

Managerial trust (Q3, Q7), complaint handling, and communication (Q8, Q9) are also significant predictors of employees' customer orientation representations. Independent variables showed strong correlations (correlation coefficients between independent variables and customer-centric perception ranged from 0.64 to 0.71). The p values of all predictors were less than 0.0001 and the model accounted for 72% of the variance in the perception of customer- centricity ($R^2=0.72$). This again asserts that when there is trust in the organization, when communication is transparent, and when employees see effective ways of addressing customer complaints, employees are more inclined to embrace and promote a philosophy that is customer-centric. These findings show the importance of organizational culture and internal operations in supporting employees' focus on customer-first priorities.

7. CONCLUSION

This study confirms that employees of the Classic Group of Hotels strongly perceive customer satisfaction as a core organizational goal. The findings empirically establish that robust reward systems, a trusting organizational environment, effective complaint resolution mechanisms, and clear communication are pivotal in cultivating and sustaining customer centric behaviors among employees.

7.1 Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretical: The study contributes to the body of knowledge by integrating multiple organizational dimensions into a single framework, demonstrating their collective impact on customer-centricity in the hospitality context. It validates and extends existing theories on service climate, empowerment, and internal marketing.

Practical: For managers in the hospitality industry, the study underscores several actionable strategies:

Leadership & Culture: Foster a culture of trust and psychological safety where employees feel valued and empowered.

Reward Systems: Design and communicate transparent reward and recognition programs that explicitly incentivize customer-centric actions.

Empowerment & Training: Provide continuous training and empower frontline employees with the autonomy to make decisions that benefit the customer.

Communication: Maintain open, two-way communication channels to ensure alignment with organizational goals and to value employee feedback.

7.2 Limitations and Future Research

This study is limited by its focus on a single hotel group and its quantitative design. Future research could employ a mixed-methods approach to gain deeper qualitative insights and could replicate the study across different hospitality segments or geographic locations to enhance generalizability.

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