

The Role of Creative Self-Efficacy and Intrinsic Motivation in Delighting Customers: The Mediating Role of Positive Psychological Capital

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Abstract

Delighting customers is attracting considerable attention of researchers from around the globe. So, the current study examines frontline employees' perceptions to perform delightful services by highlighting the effect of creative self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation through the intervention of positive psychological capital.

Simple random sampling technique was applied to choose the sample. The data was gathered from different service-related brands working across Punjab, Pakistan. Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to test the model.

The findings of this study assert that both creative self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation have a direct and indirect impact on employees' behavior to perform delightful services. The outcome of the study has significant theoretical and practical contributions.

Keywords: frontline employees; creative self-efficacy; intrinsic motivation; positive psychological capital; delightful services.

1. Introduction

Providing delightful services to the customers on each interaction has become the chief strategy for a successful business (Hyken, 2016). Different market reports disclose that businesses believe that for attaining success; it is pivotal to improve the delivery of delightful services. While still at present, poor customer services lead to cause alarmingly a massive loss of \$62 billion to businesses each year (Noble, 2016). While examining the enormous losses incurred by the businesses, it is noteworthy to examine the characteristics of the frontline employees who provide delightful services. Frontline employees (FLEs) are those individuals who directly interact with the customers and act as a liaison between the company and customer. The extent to which a customer is satisfied with the company depends primarily upon FLEs' (LaRosa & Campbell, 2011). As FLEs create the first impression in the customer's mind (Kokemuller, 2017). The action of FLEs' as a first impression determines that whether a customer becomes an evangelist or a disparager (LaRosa & Campbell, 2011). Moreover et al. (1999) and Staw et al. (1981) claim that positive customer response induces the employees to deliver delightful services. However,

a neglected area in this discussion is the factors that induce employees to perform delightful services even when customer response is unfavorable. Therefore, the current study proposes to examine the internal motivational factors (i.e., creative self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation) as antecedents for employees to perform delightful services.

Moreover, the current study proposes that merely relying on the internal motivational factors derived from motivational synergy theory proposed by Amabile (1997), to assess how well employees are providing delightful services is insufficient. So the present study tries to unravel the process as suggested by Broaden and Build Theory introduced by Fredrickson (2004), that plays a pivotal role in reshaping the perceptions about providing delightful services among the FLEs. While examining the process, it is essential to untarn the characteristics of employees' psychological empowerment that enables them to help achieve organizational goals. Although in the recent past, an employee's psychological empowerment has been examined along with internal motivational factors to bring service innovation (Hsiao et al., 2017). However, the role this connectivity plays in providing delightful services is still missing.

Therefore, the current study attempts to examine a research question, relating to whether the internal motivational factors, i.e., creative self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation (as the antecedents) induce FLEs to perform delightful services through the intervention of positive psychological capital. Addressing this question will not only prove helpful in understanding the prerequisites that induce FLEs to provide delightful services efficiently but will also provide a roadmap to the supervisor's device policies that can enhance the capabilities of FLEs while they are involved in providing delightful services. Moreover, the present study suggests introducing the factors of positive psychological capital (i.e., hope, self-efficacy, optimism and resilience) that can enhance the capabilities of FLEs.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Delightful Services

Delighting customers is a fundamental element to maintain a long-term relationship with the customers. Such a relationship is possible by providing extraordinary services and unique experience on a continual basis. Customer delight refers to a customer's experience of a particular product or service that exceeds his/her expectation (Wang et al., 2017).

In the past, much of the studies examined delightful services from the customer's perspective (e.g., Bowen, 1999; Crotts et al., 2008; Finn, 2005; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Oliver et al., 1997; Rust & Oliver, 2000). While Torres and Kline (2013) were the first to highlight the popularity of delightful services (DS) from the perspective of frontline employees (FLE) and proposed five forms of DS, i.e., problem solution delight, professional delight, comparative delight, charismatic delight and fulfillment delight. Problem solution delight refers to the extent to which the Frontline Employees (FLEs) are proactive in providing a solution to the customer relevant to the situation. Another form of DS, i.e., professional delight emphasizes the extent to which FLEs are knowledgeable and skilled to resolve any problem related to customer care. While comparative delight is the perception about the services that the customer feels superior as compared to the previous experiences. Charismatic delight refers to as FLE's friendliness towards customers. The

last but not the least, fulfillment delight shows that customers are fully satisfied, and FLEs takes care of their esteem.

Therefore, inspired by the five typologies presented by Torres and Kline (2013) that indicate the importance of FLEs to deliver delightful services (Wang et al., 2017) assert that employees should possess four types of behaviors, i.e., customizing attentive behavior, professional skills, open communication style, and sincere and gracious behavior to perform the five typologies of delightful services to the customers. The first proposed behavior of Wang et al. (2017), i.e., customizing attentive behavior emphasize that FLEs should be considerate and caring, and exert particular attention to provide services to the customers. Secondly, the FLE should possess an ability to act professionally to resolve customers queries refers to as professional skills. Moreover, open communication style indicates the extent to which FLEs interact with the customers. Moreover, sincere and gracious behavior refers the extent to which the FLEs show courtesy towards their customers.

Based on the above discussion, FLEs prove to be the most significant players in providing delightful services. Moreover, it is argued that the delivery of delightful services by the FLEs stimulate positive emotions among the customers (Pelled & Xin, 1999). This positive emotion, in turn, creates positive emotions among the FLEs that induce them to deliver extraordinary services. Moreover, Stock and Hoyer (2005) claim that the FLEs should be internally motivated and committed to performing customer-oriented services (i.e., delightful services). As yet despite the significant importance of FLEs for the delivery of delightful services, studies relating to the internal motivational factors that induce FLEs to provide delightful services is limited. Therefore, the current study proposes two antecedents that induce FLEs to deliver delightful services, i.e., creative self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation.

2.2 Creative Self-Efficacy

Tierney and Farmer (2002) introduced the concept of creative self-efficacy. They derived it from the Self-Efficacy Theory (Bandura, 1989) and the Creativity Theory (Amabile, 1988). Creative self-efficacy refers to an individuals' belief about their interdisciplinary capabilities to accomplish the assigned task through creative and innovative approaches to integrating various resources (Tierney & Farmer, 2002). The study on the FLEs of Taiwan service-related brand shows that employees who possess creative self-efficacy are highly enthusiastic to exert efforts more than their assigned duties to solve any problem (Hsiao et al., 2017). They further assert that such type of an employee view challenges as opportunities and successfully performs the assigned task. Based on the arguments above, we assume that creative self-efficacy positively influences the four pre-requisite behaviors of FLEs to perform delightful services (i.e., customizing attentive behavior, professional skills, open communication style, and sincere and gracious behavior). Accordingly, the current study proposes the following hypothesis.

- **H₁**: Creative self-efficacy has a positive influence on a) customizing attentive behavior, b) professional skills, c) open communication style, and d) sincere and gracious behavior.

2.3 Intrinsic Motivation

The study of Deci and Ryan (1985) defines intrinsic motivation as the internal factors that drive an individual to complete the assigned tasks without the intervention of any other external factors. Similarly, the Motivational Synergy Theory proposed by Amabile (1997) postulates that the eagerness that an intrinsically motivated employee exhibits relating to an assigned task are purely based on the internal motivation rather than external forces or factors. The findings of the study on employees of Taiwan service-related brand claimed that employees involve in service innovation as a challenge (Hsiao et al., 2017). Therefore, this study posits an argument that employees are eager to perform services that delight customers to challenge themselves and receive intrinsic rewards rather than extrinsic rewards. Thus, we hypothesize that intrinsic motivation positively induces FLEs to perform delightful services, i.e., customizing attentive behavior, professional skills, open communication style, and sincere and gracious behavior.

- **H₂**: Intrinsic motivation has a positive influence on a) customizing attentive behavior, b) professional skills, c) open communication style, and d) sincere and gracious behavior.

2.4 Positive Psychological Capital

Luthans et al. (2007) suggest that Positive Psychological Capital (PPC) is the dimension of positive psychology. Luthans et al. (2007) define PPC as the development state of an individual who possesses four characteristics. The characteristics of PPC include, (a) constructive approach that refers to the extent of optimism one feels towards challenges relating to the assigned tasks; (b) feeling of determination to achieve goals and continuously stick to achieve the goal, i.e., Hope, (c) self-confidence to succeed in challenging goals and exert efforts for future success, i.e., self-efficacy; and, (d) the ability to survive in difficult time and standing back, i.e., resilience. The concept of capital denotes that PPC develops and nurtures through the internal adaption to the external environment.

The relationship among intrinsic motivation, creative self-efficacy, and positive psychological capital can be described through the Broaden and Build Theory as proposed by Fredrickson (2004). This theory suggests that positive emotion and affect widens an individual's behavioral tendencies. These behavioral tendencies shape intellectual internalized attitudes such as, creative self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation that leads to enhancing PPC. This proposition infers that an individual with high level of creative self-efficacy is highly confident that results in enhancing self-efficacy of PPC (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). Moreover, individuals who possess a high level of creative self-efficacy tend to view opposition as an opportunity (Shin et al., 2012; Staw, Sandelands, & Dutton, 1981). Such an opportunity, in turn, reinforces hope and optimism. Furthermore, people with optimistic attitude tend to exhibit more resilience against any situation, which is one of the aspects of PPC. Similarly, intrinsic motivation enhances PPC (Hsiao et al., 2017) by enhancing the confidence of employees (self-efficacy), accepting challenges (hope and optimism), and ultimately an individual assurance about his/her capability to survive in any situation (resilience).

Additionally, a recent study reveals that individuals who possess a higher level of self-efficacy, optimistic attitude towards challenges and an ability to quickly recover from

setbacks (resilience) positively influence employees to perform delightful services (Shaheen, Zeba, & Mohanty, 2018). However, while studying delightful services, the literature is silent in studying this construct multi-dimensionally. So there is a need to examine the four dimensions of delightful services multi-dimensionally. The reason for such necessity is that it will help the policymakers to pinpoint those factors of delightful services that are influenced by internal motivational factors, i.e., creative self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation. Moreover, it will also highlight the role of positive psychological capital in enhancing the factors (if any) of delightful services that are not directly influenced by internal motivational factors. Therefore, we hypothesize that creative self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation engages employees in providing delightful services (such as customizing attentive behavior, professional skills, open communication style, and sincere and gracious behavior) through the intervention of PPC (i.e., self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience) as shown in *Figure 1*. Thus, we establish the following hypotheses to examine the arguments mentioned above;

- **H₃**: PPC positively mediates between the relationship of creative self-efficacy and (a) customizing attentive behavior, (b) professional skills, (c) open communication style, and (d) sincere and gracious behavior.
- **H₄**: PPC positively mediates between the relationship of intrinsic motivation and (a) customizing attentive behavior, (b) professional skills, (c) open communication style, and (d) sincere and gracious behavior.

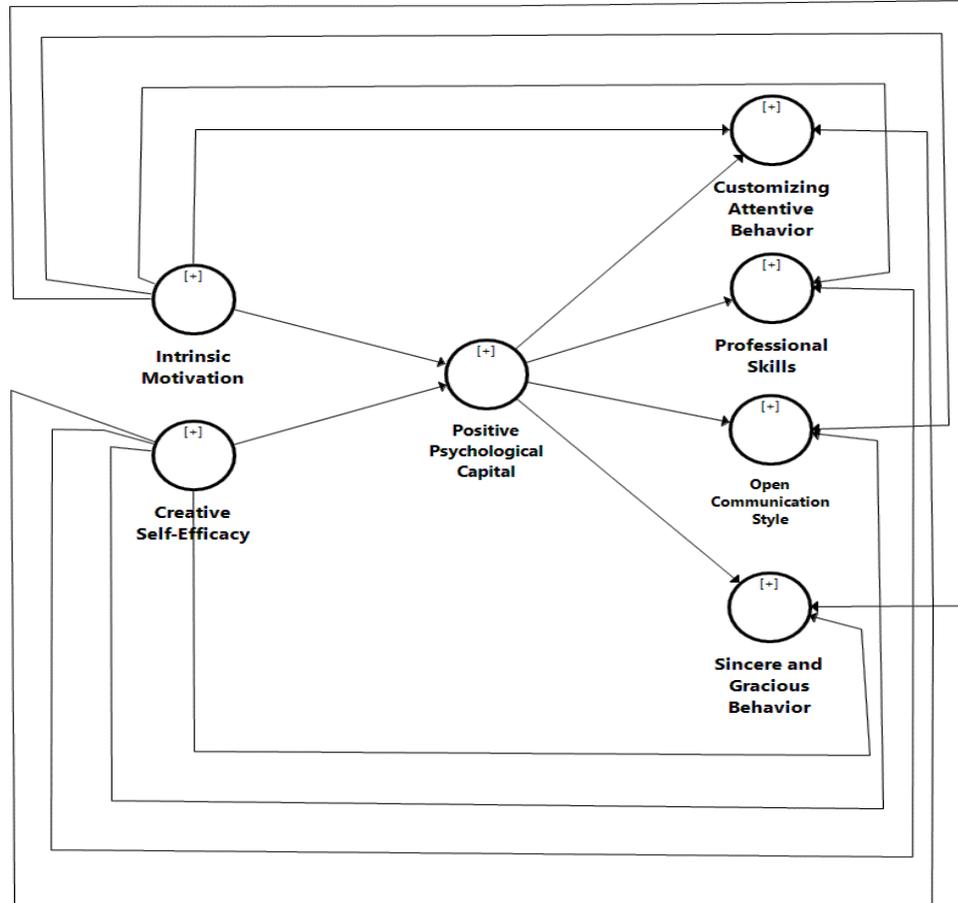


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

The population of the study consists of FLEs who belong to the services-related brands across Punjab, Pakistan. The services include medical and health care, public administration, hair and beauty, media, food and beverages, hotel and hospitality, wholesale and retail, education, finance and insurance, real estate, and fashion. The sample was randomly selected from the above-mentioned service-related brands. The data was collected from FLEs using a structured questionnaire to measure the proposed model. Moreover, only those employees who consented to participate were administered the questionnaire. The thumb rule as suggested by Barclay, Thompson, and Higgins (1995) to calculate an appropriate sample size for the current study was used to determine the sample size. Under this rule, the largest formative indicators used in the questionnaire is a multiple of 10. As all of the constructs in the questionnaire contained 69 items (See Table 2), so a

multiple of 10 equals to 690. So in light of this, a sample of 690 FLEs’ was appropriate to collect the data. Out of 690 distributed questionnaire, 615 were returned with a response rate of 89%.

3.2 Measures

A total of 69-item scale was adapted from well-established sources (see Table 1) to elicit the employees’ perception regarding the delivery of delightful services to customers. Five-Point Likert Scale was used to solicit employee’s perception towards the execution of delightful services. The value of Cronbach’s Alpha ($\alpha=0.929$) for the overall research instrument indicate that the questionnaire is reliable. While distributing the questionnaires, it was observed that FLEs were facing a problem in understanding items in the questionnaire that were in the English Language. So, the questionnaire was translated into the national language, i.e., Urdu. After the translation of questionnaire into the Urdu language, resultantly the value of Cronbach’s Alpha reached to 0.969.

To calculate the convergent and discriminant validity the study used Smart PLS-SEM. Moreover, to assess the convergent and discriminant validity of the instrument, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Composite Reliability (CR) and Hetrotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Ratio was calculated. The values of AVE and CR evaluate the convergent validity of the constructs. While HTMT ratio measures discriminant validity. The following Table 1 and 2 below show convergent and discriminant validity respectively.

The results in Table 1 below show that convergent validity is established as the value of AVE and CR are higher than 0.50 and 0.70 for all the constructs (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2013). Additionally, the value of AVE greater than or equal to 0.40 is also considered acceptable (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000).

Table 1: Sources of Measures and Convergent Validity

Constructs	Sources	AVE	CR
Intrinsic Motivation	(Tierney, Farmer, & Graen, 1999)	0.524	0.846
Creative Self-Efficacy	(Carmeli & Schaubroeck, 2007)	0.459	0.872
Positive Psychological Capital	(Luthans et al., 2007)	0.468	0.875
Customizing Attentive Behavior	(Wang et al., 2017)	0.406	0.905
Open Communication Style		0.584	0.875
Professional Skills		0.446	0.913
Sincere and Gracious Behavior		0.626	0.870

Apart from calculating convergent validity, PLS-Algorithm also calculates the discriminant validity. Discriminant validity differentiates the exogenous variables used in the model from each other. So to test discriminant validity, PLS-Algorithm was applied to calculate HTMT ratio as suggested by Henseler, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2015). Moreover, Table 2 below shows that the discriminant validity is established as the value of HTMT ratios among all the constructs is less than 0.90 as recommended by Henseler et al. (2015).

Table 2: Discriminant Validity

	HTMT
Customizing Attentive Behaviors -> Creative Self-Efficacy	0.795
Intrinsic Motivation -> Creative Self-Efficacy	0.752
Intrinsic Motivation -> Customizing Attentive Behaviors	0.707
Open Communication Style -> Creative Self-Efficacy	0.682
Open Communication Style -> Customizing Attentive Behaviors	0.814
Open Communication Style -> Intrinsic Motivation	0.575
Positive _Psychological Capital -> Creative Self-Efficacy	0.826
Positive _Psychological Capital -> Customizing Attentive Behaviors	0.862
Positive _Psychological Capital -> Intrinsic Motivation	0.747
Positive _Psychological Capital -> Open Communication Style	0.724
Professional skills -> Creative Self-Efficacy	0.794
Professional skills -> Customizing Attentive Behaviors	0.915
Professional skills -> Intrinsic Motivation	0.659
Professional skills -> Open Communication Style	0.810
Professional skills -> Positive _Psychological Capital	0.796
Sincere and Gracious Behavior -> Creative Self-Efficacy	0.720
Sincere and Gracious Behavior -> Customizing Attentive Behaviors	0.843
Sincere and Gracious Behavior -> Intrinsic Motivation	0.595
Sincere and Gracious Behavior -> Open Communication Style	0.864
Sincere and Gracious Behavior -> Positive _Psychological Capital	0.720
Sincere and Gracious Behavior -> Professional skills	0.895

4. Findings

After assessing the reliability and validity of the instrument, the next step is to evaluate the proposed structural model. To evaluate the structural model bootstrapping procedure was employed. Bootstrapping technique refers to a non-parametric procedure that aims to calculate the path coefficients, indirect effects, total effects, coefficients of determination (R^2), and f^2 . Moreover, the Bootstrapping procedure also calculates the value of Standardized Root Mean Square (SRMR) to estimate the proposed model fitness. The value of SRMR ranges from zero to 1, and less than 0.08 is considered to be a perfect fit (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008). The results of SRMR show a value of 0.075 that indicates a perfect fit. Moreover, *Figure 2* below shows the model extracted.

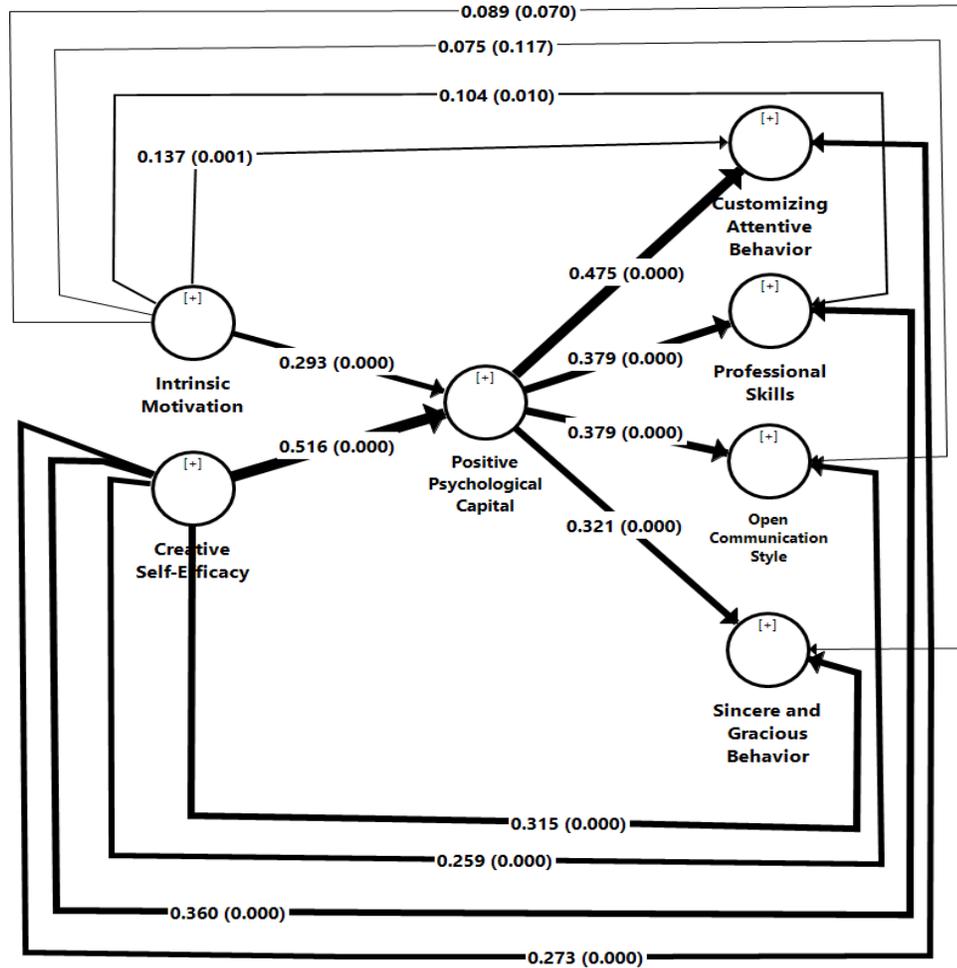


Figure 2: PLS-SEM Model

Figure 2 above shows the indirect impact of creative self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation of the FLEs during the execution of delightful services to customers (i.e., customizing attentive behavior, professional skills, open communication style, and sincere and gracious behavior) through the mediation of positive psychological capital. The outcome of bootstrapping procedure shows that H_1 is fully accepted and supports Self-Efficacy Theory and the Creative Theory (Amabile, 1988; Bandura, 1989). This finding reveals a highly significant impact of creative self-efficacy on the four practices of delightful services. This means that employees exert more efforts than needed by viewing tasks as opportunities to perform well. While the findings indicate, that H_2 is partially accepted as intrinsic motivation does not show an impact on the endogenous variables, i.e., open communication style, and sincere and gracious behavior. This finding complies with the Theory of Motivational Synergy (Amabile, 1997) and supports the fact that employees possess internal factors that induce them to customize their attentive behavior towards the

customers and utilize their professional skills to satisfy the customers. However, the findings fail to identify the effect of intrinsic motivation on open communication style and sincere and gracious behavior as these two factors belong to personality traits.

Moreover, it is clear from the above Figure 2 that both exogenous variables, i.e., creative self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation have a positive and highly significant impact on PPC ($\beta=0.516$, $p=0.000<0.01$ and $\beta=0.293$, $p=0.000<0.01$) respectively. These findings are in line with the Broaden and Build Theory suggested by Fredrickson (2004) that recommends that positive emotion broaden an individual's behavioral propensities. These behavioral propensities shape the intrinsic intellectual attitudes such as, creative self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation that leads to enhancing PPC. Consequently, PPC positively induces FLE s to involve in customizing attentive behavior ($\beta=0.475$, $p=0.000<0.01$), professional skills ($\beta=0.379$, $p=0.000<0.01$), open communication style ($\beta=0.379$, $p=0.000<0.01$), and sincere and gracious behavior ($\beta=0.321$, $p=0.000<0.01$) to perform delightful services.

Moreover, the bootstrapping procedure also calculates the coefficients of determination, i.e., R^2 to examine the predictive accuracy of the structural model. R^2 represents the percentage of the total impact of the exogenous variable on an endogenous variable (see Table 3). The calculated value of R^2 as shown in the Table 3 below represents the amount of variance generated by the exogenous variables i.e. creative self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation on the endogenous variables such as positive psychological capital (0.535), customizing attentive behavior (0.622), professional skills (0.568), open communication style (0.410), professional skills (0.568), and sincere and gracious behavior (0.418).

Furthermore, to cross-validate, the coefficients of determination, i.e., Stone-Geisser Q^2 (Geisser, 1974; Stone, 1974) is calculated. Table 3 below shows that predictive accuracy and predictive relevance both are established as the effect size of Q^2 is greater than zero.

Table 3: Result of R^2 and Q^2

Endogenous Variable	R^2	Q^2	Effect Size
Customizing Attentive Behaviors	0.622	0.233	Medium
Open Communication Style	0.410	0.223	Medium
Positive Psychological Capital	0.535	0.232	Medium
Professional skills	0.568	0.235	Medium
Sincere and Gracious Behavior	0.418	0.246	Medium

Effect size: Small: $0.0 < Q^2 < 0.15$; Medium: $0.15 < Q^2$ effect size < 0.35 ; Large: Q^2 effect size > 0.35

4.1 Mediation Analysis

Moreover, for conducting mediation analysis, Baron and Kenny (1986) suggest the following preconditions,

- There should be a significant direct relationship between independent and dependent variable.
- Separately calculate each casual relationship such as the relationship of the independent variable with the dependent and mediating variable. Then calculate mediating effect on the dependent variable.

However, Shrout and Bolger (2002), Preacher and Hayes (2008) and Zhao, Lynch, and Chen (2010) suggests that instead of performing mediation analysis stepwise; the direct and indirect effects can be calculated simultaneously through PLS-SEM.

Moreover, Variance Accounted For (VAF) can be calculated to assess the intensity of the indirect effect. Variance Accounted For (VAF) is calculated to examine the extent to which mediator absorbs the total effect (Hair et al., 2013). The formula to calculate VAF is as under:

$$VAF = \frac{Indirect\ Effect}{Total\ Effect}$$

Furthermore, Hair et al. (2013) describe the following conditions of mediations based on the calculated values of VAF;

- If $0 < VAF < 0.20$, then no mediation,
- If $0.20 < VAF < 0.80$, then partial mediation, and
- If $VAF > 0.80$, then full mediation.

Table 4 below shows the direct and indirect effects statistically. Moreover, it also shows the mediation effect of positive psychological capital. While it also calculates the value of VAF and interprets the mediation conditions as well. Furthermore, Table 4 below indicates that PPC shows complimentary and partial mediation between the relationship of exogenous (creative self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation) and endogenous (customizing attentive behavior, professional skills, open communication style and sincere and gracious behavior) variables.

Table 4: Mediation Analysis of Positive Psychological Capital

Endogenous Variable	Effect			VAF	Mediation
	Direct	Indirect	Total		
Exogenous Variable: Creative Self-Efficacy					
Customizing Attentive Behaviors	0.273**	0.245**	0.518**	0.473	Partial
Open Communication Style	0.259**	0.195**	0.454**	0.430	Partial
Professional skills	0.360**	0.196**	0.556**	0.352	Partial
Sincere and Gracious Behavior	0.315**	0.166**	0.480**	0.345	Partial
Exogenous Variable: Intrinsic Motivation					
Customizing Attentive Behaviors	0.137**	0.139**	0.276**	0.503	Partial
Open Communication Style	0.075	0.111**	0.185**	0.598	Partial
Professional skills	0.104*	0.111**	0.215**	0.515	Partial
Sincere and Gracious Behavior	0.089	0.094**	0.183**	0.513	Partial

Effect size: Small: $0.0 < VAF < 0.15$; Medium: $0.15 < VAF$ effect size < 0.35 ; Large: VAF effect size > 0.35 .

** Highly Significant at 1% or 0.01 level of significance

* Moderately Significant at 5% or 0.05 level of significance

It is clear from Table 4 above that creative self-efficacy, and intrinsic motivation shows the highly significant indirect impact on the four practices of delightful service (i.e., customizing attentive behavior, professional skills, open communication style and sincere and gracious behavior) through the mediation of PPC. Although, intrinsic motivation does not show any significant direct impact on open communication style and sincere and gracious behavior. However, with the presence of PPC as a mediator that exhibits hope, resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy internally motivate the FLEs to enhance their personality traits such as communication style and gracious behavior towards their customer.

5. Discussion, Theoretical Contributions, Managerial Implications, Limitations and Future Directions

5.1 Discussion

The results of the current study reveal that creative self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation generates personalized resources such as PPC. These findings are aligned with the conclusions drawn from the study of Hsiao et al. (2017). Moreover, creative self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation generate positive emotions among FLEs that is aligned with the Broaden-and-Build Theory proposed by Fredrickson (2004). It can be inferred that the FLEs who possess PPC are more confident, optimistic, proactive, and resilient that makes them happy and satisfied in the workplace. Furthermore, creative self-efficacy develops positive emotions among FLEs by enhancing their confidence in their abilities to attain desired outcomes. The results of the current study support the findings of Shaheen et al. (2018) who claim that PPC positively influences FLEs' capability to deliver four practices of delightful services as identified by Wang et al. (2017).

Based on the findings it can be inferred that through the positive state of mind, FLEs represent a cluster of positive emotions. Such positive emotions assist in creating an ability to recognize customers and caring about their hidden needs, show proactive attitude to solve customer problems, provide expert opinion while serving customers, engage in entertaining conversations with the customer to increase interaction, and consistently show a friendly attitude towards the customers. Moreover, FLEs with a higher level of intrinsic motivation find pleasure in engaging and coming up with new ideas and procedures. Resultantly, such a pleasure influences positively to enhance the abilities of FLEs to attend customers with care and use professional skills and techniques to delight customer.

Therefore, the results of the current study have further strengthened our confidence in the role that positive psychological capital plays between the relationship of internal motivational factors and delightful services.

In the light of above discussion, the next section describes the theoretical and practical contributions of the current study.

5.2 Theoretical Contributions

The findings of the current research significantly contribute to the existing literature of delightful services by identifying the internal factors that motivate FLEs to perform delightful services. Although, Wang et al., (2017) explored the employee's perception of

the delivery of delightful service. Still, a limited discussion was available in the literature that explores the prerequisite behaviors that employees should possess to perform delightful services (Barnes, Collier, Ponder, & Williams, 2013; Barnes, Ponder, & Hopkins, 2015). The present study bridges this gap and suggests that both creative self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation influence (derived from the Motivational Synergy Theory) the FLEs' abilities to provide delightful services. Moreover, this study examines the effect of internal motivational factors on the four dimensions of delightful services separately. Examining the four dimensions of delightful services separately provide practical implications that reveal that creative self-efficacy proves to be the most significant predictor of employees ability to deliver customizing attentive behavior, open communication style, sincere and gracious behavior, and professional skills. Moreover, this relationship can be further strengthened up with the intervention of optimism, hope self-efficacy, and resilience. The findings of the current study are in accordance with the study of Hsiao et al., (2017) who assert that internal motivators (i.e., creative self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation) ignite PPC. In contrast, the insignificant direct relationship between intrinsic motivation and open communication style and sincere and gracious behavior open up a new avenue for both the researchers and the policymakers. This finding highlights the importance of the intervention of positive psychological capital and suggests to devise policies to enhance the positive psychological capital among the FLEs so that they can delight customers effectively. Consequently, PPC will not only enhance the ability of the FLEs to provide more care and attention to the customers with professional advice but will also improve their interaction with the customers that will help in rapport building.

5.3 Managerial Implications

The current study aimed to examine the determinants of four delightful services practices according to the perceptions of FLEs of service-oriented brands. In the past, practices of delightful services are examined mainly from high-end hotel industry employees perspective. So, the findings of the current study can implicate all types of service-oriented brands. The findings of the study suggest the frontline managers develop motivational synergies among FLEs so that they can delight customers. Furthermore, the following suggestions can be considered by the managers for enhancing the capabilities of FLE's to delight customers,

Conduct special training sessions and workshops to develop creative self-efficacy, intrinsic motivations, and PPC among FLEs'.

Frontline managers should focus on implementing Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) program. LMX promotes the two-way relationship between the leader and the employees that build confidence among them to resolve any issue creatively (creative self-efficacy). FLEs who possess such type of characteristics are more inclined to delight customers by understanding their hidden needs and then tailor services accordingly.

Moreover, management should develop and support friendly environment that encourages positive relationship among peers. The supportive behavior of peers boosts confidence among employees to implicate innovative ideas to accomplish the task (creative self-efficacy). Ultimately, the teamwork of FLEs will improve the quality of provision of delightful services to the customers.

The management should work to reduce turnover of employees. As employees who have extended membership with the organization will tend to possess higher self-confidence and will be in a better position to propose creative and innovative ideas to accomplish the task. Resultantly, it will help in bringing improvements in the delivery of delightful service practices as proposed by Wang et al., (2017).

5.4 Limitations and Future Directions

Despite the fact that the present study provides a new avenue for the supervisors to rethink the psychological underpinnings of the employees that build persistent behavior in delighting the customers. Still, the study is not free from limitations. Firstly, several factors contribute to enhancing the employees' capability to deliver delightful services; however, the current study considered only two internal motivators as antecedents to employees behavior relating to the delivery of delightful services. So, the current study suggests investigating the other antecedents of the perception of employees for the delivery of delightful services such as affective commitment, work-life balance and employee engagement that might induce employees to more actively participate in providing excellent service experience.

Secondly, to generalize the results of the study, future researchers should replicate the current model in different settings and environments. Lastly, the present study is quantitative, and the data is collected by administering closed-ended questionnaires. Therefore, future researchers can investigate the current model using different research designs such as behavioral experimental designs, focus group discussions, observations and randomized field trials.

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