



Programa de Doctorado en Turismo, Economía y Gestión

TESIS DOCTORAL

FRONTLINE EMPLOYEE'S SUGGESTIONS IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY
AS A SOURCE OF ORGANISATIONAL EMPLOYEE-DRIVEN CHANGE AND
INNOVATION: AN ANALYSIS OF HOTEL RECEPTIONISTS' PROFILES,
PERSONALITY, CREATIVITY, KNOWLEDGE, AND MOTIVATION

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5. CHAPTER I
6. INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

For many authors (e.g., Al-kalouti et al., 2020), the environment of service sectors is increasingly complex, dynamic, and unstable. That lack of stability mirrors changing customer demands (e.g., Rusly et al., 2015). In the hospitality sector, customers are expected to become decisive agents of change in the transition to a more sustainable future (Jones & Comfort, 2020). Consequently, the current environment for many service and hospitality organisations is highly competitive. Service firms in those dynamic sectors have to adapt and it often means changing strategies, products, and operations to increase their competitiveness. Recent external crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic or the responses to climate change, along with the need for developing sustainable competitive advantages make changes necessary in service firms in order to face competition (e.g., Huang & Jahromi, 2021).

Academic literature tends to recognise that what allows organisations to survive and grow in the marketplace is undoubtedly their capacity for innovation (Høyrup, 2012; Witell et al., 2016). Nevertheless, many changes implemented in service firms and especially in hospitality ones are just imitations of some other companies' models or practices, but these changes also strengthen the competitive positioning of the organisation since improvements are made and customer satisfaction is enhanced. Anyway, innovation is a particularly desired change. Thus, organisations are increasingly focusing their efforts on identifying and exploiting potential sources of new knowledge as a way of encouraging innovation. Likewise, innovation has moved from the internal processes of organisations to the networks or environments to which they belong (Powell et al., 1996). Specifically, in service companies, innovation is increasingly generated by informal sources of knowledge (Bogers & Lhuillery, 2006), such as employee-driven innovation.

Employees in the hospitality industry have a closer contact with customers than in many other industries (Grissmann et al., 2013). Thus, in the hospitality industry, frontline employees play a key role in the development of positive changes and innovation due to the simultaneity of production and consumption and the importance of human factors in service delivery (Ottenbacher & Harrington, 2007). These employees have first-hand knowledge of the specific demands and preferences of customers, which enables them to create new ideas, processes, products, or services to adapt the service to the consumer (Hallin & Marnburg, 2008). Moreover, frontline employees also get information from customers about competitors' practices. This privileged information and their creative skills allow frontline employees to create original and useful ideas to better meet customer needs or to better carry out internal

tasks, such as building or improving products, services, or processes in the organization. The customer experience has become a fundamental tool for change and innovation in an organisation and, therefore, for making a difference with current and potential competitors. In this sense, employees in contact with the client often acquire exclusive, valuable, and context-specific knowledge, which is often not possessed by managers (Kesting & Ulhøi, 2010). According to Chang et al. (2011), the interaction between employees and customers greatly enhances service quality and innovation in hotels. When employees are given the opportunity to participate in change and innovation processes in the company and are motivated to do so, they are in a position to share these creative ideas with the organisation through suggestions, resulting in organisational changes or innovations driven by them (informal change or innovation). Because of this, more and more companies in the hotel industry are recognising the importance of the employee as a source of value in change and innovation processes. In fact, Lee (2008) affirms that change leaders can be within the workforce and, in this case, their potential inputs will be of great value. In this regard, Chiang (2010) found that hospitality employees value communication with managers, training regarding change, and the possibility of participating in the change process.

Research shows that many change and innovative ideas in the hospitality sector are produced by employees in contact with the customer, who in turn implement and examine them (e.g., Ottenbacher, 2007; Ottenbacher & Harrington, 2009). Thus, companies that promote employee-driven change and innovation will have a higher innovation performance as it will stimulate cooperation between employees and managers (Hansen et al., 2017). To this end, organizations should develop channels of knowledge distribution and exchange, such as suggestion systems, through which employees can share their creative ideas and are motivated to do so (Akram et al., 2011; Fairbank & Williams, 2001).

According to Plessis et al. (2008), suggestion systems are tools that encourage employees to think creatively and innovatively about their work and everything around them, thus generating ideas or suggestions that are beneficial to the organization and for which the employee receives recognition. In this sense, Buech et al. (2010) state that suggestion systems allow organisations to benefit from their employees' capacity for innovation. Larson (1989) states that suggestion systems not only provide innovation to the company, but also give employees a certain sense of importance within the organization when their suggestions are put into practice. In this way, the suggestion system gives employees the possibility to contribute their ideas, encourages them to participate in the organization's decision making

and, therefore, promotes business innovation (Lasrado et al., 2016). Lages and Piercy (2012) offer examples of the relationship between frontline employee's generation of ideas and service improvements. Thus, employee suggestion systems play a crucial role for organizations that want to implement changes and be more innovative to stand out in the marketplace (Buech et al., 2010).

In the hospitality industry, the quality of service depends considerably on the ability of firms to obtain, develop, assemble, and distribute knowledge assets (Bouncken, 2002). As Arthur and Kim (2005) point out, the knowledge that employees possess will only become a competitive advantage if they have the opportunity to share their ideas and the motivation to contribute to the improvement of the organization. According to Yang (2010), hotels can increase their organizational effectiveness by promoting knowledge sharing among employees. Also, coordination of employees and their joint creative thinking is essential to increase customer satisfaction and service quality (Bouncken, 2002). Individual employee knowledge is converted into organisational knowledge that forms valuable intangible assets (Yang & Wan, 2004). Thus, when hospitality companies identify and leverage their organizational knowledge, they become more dynamic and achieve greater business performance (Baloglu et al., 2010). Therefore, hospitality employees represent a source of value for change and innovation processes (e.g., Radu & Vasile, 2007), and the effective management of the valuable suggestions proposed by them helps to create competitive advantages over competitors in the hotel and tourism industry (Bouncken & Pyo, 2002).

However, Di Mascio (2010) indicates that there are relevant differences in frontline employees' attitudes, behaviours, and performance. Research about frontline employees (e.g., Di Mascio, 2010; Peccei & Rosenthal, 2000) has shown that some of them lack commitment to customer service and customer-oriented behaviour, and consequently to change proposals. Hence, some employees could engage more actively than others in the so-called voice behaviour (Morrison, 2011) that refers to the discretionary communication of ideas, opinions, and suggestions. The potential existence of service of frontline employees with varying degrees in the implication for change activities would be a relevant aspect of research. Moreover, Di Mascio (2010) states that there are different aspects underlying various typologies of service mind-sets and behaviours. With regard to change initiatives, the identification of features related to frontline employees would allow a clarification of different profiles in this context, and it would be also interesting for service scholars and practitioners.

From an individual point of view, suggestions require the employee's ability and motivation. As indicated by García-Almeida et al. (2012), the two significant aspects in relation to the execution of actions whether by individuals, groups, etc. are the ability and willingness to carry out these actions. Regarding innovative suggestions by frontline employees, on the one hand the individual would need the ability to make them. The literature on suggestions tends to stress the relevance of creativity as the general capability to come up with something novel: it would act as a process capacity to make suggestions. However, the ability to make suggestions could also need a content ability, based on knowledge inputs that have been constructed over time and would serve as filters that would determine the difference of what is new and not, information to be combined to identify innovation opportunities, etc. This is coherent with advances in neuroanatomy, since Dietrich (2004) states that "it has been widely accepted in the literature that knowledge is essential for creative thinking" (p. 1020). On the other hand, the motivation to make suggestions could be necessary since frontline employees who are able to make innovative proposals could refrain from doing so if they do not have some stimuli to express those ideas. Amabile (1983) adopts a similar view when addressing the social psychology of creativity based on three elements of creative performance: creativity-relevant skills, domain-relevant skills, and task motivation. Consequently, the frontline employee's creativity, constructed knowledge, and motivation could be relevant factors to make innovative suggestions.

Another aspect to consider at the individual level is the personality of the employee since, as many researchers claim, the individual's personality influences the process of generating ideas (e.g., Amabile, 2012; Gupta & Banerjee, 2016). The academic literature has shown that the proactive personality of the individual is related to favourable outcomes for both the employee and the organisation, such as professional success, innovation development, entrepreneurship, job performance and team effectiveness (Kim et al., 2009). Furthermore, Hsieh et al. (2011) indicate that personality traits influence the individual's willingness to share knowledge with the organisation and thus affect innovation performance. Rathi and Lee (2016) outline that a relevant topic of study with regard to frontline hospitality employees is the role of employee personality traits in predicting individual and organisational outcomes, such as customer satisfaction and service quality. An outstanding model to understand, approach and study personality in the work setting is the Five-Factor Model of personality (McCrae, 2017: McCrae & Costa, 1987), also known as the Big Five model. This model classifies many personality traits into five factors that are characterised as the main dimensions of personality,

namely extraversion, neuroticism, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness to experience. Zare and Flinchbaugh (2019) refer to the relationship between personality and voice behaviours. Therefore, the personality of the individual could influence both the creation of innovative suggestions and the willingness of employees to share them with the company.

Due to all the above, the current challenges of the hospitality industry must be addressed by companies by encouraging the participation and involvement of employees in change and innovation processes and taking into account the suggestions they propose based on their valuable knowledge given their close relationship with the customer. These employee suggestions, if properly managed by management, could contribute to the improvement of productivity, innovation, and long-term success of hospitality companies (e.g., Hon, 2011; Lasrado et al., 2016). The challenges identified in the proposal and implementation of suggestions by frontline employees in hospitality firms as change and innovation agents point to the existence of some research gaps in academic literature and are the basis for the objectives of this doctoral research. In a more specific way, the goals of the doctoral dissertation are the following ones:

1. To explore the existence of service frontline employee groups based on their level of implication in change activities.
2. To identify individual, organisational/group, customer-relational, and job and work characteristics that allow for defining groups of service frontline employee based on their level of implication in change processes.
3. To analyse the potential influence of frontline employees' personality traits on their implemented suggestions as a key involvement in the organisational system to channel and implement suggestions with the identification of feasible improvements in hospitality firms.
4. To analyse the role played by frontline employees' creativity, knowledge, and motivation to suggest organisational changes as a basis for employee-driven innovation in hospitality firms.

The structure of the doctoral dissertation aims to achieve those four goals. The work encompasses seven chapters/sections, including this introductory section (Chapter I) and the general conclusions in Chapter VI. Chapter II addresses the general conceptual framework that are the central topics of the work; in that line, that chapter presents a literature review of

organisational change, organisational innovation, and voice behaviour and suggestions in order to present the introductory theoretical foundations of employee-driven change and innovation.

Chapters III, IV and V are presented in the format of scientific articles, and they encompass the specific theoretical and empirical aspects that develop and allow for achieving the four objectives of the doctoral dissertation. In Chapter III, a study of the existence of service frontline employee groups based on their level of implication in change activities is conducted. To that end, the number of proposed, implemented, and successful suggestions is considered. Moreover, the identification of relevant features of the groups identified is performed based on individual characteristics, organisational and group characteristics, relationships with customers as main element of the immediate social environment, and job and work aspects.

Chapter IV focuses on the study of the impact of frontline employees' personality traits on their implemented suggestions. By using the framework of the Five-Factor model of personality, the analysis goes in depth to address the relationship between personality and both the proposal of suggestions and their defence in the organisation to have them implemented performed by frontline employees.

Chapter V deals with frontline employee-driven innovation and explanatory factors for the proposal of innovative suggestions. Employees' creativity, knowledge and motivation are the three elements of creative performance included in the model of social psychology of creativity by Amabile (1983) and they are also paramount aspects in the ability and motivation approach. The theoretical and empirical analysis of these three elements in relation with innovative suggestions is the backbone of the chapter.

A final section of this work presents some extracts of the doctoral dissertation translated into Spanish. More specifically, the goals of the research, the summary of the work, and the conclusions are included in Chapter VII in Spanish.

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7. CHAPTER II

8. CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS

CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS

This chapter focuses on the academic presentation of four aspects that are central to this dissertation: organisational change, organisational innovation, and voice behaviour and suggestions. As the three following chapters address specific research goals, the function of this section is to provide a conceptual review about those four aspects after analysing some basic ideas of academic literature.

2.1. Organisational change

Organisations nowadays are surrounded by a rapidly evolving and aggressively competitive business environment. Given this situation, the survival of organisations lies mainly in developing and managing change (Burke, 2017). Thus, the need for firms to adapt to changing business conditions and to outperform the competition is the main engine of change in organisations (Murphy, 2002). In this way, change is seen as a natural response to the internal and environmental conditions encompassing the organisation (Leifer, 1989). Paradoxically, the continuous change that organisations deal with is the only thing that remains constant (Elving, 2005).

The concept of change according to De Faria (1996) refers to the modification of a condition or situation that implies the transformation of characteristics, that is, an alteration of dimensions or aspects, whether they are more or less meaningful. Greenan (2003) highlights the existence of three types of changes: technological, organisational and skill changes. In the context of organisations, change is seen as inevitable, and it is not possible for firms to remain static in today's hectic business market. Thus, change is constantly present and affects all organisations. Therefore, organisations must focus on continuous review, renovation, and adjustment, through experimentation and risk-taking to cope with the market situation (Smith, 2011). Moreover, in view of the risk involved in change for organisations and the uncertain future ahead of them, it is essential that they are clear about the reason for change and the direction they want it to take (Kezar & Eckel, 2002). Among the most frequent reasons organisations have for initiating change are to increase efficiency, reduce costs, increase profits, ensure business growth, or achieve business survival, among others (Diefenbach, 2007).

The concept of organisational change has been addressed by numerous authors whose contributions are gathered in the academic literature. According to Bejinariu et al. (2017), who

provided a broad definition of the term, organizational change can be defined as “change in organizational structure, its system/sub-systems, employees and relation of between them in a planned or non-planned way” (p. 322). In addition, organisational change entails changes in the mission, vision and/or processes of organisations, and affects both the individual and the organisation as a whole (Bejinariu et al., 2017). Another approach to the concept is provided by Greenan (2003), who states that organisational change is “any change in the distribution of power, skills, information or in the lines of communication” (p. 292). It is also worth mentioning the definition proposed by Moran and Brightman (2001), who define organisational change management as “the process of continually renewing an organization’s direction, structure, and capabilities to serve the ever-changing needs of external and internal customers” (p. 111). Thus, a similar approach to the term is provided by Whiteley (1995), who considers organisational change as “a renewal of parts or even the whole of organisational culture, structures, processes and relationships with the outside environment” (p. 34). In this line, Macdonald (1995) adds a fundamental idea by understanding organisational change as “a process in which the finding and acquisition of external information are critical” (p. 557). Finally, Dawson (1996) makes a relevant assertion in considering that organisational change, although it is a process that can be planned in detail, is inevitable as it is affected by uncertainty, serendipity, and chance. In this way, Dawson (1996) shows that the nature of organisational change is dynamic or variable, moving away from the static or unchanging.

Organisational change has been a broadly studied and discussed subject and, as such, academic literature on organisational change recognises many different types of change that take place in organisations, including among them: planned or emergent change (Bamford & Forrester, 2003), depending on whether it is the result of conscious actions or arises spontaneously; first-order and transactional change or second-order and transformational change (Burke & Litwin, 1992), or, in the same context, shallow or deep change (Grouard & Meston, 1996), based on the extent of the change and its impact on the organisation; continuous or discontinuous/episodic change (Norbutus, 2007; Weick & Quinn, 1999), depending on the pace of implementation; evolutionary or revolutionary change (Tushman & O'Reilly, 1996), depending on whether the change is gradual, incremental and specific or radical and disruptive at the level of the whole organisation.

As stated by Burke (2017), change in organisations is largely unplanned and evolutionary. Therefore, managers and employees at all levels must be able to implement planned changes but above all to effectively manage unexpected or emerging changes (Burke,

2017). Thus, the ability of organisations to manage change is considered essential for the organisation's long-term survival in the marketplace (Okumus & Hemmington, 1998). According to Lunenburg (2010), the individual or team that oversees initiating and managing change in the organisation are known as change agents, either internal to the organisation or external, such as consultants from outside the firm.

In an organisational change context, external consultants employ techniques and ideas to smooth change (Werr & Styhre, 2002). Organisations look to external consultants primarily for new ideas, skills, impartiality, and objectivity (Gattiker & Larwood, 1985). According to Lunenburg (2010), external consultants are not tied to the organisation's culture, policies, or traditions, so they can provide a different perspective to the situation and challenge the *status quo*. Bryson (1997), in his research on service firms, noted that consultants are frequently involved in change processes in those aspects of strategic importance to organisations which often require the use of external expertise, i.e., changes in management structure and processes, organisational culture, and personnel capabilities. Furthermore, it should be added that external consultants are hired by organisations to address a specific need or problem (Buono & Subbiah, 2014). Therefore, it can be stated that the involvement of external consultants is temporary and relevant to drive planned organisational change.

Although organisations often use external consultants to plan and manage change, the involvement of internal consultants or change agents is essential for organisations to cope with the rapidly changing environment and to be able to adapt to the changes that are continually emerging. A classical approach to initiate and even plan detailed changes is the direct involvement of top managers. These managers are supposed to know the organisational strategy in depth and are able to come up with ambitious modifications in the company. However, this approach is limited by the complexity and dynamism of the environment and their bounded rationality, and some researchers question its efficacy (e.g., Burnes, 2004a). Several authors (e.g., Bamford & Forrester, 2003; Bryson, 1997) agree that organisational change should be driven from the bottom of the organisational pyramid, i.e., by those people who are closely familiar with the organisation's practices. Thus, employee-driven change in organisations refers to change that is driven from the bottom of the organisational hierarchy when change needs emerge from employees (Pries-Heje & Vinter, 2006). An active, continuous, and significant involvement of employees in the change process is essential for employees to feel motivated and take personal responsibility for achieving organisational change (Smith, 2005). The relevance of employee-driven change is supported by Burnes

(2004b), who states that organisational change will be successful only when the full participation and commitment of all those involved in the change process is achieved. Moreover, the benefits of employee involvement in the change process are numerous, as it not only improves responsiveness to change, but also improves quality, employee commitment, job performance and satisfaction, and productivity in the workplace (Fenton-O'Creevy, 1998).

2.2. Organisational innovation

The fierce competition faced by organisations in the business environment leads them to constantly strive for competitive advantages over their peers, with innovation becoming an essential element for their survival and success (e.g., Read, 2000). Thus, some of the main forces driving innovation in an organisation are the business environment and the firm's strategy (Laforet, 2011). In this regard, Hult et al. (2004) define innovativeness as "the capacity to introduce some new process, product, or idea in the organization" (p. 430). Innovative organisations pursue the creation of novel ideas, products or services and their successful implementation in the marketplace, in addition to the fact that they anticipate consumer needs in order to be better prepared than their competitors to satisfy them (Simpson et al., 2006).

The term "organisational innovation" has been widely discussed and defined in the academic literature. Among all these definitions, the contribution of Damanpour (1991), who considers organisational innovation as the "adoption of an internally generated or purchased device, system, policy, program, process, product, or service that is new to the adopting organization" (p. 556), is noteworthy. In addition, Gumusluoglu and Ilsev (2009) go further with this approach by defining organisational innovation as the "tendency of the organization to develop new or improved products/services and its success in bringing those products/services to the market" (p. 266). It is also interesting to note a more specific definition provided by Barcet (2010) who understands that service innovation or service-based innovation "introduces something new into the way of life, organization, timing and placement of what can generally be described as the individual and collective processes that relate to consumers" (p. 51). Furthermore, Woodman et al. (1993) draw a relevant distinction between change and innovation in organisations by considering innovation as a "subset of an even broader construct of organisational change" (p. 293), i.e., only a share of organisational change is innovation.

Following the contributions of Gopalakrishnan and Damanpour (1997) in the field of innovation, the stages of the innovation process can be grouped primarily into two phases: innovation generation and innovation adoption. Thus, while innovation generation mainly includes idea creation, problem solving, project development, and decision making involving the development of new products and processes, the adoption phase involves embracing an existing idea and implementing it in the organisation (Gopalakrishnan & Damanpour 1997). Therefore, the development of novel products, processes, services, or technology that are new both to the market and to the firm undertaking this task represents innovation generation, while changes that are new only to this particular firm represents innovation adoption (Dost et al., 2016; Pérez-Luño et al., 2011). Thus, each stage of the innovation process contributes to the organisation in different ways, e.g., innovation generation contributes to improving the efficiency and competitiveness of organisations, and innovation adoption assists in improving performance or overcoming organisational weaknesses (Dost et al., 2020).

It is also relevant to understand the different processes by which innovation is developed. In this regard, reference can be made to the distinction provided by Gallouj and Savona (2009), who have addressed planned/intentional innovation and unintentional innovation. Thus, on the one hand, planned/intentional innovation follows a detailed programme of action and is the result of formal research and development activities. On the other hand, unintentional innovation is emergent in nature, resulting from an inertial learning process by the agents involved. Following these lines, Moosa and Panurach (2008) add that planned or formal innovation, which is often delegated to the marketing or R&D department, is an inefficient way of fostering innovation. This highlights the importance of unintentional or informal innovation processes especially in service firms, which should be driven by the employees who are in direct contact with customers and who have the most valuable knowledge about customer needs and preferences (Moosa and Panurach, 2008). In this way, frontline employees in the service sector are the interface between an organisation's internal operations and external customers (Babakus et al., 2017). In addition, these employees have an intimate knowledge of customers' needs at any time, which can lead to the development of innovation initiatives and increased customer satisfaction.

The academic literature on innovation management in organisations focuses mainly on the role of R&D teams and neglects the crucial involvement of employees at the bottom of the organisational hierarchical pyramid in the innovation process. Kesting and Ulhøi (2010) in their research define the concept of employee-driven innovation as “the generation and

implementation of significant new ideas, products, and processes originating from a single employee or the joint efforts of two or more employees who are not assigned to this task” (p. 66). Employee-driven innovation has shown that the firm’s own employees are a valuable source of innovation in the organisation; therefore, the innovative potential of the firm is huge (Høyrup, 2010). Thus, employees at all levels of the organisation can be innovation assets regardless of their educational background and their position in the firm (Laviolette et al. 2016). Kesting and Ulhøi (2010) argue that the potential and capabilities of employees to develop innovation should be leveraged, valorised, and exploited for the benefit of both the organisation and its employees.

Employee-driven innovation is primarily a bottom-up process in organisations. Chesbrough (2003a, 2003b) states that many innovative organisations have adopted an “open innovation” model, using external inputs in the development of their innovation processes and competitive strategy. In this way, many firms successfully innovate by tapping into ideas, knowledge, and experience from a wide pool of external sources. Thus, the open innovation model revolves around the way in which organisations harness the knowledge of external actors in their innovation processes. Laursen and Salter (2006) have found that firms that pursue open strategies for seeking ideas or knowledge tend to be more innovative. The organisation’s ability to capture and take advantage of external knowledge is paramount to its innovation process (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990). In this sense, Høyrup (2010) affirm that organisations should not settle for the innovation initiatives that their R&D department can develop but should combine their own knowledge with knowledge from external sources that contribute to the successful development of the innovation. It can be concluded that open innovation is about managing the intentional inputs and outputs of knowledge that drive the organisational innovation process. This shared knowledge can be built by employees, with the ideas, knowledge, experience, creativity, and competences of the firm’s employees being considered the drivers of innovation (Høyrup, 2010).

Particularly in service firms, frontline employees are considered key agents in the development of innovation (e.g., Karlsson & Skålen, 2015; Melton & Hartline, 2010; Ordanini & Parasuraman, 2011). In this context, Åkesson et al. (2016) define frontline employees as “personnel either working entirely with customer contact duties or combining customer-contact obligations with back-office work” (p. 338). Toivonen and Touminen (2009) argue that frontline employees in service organisations are able to come up with innovative ideas by getting information from different sources, e.g., through their close contact with customers. In

this way, frontline employees succeed in turning external information or knowledge into interesting value propositions for organisations. This is supported by Kesting and Ulhøi (2010) who state that employee-driven innovation arises from social interaction. Åkesson et al. (2016) add that frontline employees are not isolated, which is why they are influenced and inspired by other actors, such as customers. Thus, frontline employees' knowledge of customers' needs and preferences enables them to create value and drive the innovation process in organisations. Frontline employees are therefore at the core of any service innovation, and their involvement in the innovation process is recognised as paramount.

2.3. Voice behaviour and suggestions

The active participation of employees in organisations can be carried out in a wide range of different ways, e.g., managers can involve employees in the decision-making process, quality circles can be carried out for employees to find solutions to problems, managers can encourage employees to contribute suggestions for change, etc. (Larson, 1989). Employees are constantly torn between speaking up and sharing relevant information with the organisation or remaining silent. Thus, the extent to which employees engage with the organisation and raise their voice to share their ideas, concerns or suggestions can greatly affect the organisation's performance or survival (Morrison, 2011). Following social exchange theory, employees who experience positive or quality social exchanges with their employers are more likely to adopt proactive behaviours and engage with their employers by using their voice more frequently (Blau, 1964; Liu et al., 2013).

It is essential to understand what employee voice entails. For example, Morrison (2011) defines it as the "discretionary communication of ideas, suggestions, concerns, or opinions about work-related issues with the intent to improve organizational or unit functioning" (p. 375). In this sense, the voice of the employees can be directed either to the boss (upward communication) or to a teammate. LePine and Van Dyne (2001) argue that employee voice is not meant to be a criticism, but as "constructive change-oriented communication intended to improve the situation" (p. 326). Furthermore, Detert and Burris (2007) add that employee voice is "the discretionary provision of information intended to improve organizational functioning to someone inside an organization with the perceived authority to act, even though such information may challenge and upset the status quo of the organization and its power holders" (p. 869). Considering the above definitions, several conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, voice is inherently discretionary, as employees freely decide at any given moment whether to share

their voice or to remain silent. Secondly, voice is a behaviour, not an attitude or a perception. LePine and Van Dyne (1998) consider voice as a good example of organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB). Thirdly, voice is constructive in nature, since employees do not intend to negatively criticise or complain when sharing their voice, but to contribute to an improvement in the organisation. Finally, voice involves risk, as employees' ideas or suggestions may not be well received by others, which may lead to tensions or some kind of confrontation. In addition, employee voice and silence, i.e., when employees withhold or do not share information or their ideas with the organisation on relevant work issues, are compatible (Morrison, 2011). Thus, sometimes employees choose to express their opinions or ideas on certain topics and sometimes they choose to remain silent.

Any organisation relies daily on multiple acts that shape the citizenship behaviour of its employees, such as making suggestions, among others (Smith et al., 1983). As Larson (1989) states, employee suggestions are a clear and widespread way for employees to participate in organisations. Employee suggestions are considered a “technical, organisational or financial improvement that would introduce changes in the practices and solutions applied so far, which would benefit the company” (Szewczyk, 2019, p. 54). In this regard, a suggestion is a behaviour carried out by employees that aims to bring about improvements in the organisation by constructively proposing changes (e.g., LePine & Van Dyne, 1998; Li & Zhou, 2019). In this way, employees can help the organisation adapt to the changing environment and improve its products, processes, and services by voicing suggestions for change (Lipponen et al., 2008).

Organisations often use employee suggestion systems to increase employee participation in the firm and to encourage employees to contribute solutions to problems that cannot be solved through traditional organisational procedures (Marksberry et al., 2014). Employee suggestion systems are often used to stimulate creative thinking among employees with the purpose of getting employees to develop innovative ideas that benefit the organisation (Carrier, 1998; Du Plessis et al., 2008). The employee suggestion system is one of the oldest employee engagement tools, and they have evolved from anonymous boxes on the wall to sophisticated electronic suggestion systems that allow faster processing of ideas (Fairbank & Williams, 2001; Lasrado et al., 2015). Marx (1995) clearly defines the suggestion system as a “formalized procedure to encourage the employees to think creatively about their jobs and their job environment and to come forward with ideas for which they will be rewarded on a specific basis, if acceptable and to the advantage of the organization”

(p. 16). Therefore, the development of an employee suggestion system is crucial for any organisation that wants to be more innovative (Buech et al., 2010), which is so crucial to survive and succeed in today's business environment.

Through suggestion systems, organisations not only encourage employees' ideas, but also evaluate their suggestions, implement them, and reward employees if they consider them appropriate and useful (Moneim, 2009). Ideas or suggestions proposed by employees are not always considered creative, valid and/or suitable for implementation in the organisation (e.g., Khazanchi & Masterson, 2011). Organisations therefore carry out a process of assessment of suggestions to screen out and reject those ideas that are not deemed suitable to be implemented. In this regard, Axtell et al. (2000) asserts that proposing suggestions does not ensure their implementation. Thus, once the suggestion is proposed by the employee, a specialised committee or group oversees evaluating its validity and, if its report is positive, granting the appropriate reward to the employee who shared the idea (Du Plessis, 2016; Moneim, 2009). In decentralised organisations, a manager can be the only evaluating agent of the suggestion.

It is critical to the success of any suggestion system that the organisation provides feedback to employees when they propose a suggestion. Communicating to employees the outcome of their suggestion and the reasons for or against its implementation, i.e., implemented or rejected, is key to the success of the suggestion system (Buech et al., 2010). Thus, feedback on rejected suggestions can keep employees motivated with the suggestion proposal, whereas not providing feedback to employees will make them feel discouraged and frustrated (Lasrado et al., 2016; Neagoe & Klein, 2009). As a consequence of not providing feedback to employees, there may be a decrease or complete refusal by the employees concerned to propose suggestions in the future. Instead, providing feedback to employees (at the right time) will allow them to get involved and improve the quality of their proposals (Verdinejad et al., 2010). Cho and Erdem (2006) stated that employees feel valued and therefore become more committed to the organisation when their suggestions are taken into account and implemented in the workplace. In addition, providing feedback to employees on their proposals highlights the effectiveness of the suggestion system (Leach et al., 2006).

Finally, it is noteworthy the relevance for organisations to develop channels for knowledge sharing and transfer (Akram et al., 2011), such as suggestion systems, and to make them available to employees so that they can share their innovative ideas and feel that they have a voice in the organisation. Thus, employee suggestions for change are recognised as an

important driver for developing competitive advantage, and organisations that value and promote employee voice are more likely to achieve their goals and objectives (Daley & Vasu 2005; Lipponen et al., 2008).

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9. CHAPTER III

10. SERVICE FRONTLINE EMPLOYEES' SUGGESTIONS AS RELEVANT SOURCE OF ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE: AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF HOTEL EMPLOYEE' PROFILES

SERVICE FRONTLINE EMPLOYEES' SUGGESTIONS AS RELEVANT SOURCE OF ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE: AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF HOTEL EMPLOYEE' PROFILES

Abstract

Given the strong competition and dynamism that service firms face in the business environment, and the crises they have to overcome such as the Covid-19 pandemic, organisational resilience and change capacity is fundamental for their survival. Among the key employees to drive the change process in service firms, the role of frontline employees stands out, as the valuable knowledge they have acquired through interactions with customers is key to providing useful suggestions for service improvement. The work studies the existence of different profiles of frontline service employees based on their involvement in change activities through their suggestions and the underlying characteristics that define those potential groups. The data were collected from a survey with 153 receptionists from hotels in Tenerife (Spain). The results show the existence of three groups of frontline employees ranging from individuals with no implication in change initiatives to employees with high implication in change processes. Moreover, significant aspects to characterise these frontline service employees' profiles have been identified: the frontline service employee's gender, organisational decentralisation of communication, participative leadership, getting inputs from customers, focus on customer satisfaction, job satisfaction, and construction of firm specific job knowledge. Managers can foster frontline employee-driven change based on them.

Keywords

Frontline employees; employee-driven change; organisational change; service firms; suggestions.

3.1. Introduction

In recent years, service business environments are increasingly characterised as dynamic and unstable (Al-kalouti et al., 2020). Dynamism in the business environment results in constant changes to the clients' service scope (Rusly et al., 2015). Service firms need to implement changes in their organisational practices and even their products to increase their competitiveness, where service innovations are key changes (Witell et al., 2016) to achieve that goal. Changes tend to increase business resilience in firms operating in service industries

and it is paramount in crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic but also in the development of sustainable competitive advantages (Huang & Jahromi, 2021).

Organisational change and change management are highly complex (Pries-Heje et al., 2018). Service firms need to have change capabilities to respond to competition in highly dynamic sectors and crises. In that sense, organisations often struggle to create meaningful, sustainable changes (Stouten et al., 2019). The development of an organisational change capability is required to face those challenges in the long term. The organisational change literature usually observe change as a planned process or as an emergent one (Edwards et al., 2020). The emergent process of change is observed as a bottom-up approach, where the focus lies on the employees. For Andreeva and Ritala (2016), an important characteristic of organisational change capability is its embeddedness in employees' attitudes and behaviours. Employee-driven change deals with the change driven from the bottom of the organisational hierarchy when need for change arise among employees (Pries-Heje et al., 2018). Many firms have been adopting empowerment strategies that foster less hierarchy and more self-management (Lee & Edmondson 2017; Van Baarle et al., 2021). Thus, employees become key agents for change to help information-overloaded managers who are limited by bounded rationality (Dobrajska et al., 2015). This trend is also highlighted in many service sectors where firms do not have the critical mass or the strategic/structural priority to set formal R&D departments.

Among the key employees to initiate and even lead the initial steps of the change process, the literature outlines the role of frontline employees (González-González et al., 2021). For Lages and Piercy (2012), frontline employees are likely the key individuals to provide useful suggestions for service improvement. According to Aziz and Sparrow (2011) and in the context of a service firm, the knowledge gained through the interactions of frontline people with customers is very relevant. Due to the intensive contact with customers, frontline service employees are in a favourable position to identify and understand service consumers' needs and demands. In addition, as many frontline employees also understand their firm's strategy and business concept (Karlsson and Skålen, 2015), they could be expected to contribute to successful organisational changes. Thus, managers are interested in fostering service frontline employees' proactive behaviour since it avoids problems in the future (Tian et al., 2019). The generation of ideas for service improvement by frontline employees is a very relevant aspect with scant research (Lages & Piercy, 2012).

Frontline employees differ greatly in attitudes, behaviours, and performance (Di Mascio, 2010). Though service literature has offered some taxonomies of frontline employees (e.g., Ford & Etienne, 1994; Peccei & Rosenthal, 2000), it has not directly addressed the taxonomy of service frontline employees based on their involvement in change activities. Thus, recent research (e.g., González-González et al., 2021) recognise that service frontline employees are not involved in change activities in the same degree. Some authors (Di Mascio, 2010; Peccei & Rosenthal, 2000) has pointed to the existence of frontline employees who show a lack of commitment to customer service and customer-oriented behaviour, and consequently to change proposals. Furthermore, González-González et al. (2021) point at the existence of different degrees of involvement in change activities by service frontline employees. This in line with Karlsson and Skålen's work (2015), who find that frontline employee involvement in service innovation ranges from passive to active. The identification of frontline employee groups in change initiatives and their characteristics would extend the academic notions of the role of frontline employees in service change and provide practical contributions to face dynamic competitive situations and crises based on the exploitation of the potential to change that lies in those employees. Moreover, Lages and Piercy (2012) study the role of service frontline employees in the generation of ideas by sharing their thoughts, suggestions, and solutions. As service literature has attributed the differences in those dimensions to individual and organisational characteristics, the taxonomy analysis could be complemented with the identification of characteristics and aspects that allow for understanding group membership in those varying degrees of change implication. In that line, several authors (i.e., Di Mascio, 2010; Ford & Etienne, 1994; Peccei & Rosenthal, 2000) provide aspects that can characterise the existence of different groups of frontline employees, and they can be applied to the description of service frontline employees with a varying degree of implication towards organisational change.

Due to the identification of these research gaps, the goals of the paper are to explore the existence of service frontline employee groups based on their level of implication in change activities, and the identification of individual, organisational, customer-relational, and job characteristics that allow for defining those groups. Following the recommendation by Lages and Piercy (2012), the goals of this work have been explored with representative, quantitative data from multiple firms in a same service sector, namely the hotel one. Thus, a survey with data from hotel receptionists from the island of Tenerife (Spain) is the basis for the empirical approach of this work. After a conceptual framework to understand the role of service frontline

employees in organisational change, the method for that survey is explained. Then, the findings are presented in the results section. The conclusions of the work are addressed in the last section.

3.2. Organisational change in service firms and frontline employees' suggestions

Today's business environment is so complex and dynamic that organisational change is assumed to be indispensable for the survival of organisations (Kaufman, 2017). In fact, change is a reality for organisations (Smith, 2005). Thus, the nature of service firms is fundamentally changing, as they are primarily affected by instability, uncertainty, and the need for continuous adaptation (Benhadda & Chibili, 2019). As established by Nelson (2003), organisational change enables the transition from the status quo to a new desired situation to better adapt to the environment. These changes, particularly in the service sector, can be driven by external forces of the industries or by internal management decisions (Lee, 2008). Organisational change has been a broadly studied and discussed subject.

Organisational change must always go hand in hand with organisational strategy (Burnes, 2004), consequently, change management has become an indispensable management skill. Moran and Brightman (2000) state that change management is a continuous process that updates an organisation's direction, structure, and capabilities to respond to the ever-changing needs of customers. Particularly in service firms, change management is responsible for managing the human side of change in order to ensure a successful transition (Asnan et al., 2015; Creasey, 2007). The successful management of change is vital to any organisation to subsist and prosper in the present highly competitive and unceasingly evolving business environment (By, 2005). As the Covid-19 pandemic has shown (Huang & Jahromi, 2021), the ability of organisations to manage organisational change is crucial to their long-term survival.

Every organisational change, regardless of its extent, requires an individual or group to take on the task of initiating and managing change in the organisation; these people are known as change agents (Lunenburg, 2010). As established by Alharbi (2016), a change agent not only initiates change and manages the change process, but also helps others to understand why change is necessary, tries to resolve conflicts, and obtains people support. According to Lunenburg (2010), change agents in organisations can be internal, such as managers, work teams or individual non-managerial employees, or external, such as consultants from outside the organisation. Internal and external consultants share the same role; however, they have different experiences and positioning in relation to the organisation, and their authority and

credibility come from different sources (Scott & Hascall, 2000). In fact, due to the external agents' unfamiliarity with the organisation (e.g., lack of knowledge about the organisation's history, operating procedures, and staff), external change agents often work alongside an internal coordinator (Lunenborg, 2010) or some other internal agents. According to Espinosa and Giménez (2006), the internal change agent will bring a deep knowledge of the business, the culture, the organisation's procedures, the people involved and their possible reactions to change, while the external change agent will bring innovative ideas, different points of view to address problems and extensive experience in change management. Increasingly, service provider companies are finding it essential to have change agents that enable them to keep up with and modify their practices and policies to cope with organisational changes (Alharbi, 2016).

Although the planned approach to change has been considered very effective in the academic literature, it has been challenged by several authors (e.g., Burnes, 2004) who claim that the current environment is changing so rapidly that organisational change is more of an open-ended and continuous process than a set of pre-identified events (By, 2005). As such, the emergent approach to change has been gaining attention, which considers that change rather than being driven from the top of the hierarchical pyramid of the organisation, is driven from the bottom-up (Bamford & Forrester, 2003). Thus, service firms have traditionally realised that successful change management relies on change being managed by people familiar with the culture, style, and practices of the organisation (Bryson, 1997). Thus, a manager was seen as the person with the necessary authority to manage (e.g., leading activities, planning, organising, supervising, etc.) (Caldwell, 2003). Nevertheless, the emergent approach suggests that change is happening so fast that it is very difficult for senior managers to act as change agents and to effectively initiate the required organisational responses on time. Edwards et al. (2020) merge these two approaches by considering that successful change requires the reconciliation and integration of top-down and bottom-up perspectives; these authors go on to outline the role of the employees in identifying and solving problems that top management indicate.

As a result, there has been paradigm shift from the traditional “command and control” management style to a new “involvement and engagement” style in which managers share power down the levels of the organisational hierarchy and empower employees to be receptive to change (Van Baarle et al., 2021). This results in less hierarchical and more flexible organisations in which self-managed work teams and individual employees are allowed to act as agents of change and take responsibility for frontline decision making (Caldwell, 2003).

According to Melton and Hartline (2010), service firms are increasingly involving frontline employees, either directly or indirectly, in the idea generation phase to provide feedback on new service initiatives, as managers believe that employees who have direct and frequent contact with customers can sense whether the market will accept or reject a new service offering. Likewise, Lee (2008) affirms that change leaders can be within the workforce and, in this case, their potential inputs will be of great value. In this regard, Chiang (2010) found that what service employees, specifically employees in the hotel industry, value the most is communication with managers or supervisors, training regarding change, and the possibility of participating in the change process.

The involvement of employees in the change process builds an ideal organisational environment that leads to successful change (Edwards et al., 2020). As stated by Ugwu et al., (2018), employee participation or involvement is a process of empowering employees to share their ideas or experiences in creating value, strive to provide solutions to problems and improve the performance of the organisation. Bowen and Lawler (1995) stress that service firms must adjust their practices, policies, and structures to build and sustain employee empowerment, which requires the distribution of information, knowledge, rewards, and power throughout the organisation. Numerous authors in academic literature (e.g., Mikkelsen et al., 2000; Sverke et al., 2008) agree on the importance of employee involvement in the success of any change in the organisation, as employee participation is considered the most effective strategy for developing and executing quality organisational change (Hussain et al., 2018).

According to Hon and Lui (2016), when service firms give employees the opportunity to participate and get involved, they strive to communicate and collaborate with the organisation, which stimulates the generation and sharing of creative ideas and drives organisational change. Thus, when employees are fully involved in the change process, from the planning or identification phase, the employees' understanding and awareness of the need for change is enhanced (Puspasari et al., 2017). Edwards et al. (2020) argue that emergent change processes allow employees to participate in change efforts by contributing to the formulation of changes, thus assuming the role of change agent or change driver. Based on Pries-Heje and Vinter (2006), for this to happen, the organisation needs to adopt an open management style that encourages change to emerge from the bottom up. For Karlsson and Skålén (2015) frontline employees contribute customer knowledge, product knowledge and practice knowledge during five phases of the service innovation process: project formation, idea generation, service design, testing and implementation. Lages and Piercy (2012) offer

examples of the relationship between frontline employee's generation of ideas and service improvements.

Though employee participation in organisations can be implemented in a wide range of different ways, the most relevant one seems to be that managers can encourage employees to contribute suggestions for change (Edwards et al., 2020). As it reveals as an opportunity for organisational change, a working atmosphere in which management supports, considers, and encourages suggestions for changes proposed by employees provides a basis for open employee participation and involvement (Weber & Weber, 2001). Liang et al. (2017) find that when supervisors show interest in service employees' suggestions, these employees feel more confident in sharing their suggestions with the organisation. Xiong et al. (2019) consider employees who express change-oriented ideas and suggestions aimed at driving an organisational improvement to be a fundamental resource in a service-based hospitality context.

As stated by Moneim (2009), in organisations there should be a free transfer of suggestions originating from employees to managers, who will evaluate and implement the suggestions if they consider them feasible, and who will give feedback to employees and reward them if suggestions for change are successful. Likewise, Arthur and Aiman-Smith (2001) describe the employee suggestion system as a fundamental mechanism for turning individual-level knowledge into organisational knowledge, making relevant individual knowledge available to decision-makers, because although the suggestion proposal is behavioural, the content of the suggestion arises from the knowledge of the employee who develops the idea. Suggestion programmes are hence designed and implemented to foster new and valid ideas from employees about their work. According to Raub and Robert (2013), when frontline service employees feel encouraged to take the initiative and propose suggestions for service improvement, in most cases the changes suggested result in improved service quality.

In the service sector, those employees who come up with good and novel ideas or suggestions to meet customers' needs and demands are the frontline employees, i.e., employees in contact with customers (González-González & García-Almeida, 2021; Stock, 2015). These employees have frequent face-to-face interactions with clients and therefore gather valuable information about their preferences and needs (e.g., Engen & Magnusson, 2018; Schaarschmidt, 2016). Hon et al. (2013) state that frontline service employees have numerous chances to identify problems and make suggestions as a result of their daily interactions with customers. The information held by frontline employees is vital for service firms to

continuously adapt their offerings to the changing needs of customers and the market (Wilder et al., 2014). Thus, frontline employees constitute an important source of information that drives change (Stock, 2015), acting as facilitators or agents of change.

In line with González-González and García-Almeida (2021), frontline employees in service firms are in a key position to identify the diverse customer needs, get information about competitors, and discover internal aspects of the organisation that can be developed and improved, thus acquiring useful knowledge that can be transformed into an opportunity for change. Based on Devine (2010), managers particularly value the involvement of frontline service employees in organisational change processes, as the experience of frontline employees provides practical contributions that managers cannot personally access because it goes beyond their managerial experience (Lee, 2008). Suggestions from frontline employees often provide managers with a real image of the service management situation, which facilitates the decision-making process (Bao et al., 2021). Thus, frontline employees in service-based firms play a major role in bridging the information gap between those who offer the service and those who consume it (Lievens & Moenaert, 2000). Therefore, from the bottom of the organisational pyramid, frontline employees are the ones who initiate change or propose organisational changes in service firms.

Di Mascio (2010) indicates that there are different aspects underlying various typologies of service mind-sets and behaviours. In their description of frontline employee profiles and based on the works by Ford and Etienne (1994) and Peccei and Rosenthal (2000), this author attributes type membership to individual characteristics, organisational characteristics, immediate social environment, and job characteristics. After adapting them to the specific service change dynamics, individual characteristics, organisational and group characteristics, relationships with customers as main element of the immediate social environment, and job and work aspects have been used in this work to study their role in service frontline employees grouped according to the level of implication in change initiatives. A review of academic literature supports this approach. Malhotra et al. (2013) claim that organisations need to better understand the specific profile of frontline service employees that is most appropriate for employee-customer interactions. In this regard, Okan et al. (2020) emphasise the relevance of the age of frontline service employees in achieving high quality customer interactions. Moreover, several authors (e.g., Shaltoni and Pinar, 2013; Toor et al., 2018) support that the gender of the frontline service employee interacting with a customer of a given gender influences the customer's perception of service delivery. Likewise, while Sobaih

and Hasanein (2020) highlight the importance of salary and working conditions on the extrinsic motivation of frontline employees, Yeh (2013) underlines the significance of frontline employees' job satisfaction in delivering higher quality service. Furthermore, González-González and García-Almeida (2021) identify the potential of frontline employees' work experience in identifying opportunities for improvement and generating new ideas in service firms. Therefore, considering, among others, the variables mentioned above, this work aims to describe the different profiles of frontline employees in service firms based on their active implication in the change process.

3.3. Methodology

To meet the objectives of this work from an empirical perspective, a survey was conducted among frontline employees of high-end hotels in the north of Tenerife (Canary Islands, Spain). The Canary Islands are a well-known tourist destination in the international tourist market, especially for Europeans. The relevance of the hotel sector in the Canary Islands is well recognised as the hotel supply in the Archipelago represents a share of 12% of the total hotel supply in Spain (Ledesma Rodríguez et al., 2021). Tenerife is the island that receives the highest amount of visitors out of the total number of arrivals in the Canary Islands (37.8% of the total in 2019, i.e., 8,441,644 visitors) (Web Tenerife, 2019). Moreover, the Tourism Observatory of the Canary Islands states that given the strong competition in global markets, destinations are forced to apply policies that encourage innovation and entrepreneurship in the hospitality industry on a local scale, thus generating improved processes and products that take advantage of current opportunities (Hernández Martín et al., 2021). Hence, the development of innovative ideas, together with that of technology, are crucial for the Canary Islands to remain highly competitive in the field of tourism (INtech Tenerife, 2019). This highlights the adequacy of the hotels on the island as a relevant context to study organisational change dynamics in the tourism industry.

Having analysed the different roles of frontline employees in hotels, receptionists were defined as the target population and key informants for the research. According to Mendoza et al. (2020), hotel receptionists often must deal with customer needs, requests, and complaints, and must offer solutions to customers' problems in order to provide quality service and ensure customer satisfaction and loyalty. Moreover, they play a crucial role in hospitality organisations and are adequate individuals to represent frontline employees, as supported in recent academic literature (e.g., Akubia, 2020; Astuti et al., 2018) in which receptionists were

selected as study subjects. Consequently, receptionists employed in 3-, 4- and 5-star hotels in the north of Tenerife were targeted to form the population for this research. Based on the information provided by the destination management organisation of the island and tourist accommodation metasearch engines, 77 hotels of 3-, 4- and 5- stars were located in the study area. As a result of direct contacts with each hotel, the size of the study population comprised 484 receptionists.

The questionnaire for the survey was developed following a literature review and eight in-depth interviews with experts in the field and was prepared in Spanish. For this study, two groups of variables were addressed. Firstly, the central variables to classify the frontline employees are the following ones: the total number of suggestions proposed by the receptionist in the last month; the total number of suggestions proposed by the receptionist in the last month that have been implemented by the organisation; and the total number of suggestions proposed by the receptionist in the last month that have been implemented by the organisation and have given successful results.

Furthermore, several variables regarding frontline employees' individual characteristics, organisational and group characteristics, relationships with customers as main element of the immediate social environment, and job and work aspects were also addressed. In many cases the items to measure were included in a 7-point Likert format. With regard to the individual characteristics, the receptionist's age, gender, formal education, number of years working as a receptionist, and creativity were analysed. Creativity was measured with a 6-item scale taken from García-Almeida and Cabrera-Nuez's work (2020). Five variables were considered in the category of organisational and group characteristics: firm innovation culture, climate of trust in the department, decentralisation of organisational communication, participative leadership, and rewarding leadership. Innovation culture was assessed by using four items from the scale by Dobni (2008). The trust climate in the department was measured with Chang and Bordia's (2001) 3-item scale. To measure the level of decentralised communication in the organisation, an item was created inspired by the discussion of communication network density by Liang et al. (2010). One item to measure participative and rewarding leadership respectively was created based on the ideas provided by one of the interviewed experts.

As for frontline service employees' relevant aspects of their relationship with customers to reflect their immediate social environment, two variables were considered. On the one hand, and according to the comments of another interviewed expert, customer inputs were measured

with one item that refers to complaints or comments that customers have made to receptionists to improve service. On the other hand, one item from Koys' (2001) 5-item scale of organisational citizenship behaviour was used to study the orientation towards customer satisfaction of these frontline employees. With regard to job and work aspects, four variables were studied, encompassing the employee's average monthly salary (in euros), their positive working conditions, their job satisfaction, and the firm specific job knowledge. The positive working conditions of receptionists were studied with two items suggested by two experts in in-depth interviews that refer to the existence of good working conditions and whether the conditions agreed with the organisation are met, respectively. Regarding employee job satisfaction, it was measured with one item as supported by some authors such as Scarpello and Campbell (1983) stated that the best overall rating of job satisfaction is a single item that simply asks the individual whether s/he is satisfied with her/his job. The use of a single item to measure job satisfaction is also supported by Navy (2002), so this finding was applied in this work. Lastly, the firm specific job knowledge was analysed considering the average number of years the employee has worked in that firm as a receptionist.

The fieldwork was conducted right before the Covid-19 pandemic and started by visiting each of the high-end hotels in the population. Once in the accommodation, the head of reception or receptionist in charge was introduced to the study and asked for her/his collaboration. Only 12 hotels refused to participate, while the remaining hotels were interested and committed to the research. Questionnaires for all the receptionists in the participating hotels were left to be filled. Several days later, a reminder call to make sure that the questionnaires were ready to be collected was made to all the participating hotels. As a result of the fieldwork, 153 valid questionnaires were obtained, which make up the final sample of this work. This self-selection sample implies a valid response rate of 31.6% and a maximum margin of error of 6.56% for a confidence level of 95%. Finally, it is worth mentioning that the sample is mostly made up of women (58.2%), although the participation of both genders is balanced. The average age of the individuals in the sample is 35 years, with an average length of service of 7.5 years as receptionists in their current firm, and 10 years of total work experience.

3.4. Results

With regard to the first goal of this work, the classification of service frontline employees take into consideration three variables of interest: the number of suggestions

proposed by hotel receptionists in the last month; the number of suggestions proposed by hotel receptionists in the last month that have been implemented by the organisation; and the number of suggestions proposed by hotel receptionists in the last month that have been implemented by the organisation and have been considered successful (see *Table 3.1.*). The original descriptive analyses of these three variables are explained, and then the cluster analysis is presented to achieve the first goal of the research.

Analysing the number of suggestions made by employees (*Table 3.1.*), it should be noted that most employees proposed one or two suggestions in the last month, i.e., 22.2% and 35.3% respectively. However, 15.0% of the employees in the sample did not share any suggestions with the firm in that period. In addition, there is an interesting group to consider as it stands out for its great capacity to develop and propose suggestions. This group is made up of those employees who have proposed five or more suggestions to the organisation in the last month, which represents 7.2% of the sample.

Table 3.1. also reveals that of the total employees surveyed, 51.6% of them managed to propose suggestions that were implemented by the organisation, while of the remaining 48.4% of the employees, 33.4% of them proposed suggestions that were not positively assessed by the firm to be implemented. Furthermore, of the 51.6% of employees who proposed suggestions that were implemented, 30.1% of them only managed to propose one suggestion in the last month that was considered feasible and suitable by the organisation to be executed. Also, the group of employees who stand out again are those who managed not only to submit five or more suggestions in the month, but also to convince the organisation to implement them, thus making up 4.6% of the sample.

In addition, *Table 3.1.* shows that out of the total number of employees in the sample, 43.1% of them proposed suggestions that were implemented and led to successful results for the organisations. In contrast, 8.5% out of the remaining 56.9% of employees in the sample made suggestions that were implemented but did not lead to positive results. Also, 28.1% out of the total number of employees who proposed suggestions in the last month that turned out to be successful (43.1%) made one successful suggestion in that period, followed by 9.2% who managed to come up with two successful suggestions. Additionally, it can be observed that there is a residual 2.6% of frontline employees who are remarkable in their contribution to organisational change due to their high effective, productive number of proposals (i.e., five or more in just one month) that were implemented and even deemed successful. This implies that it is a valuable group of frontline employees to take into account as they manage to overcome

the phases of proposal and implementation of suggestions, achieving beneficial results for the organisations they work for.

Table 3.1. Proposed, implemented, and successful suggestions by employee

PROPOSED SUGGESTIONS		IMPLEMENTED SUGGESTIONS		SUCCESSFUL SUGGESTIONS	
Number of proposed suggestions	Number of employees	Number of implemented suggestions	Number of employees	Number of successful suggestions	Number of employees
0	23 (15.0%)	0	74 (48.4%)	0	87 (56.9%)
1	34 (22.2%)	1	46 (30.1%)	1	43 (28.1%)
2	54 (35.3%)	2	20 (13.1%)	2	14 (9.2%)
3	22 (14.4%)	3	4 (2.6%)	3	3 (2.0%)
4	9 (5.9%)	4	2 (1.3%)	4	2 (1.3%)
≥5	11 (7.2%)	≥5	7 (4.6%)	≥5	4 (2.6%)
Mean	2.026	0.967		0.732	
Std. dev.	1.538	1.411		1.203	
Median	2.000	1.000		0.000	
Mode	2.000	0.000		0.000	

Source: own elaboration

In order to discover the existence of groups of frontline service employees based on their involvement with suggestions as a basis for change, a two-stage cluster analysis of the employees who had proposed at least one suggestion was conducted by considering the number of proposed, implemented, and successful suggestions in the last month. Consequently, the employees who did not propose any suggestion were not included in this first analysis. The cluster analysis showed the existence of two different groups. To analyse the whole sample, all frontline employees were taken into account based on their membership to the three groups identified, namely frontline employees with no suggestions and the ones in the two groups obtained from the cluster analysis.

In this work, following the recommendation of Hair et al. (2014), each group identified in the cluster analysis was examined and a specific label describing its nature was assigned to each of them, apart from the one given to the employees with no suggestions. Thus, based on the number of proposed, implemented, and successful suggestions from frontline service employees, members of Group 1 could be labelled as “non-suggesters”, members of Group 2 could be considered as “suggesters with low involvement”, and members of Group 3 could be regarded as “suggesters with high involvement”. The term “involvement” in the labels of employee suggesters (Groups 2 and 3) refers to the active participation and commitment shown

by frontline service employees in providing suggestions as a way of driving organisational change.

Table 3.2. shows the number of employees assigned to the three identified groups. Thus, Group 1 (non-suggesters) makes up for 15.03% of the combined cases of the sample, as it has been indicated in *Table 3.1.*; Group 2 (suggesters with low involvement) comprises 77.13% of the individuals; and Group 3 (suggesters with high involvement) encompasses 7.84% of the total number of frontline employees. Moreover, *Table 3.2.* also displays interesting results in terms of the average number of suggestions that have been proposed, have been implemented, and have been successful by the different groups. Starting with the number of suggestions put forward, suggesters with low involvement propose on average 2 suggestions per month, while suggesters with high involvement propose on average almost 6. Furthermore, relevant differences between the results of the two groups are also found in the average number of implemented and successful suggestions: while suggesters with low involvement fail to implement on average at least one suggestion per month, suggesters with high involvement manage to implement almost 5 suggestions in the same period and more than 3 of them are successful.

Table 3.2. Cluster distribution

Type of suggester	Number of members	Average number of proposed suggestions	Average number of implemented suggestions	Average number of successful suggestions
Non-suggesters	23	0	0	0
Suggesters with low involvement	118	2.034	0.754	0.576
Suggesters with high involvement	12	5.833	4.917	3.667

Source: own elaboration

To meet the second objective of this work that refers to the identification of individual characteristics, organisational and group characteristics, relationships with customers, and job and work aspects that allow for defining those groups, bivariate analyses have been conducted. Apart from descriptive analyses, three other statistical techniques have been conducted in order to observe the independence of the variables: for continuous variables, the relationship has been analysed with One-way ANOVA; for dummy variables, the analysis has used the Chi square test; and for ordinal variables, the statistic employed has been the Kruskal-Wallis' H. The preparation of some variables for those analyses was required, mainly regarding the creation of dummy variables and dimensionality reduction of the scales by conducting

exploratory factor analysis. Thus, in the factor analyses for individual creativity, innovation culture, and climate of trust, only one factor in each scale was extracted. Moreover, the mean of the two items to measure the working conditions was computed.

The first group of analyses in this line studies frontline employees' individual characteristics across the three groups (*Table 3.3.*). Examining the upward trend in the average age of employees in relation to their commitment to suggestions as shown across the three groups, it seems there is a positive, linear relationship between age and involvement in making suggestions (average ages of 33.26 and 37.83 years, for non-suggesters and suggesters with high involvement, respectively). However, this relationship is not statistically significant. Furthermore, the results obtained allow us to affirm that it is mostly women who are more involved in the proposal of suggestions (83.3%) in comparison to men (16.7%). Moreover, the results indicate that though higher education stands out across the three groups (more than two thirds of employees in each group), there is no significant pattern to outline with regard to this aspect. In terms of total job experience, it appears that as employees' job experience increases, so does their involvement with the suggestion proposal. The data show that on average there is a difference of more than 5 years in job experience between non-suggesters and suggesters with high involvement (9.10 and 14.62 years, respectively). Nevertheless, this increasing trend across the three groups is not statistically significant. Finally, after obtaining one factor that represents individual creativity, the degree of employee creativity seems to rise as employees become more involved in suggesting ideas, but this association cannot be stated to be significant.

Table 3.3. Individual characteristics

Type of suggester	Age	Gender		University degree		Average total job experience (in years)	Creativity
		% male	% female	No	Yes		
Non-suggesters	33.26	56.5%	43.5%	30.4%	69.6%	9.10	-0.052
Suggesters with low involvement	35.69	41.5%	58.5%	33.9%	66.1%	10.14	-0.013
Suggesters with high involvement	37.83	16.7%	83.3%	33.3%	66.7%	14.62	0.225
Test of independence	ANOVA F = 0.732 (0.483)	Chi square = 5.167 (0.075)*		Chi square = 0.104 (0.949)		ANOVA F = 1.076 (0.344)	ANOVA F = 0.341 (0.712)

Source: own elaboration

The organisational and group characteristics analysed in this study combine firm-related and departmental aspects. *Table 3.4.* displays their relationship with the groups

identified in this work. Regarding innovation culture, the data do not show a clear trend, so no conclusions can be drawn in this respect. As for the existence of a climate of trust in the department, this seems to favour the involvement of employees in the firm's change process, although no specific pattern is shown, and this connection cannot be considered significant. By contrast, decentralisation of organisational communication is very relevant to achieve greater involvement of frontline employees in service changes. Centralised communication will then lead to less employee involvement and therefore a lower level of knowledge/ideas sharing with firm managers. According to the findings of the work, participative leadership is also significantly associated with high employee involvement in suggesting ideas. Thus, the less the management allows the employee to participate in the processes, the less or not at all committed the employee will be to propose suggestions. Furthermore, though there seems to be a relationship between the existence of a rewarding leadership and the involvement of employees in the change process through suggestions, the link between these two variables is not statistically significant.

Table 3.4. Organisational and group characteristics

Type of suggester	Innovation culture	Trust climate	Decentralised communication	Participative leadership	Rewarding leadership
Non-suggesters	-0.151	-0.033	3.391	4.348	3.783
Suggesters with low involvement	0.037	0.006	4.110	4.763	4.415
Suggesters with high involvement	-0.074	0.006	4.583	5.500	4.333
Test of independence	ANOVA F = 0.374 (0.688)	ANOVA F = 0.015 (0.986)	Kruskal-Wallis H = 5.701 (0.058)*	Kruskal-Wallis H = 4.809 (0.090)*	Kruskal-Wallis H = 2.654 (0.265)

Source: own elaboration

With an emphasis on the influence of customer relationships, the results in *Table 3.5* indicate the relevance of employee-customer communication and attention. Thus, it is worth noting that the more complaints, comments, or just general feedback employees receive from customers to improve services or some other general aspects of the firm, the more they will be involved in proposing improvements to the organisation. Therefore, lack of customer input will result in employees being less involved in proposing ideas for change. On the other hand, customer orientation seems to be significant to distinguish frontline employees in their implication for change; however, the implication pattern is not clear because both the employees with no change involvement and those with a high involvement are characterised

with a high level of customer orientation. A reason for this could lie in the combination with additional variables; thus, some committed employees to customer satisfaction could be very focused on meeting customer's needs but lack skills and knowledge of the business model to go beyond and extract managerial conclusions to correct potential organisational problems in observed customer behaviours.

Table 3.5. Relationships with customers

Type of suggester	Inputs from customers	Focus on customer satisfaction
Non-suggesters	4.174	6.304
Suggesters with low involvement	4.220	5.695
Suggesters with high involvement	5.750	5.917
Test of independence	Kruskal-Wallis H = 9.905 (0.007)***	Kruskal-Wallis H = 6.403 (0.041)**

Source: own elaboration

Table 3.6. displays interesting job and work aspects of frontline employees in relation to their involvement in the change process. Though employees' average values of working conditions and salaries differ in the employee categories ordered by their level of change implication in an increasing way, these differences are not significant. Another important issue to consider is how frontline employees' level of job satisfaction influences their involvement in the organisational change process. The results of the study confirmed that the higher the level of job satisfaction, the higher the level of commitment to the change design. Finally, when examining the firm specific job knowledge acquired by employees over the years, there is a clear upward trend in relation to their involvement in proposing improvement ideas. Thus, it is worth noting that as employees have more years gaining job knowledge in the firm, they will be more committed to making suggestions. The results show that highly involved employees outperform low involved employees in 6 years of acquiring job knowledge in the firm, outperforming non-suggestive employees by 8 years (13.74, 7.24, and 5.30, respectively).

Table 3.6. Job and work aspects

Type of suggester	Positive working conditions	Monthly salary (€)	Job satisfaction	Average firm specific job knowledge (in years)
Non-suggesters	5.109	1023.810	5.478	5.30
Suggesters with low involvement	5.496	1065.464	5.958	7.24
Suggesters with high involvement	5.583	1090.833	6.333	13.74

Test of independence	ANOVA F = 0.829 (0.439)	ANOVA F = 1.472 (0.233)	Kruskal-Wallis H = 6.104 (0.047)**	ANOVA F = 3.208 (0.043)**
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Source: own elaboration

Consequently, the empirical findings of this work relate to the existence of frontline employees' groups based on their implication for change and with distinctive features. Out of the total number of employees in the sample, 15.0% did not propose any suggestions, 33.4% proposed suggestions that were not implemented, 8.5% proposed suggestions that were implemented but were unsuccessful, and 43.1% proposed suggestions that were implemented and their results were very positive for the organisations. Therefore, the role of the latter group is of utmost importance, since they have brought about the implementation of improvements in the firm through the proposal of valid suggestions, thus contributing to successful organisational change. The analysis of the behavioural involvement of frontline employees in change management has identified the existence of three groups of employees: non-suggesters, suggesters with low involvement, and suggesters with high involvement.

Regarding frontline service employees' profiles in terms of their involvement in proposing suggestions to drive change in organisations, it should be noted that gender is the only relevant individual characteristic to observe a higher implication in the change process. In terms of organisational characteristics, it can be argued that the existence of decentralised communication in the firm and the fact that the organisation practices a participative leadership dynamic, encourages the employee to suggest more and to strive for change in the organisation. As far as employee-customer interaction is concerned (immediate social environment), it can be stated that customer input clearly encourages the employee to become more involved in coming up with ideas. However, a greater focus on customer satisfaction does not imply a greater involvement of employees in making suggestions for change. Finally, looking at job characteristics, the findings reveal that the higher the level of job satisfaction of employees and their tenure in the firm, understood as the acquisition of firm specific job knowledge, the more employees will be involved in proposing ideas for improvement.

3.5. Conclusions

This work has identified profiles of frontline employees of hotel firms regarding their distinctive level of active implication in the change process. As changes and innovation are increasingly required to remain competitive in service sectors, and even survive as the recent Covid-19 pandemic has shown, understanding how effective changes are initiated and

developed is paramount. For many service firms, those changes are heavily dependent on emergent approaches based on taking advantage of their human resource knowledge from both managers and non-managerial employees. In many service industries, the employee-driven change is becoming strategic due to the competitive edge that their contributions can provide. This is especially relevant for the case of frontline employees in service organisations since their boundary spanning roles allow for obtaining direct information from customers (and often indirectly from competitors) that become the drive to unleash change and innovation dynamics.

The findings of this work have been obtained with data from the hotel industry. They entail relevant theoretical and practical implications that can be further extended to the global service sector due to workflow and dynamic similarities with some other service industries. Regarding the theoretical implications, this work has shown that frontline employees tend to be active change agents in their firms since most of them make suggestions in their service organisations. Another interesting contribution of this work is to show the relevance of the evaluation process of the changes initiated by frontline employees. In that line, it is not possible to assume that most changes proposed by frontline employees will be implemented because the filter process of those ideas tends to reject a significant amount of them. An additional line of thought to state the soundness and thoroughness of that evaluation system is the perceived success of most implemented changes, considering the high proportion of subjectively deemed successful suggestions out of the implemented ones.

Another relevant theoretical implication of this work deals with the identification of patterns that characterise the different degrees of implication in change processes by frontline employees. In that line, and based on their efforts towards firm change, frontline employees range from individuals who do not participate at all in this process, at least in a proactive way, to individuals with a very high implication. Furthermore, this study also contributes to academic literature by identifying service frontline employees' individual and perceived organisational features that have got a relevant impact on the implication for firm change. That contribution expands the academic knowledge to understand, predict and even foster organisational change in service firms.

With regard to managerial implications, the results of this study point to several recommendations. Thus, in order to increase the pool of suggestions oriented to change by frontline employees, managers should open direct channels that facilitates the proposal of suggestions. In view of the fact that female frontline employees tend to have a higher participation in the change process, managers should encourage male employees to feel free to

engage in voice behaviours. Mentorship activities should be also organised to foster knowledge transfer between more senior frontline employees who know the organisational strategy, culture, and operations and newer, more recently hired employees. As information from customers are relevant inputs for the frontline employees change-oriented comments, service encounters have to be strengthened in line with customer service goals; these encounters should create a calm atmosphere where detailed comments about the customer needs, the firm's operations and service attributes, and even those of its competitors are made. Moreover, the emphasis on sharing values on customer orientation and satisfaction could be complemented with training activities and information about the business model and strategic priorities of the firm in order to foster the proposal of suggestions from client minded frontline employees.

Considering that there are also some organisational and group characteristics that seem to be related to the frontline employees' change initiatives, managers should pay attention to certain practices that could favour them. Thus, the firm should also complement the suggestion channels with formal evaluation systems to assess the adequacy and feasibility of the proposals but adopting a decentralised communication structure that avoid the long hierarchical chain. To increase the likelihood of implementing suggestions, the firm should provide information about its strategy to frontline employees, so they could carry out an initial analysis of their suggestions and its alignment with the organisational priorities. In that same line, frontline managers should abandon authoritarian attitudes and the classical order and command leadership style and instead adopt a more participative approach to make frontline employees more comfortable in the task of suggesting potential changes in the department or in the firm. That could also increase the general work satisfaction in the frontline department, which is another aspect linked to a higher active implication with change activities.

Further research should explore the extrapolation of findings to some other frontline jobs within the hotel industry and to some other service sectors. Moreover, it would be interesting to analyse the research question in different geographical contexts to control for cultural and national differences. A qualitative approach could be another future avenue for research since it would provide an in-depth analysis of the relationship of the frontline employees' implication for change and significant aspects identified in this work. This is especially necessary in the study of the role of frontline employees' customer orientation on change initiatives.

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11. **CHAPTER IV**

12. **FRONTLINE EMPLOYEE-DRIVEN CHANGE IN HOSPITALITY
FIRMS: AN ANALYSIS OF RECEPTIONISTS' PERSONALITY ON
IMPLEMENTED SUGGESTIONS**

FRONTLINE EMPLOYEE-DRIVEN CHANGE IN HOSPITALITY FIRMS: AN ANALYSIS OF RECEPTIONISTS' PERSONALITY ON IMPLEMENTED SUGGESTIONS

Abstract

Since innovation and improvement of practices in the hospitality industry tend to be less formalised than in many other sectors, employee-driven organisational change becomes crucial for the survival and growth of hospitality firms. Frontline employees' suggestions are relevant in this process because their knowledge is partially constructed from direct contact with customers and indirectly with competitors. The employee's personality is a paramount individual characteristic that can exert a major potential influence on the proposal and implementation of those suggestions. This work discusses the impact of the personality dimensions in the Big Five model (i.e., *extraversion*, *neuroticism*, *conscientiousness*, *agreeableness*, and *openness to experience*) on suggestions generated by frontline employees and implemented in their firms. The five presented hypotheses were tested with data from 167 frontline employees from hotels in Tenerife (Spain). In addition, to complement the survey and its results, a qualitative approach based on 19 semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted with hotel receptionists was carried out.

The results show the relevance of frontline employees' extraversion, neuroticism, and lack of direction on employee-driven organisational change, as well as the positive association between older employees and a higher number of implemented suggestions compared to those proposed by younger employees.

Keywords

Employee-driven change; implemented suggestions; frontline employees; personality traits; employee voice behaviour; receptionists.

4.1. Introduction

Change is crucial for organisations operating in growing and highly competitive business environments, such as the hospitality industry. Organisational change in hotels can be a major challenge, as these organisations are forced to continuously improve and innovate to face competition and adapt to changes in customer demands or in the environment (Presbitero & Teng-Calleja, 2017). Hussain et al. (2018) established that organisational change explains

an organisation's shift from the known or current state to the unknown or aspired future state. Several authors (Bamford & Forrester, 2003; Eisenstat et al., 1990) agreed with the idea that organisational change should be driven by employees rather than by top management. According to Hussain et al. (2018), employee involvement in the change process is the most effective strategy for generating and implementing change, resulting in high quality organisational change. In the hospitality industry, frontline employees, given their constant interaction with customers, have accurate and up-to-date information about the latter's needs and expectations (Chang & Busser, 2020; Coelho et al., 2011). Thus, they can come up with good ideas for suggesting improvements in customer service or even in strategic aspects (Bettencourt & Brown, 2003).

Lipponen et al. (2008) affirmed that suggestions for change proposed by employees enable and drive the development of competitive advantages. Suggestions arise from employee creativity (Lasrado et al., 2016) or competitive intelligence activities (Kalra et al., 2020). Thus, employees' creativity and imitation efforts have been established as key sources to propose valid suggestions for improving the firm's performance. According to Fairbank and Williams (2001), firms should provide employees with knowledge sharing and exchange channels through which they are motivated to share their creative ideas, such as suggestion systems. Employees' ideas or suggestions are not always considered sufficiently creative or suited for implementation in the organisation (Khazanchi & Masterson, 2011). Thus, suggestions proposed by employees are evaluated by organisations to decide on those that will be rejected or implemented. In this part of the process the employee also plays a relevant role, because after coming up with an idea, s/he also must defend it, promote it, and convince management of its validity to be implemented (Luria et al., 2009; Nijhof et al., 2002). LePine and Van Dyne (1998) considered that employee voice behaviour involves both proposing suggestions and advocating for their implementation in the firm. The study of employees' individual characteristics is, hence, crucial.

A relevant individual aspect to orientate behaviour in different situations is personality (Agrawal et al., 2014). In fact, academic literature supports that employee voice behaviour is associated with their personality traits (e.g., Zare & Flinchbaugh, 2019). One of the most popular and widely studied taxonomies of personality traits is the Big Five or Five-Factor Model (FFM). This model classifies many personality traits into five factors that are characterised as the main dimensions of personality, namely extraversion, neuroticism, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness to experience (Goldberg, 1990; McCrae and

Costa, 1987). These personality traits can influence the employee's behaviour in several phases of the creation and approval process of suggestions.

Most of the research on organisational change in hospitality focuses on the role of managers. Relatively few studies have been conducted on the role of frontline employees as change facilitators (e.g., Chiang, 2010; Presbitero & Teng-Calleja, 2017). Academics and researchers concerned with innovation agree on the potential value of employee-driven change for long-term organisational adaptability (Bani-Melhem et al., 2018; González-González & García-Almeida, 2021). Moreover, psychology is a pillar for hospitality research (Ali et al., 2019). Several studies have considered the relationships between personality differences in employee voice (LePine & Van Dyne, 2001; Zare & Flinchbaugh, 2019) and in their innovative behaviour (Yesil & Sozbilir, 2013). Rathi and Lee (2016) stated that what needs to be studied further regarding frontline hospitality employees is the role of employee personality traits in predicting individual and organisational outcomes, such as customer satisfaction and service quality. Moreover, Carnevale et al. (2017) added that future research on innovative behaviour should focus more on the promotion and implementation of employees' ideas. Thus, this work contributes to the enrichment of the academic literature by studying the implemented suggestions of frontline employees in hospitality firms based on their personality differences and exploring the Big Five personality traits as a framework for understanding the employee's creation of suggestions and overcoming of obstacles for their implementation.

To address this research gap in the hotel sector, the Five-Factor Model of personality (McCrae, 2017; McCrae & Costa, 1987) proves to be an adequate theoretical approach to study frontline employees' personality traits in relation to the proposal and implementation of suggestions as a contribution to organisational change. Understanding how personality differences of employees in the hospitality industry play out in the proposal and implementation of suggestions is fundamental for change-oriented organisations that aim to remain competitive in the marketplace taking advantage of employee's know-how. The present study addresses frontline employees as change agents in the hotel sector, and their involvement in the organisational system to channel and implement suggestions with the identification of feasible improvements. Moreover, the potential influence of frontline employees' personality traits on their implemented suggestions has been addressed, resulting in the proposal of five hypotheses, which are examined with information obtained from receptionists. The findings of this work may lead to insightful and relevant implications.

4.2. Frontline employee's suggestions and its implementation in hospitality firms

Hospitality firms are obligated to constantly change and innovate (Hassi, 2019). Human resources play a relevant role in the capabilities that favour change and adaptation to the business environment (García-Lillo et al., 2018). Change agents can be internal, such as managers or non-managerial employees who drive and supervise the change process, or external, such as consultants from outside the company (Lunenburg, 2010). Eisenstat et al. (1990) affirmed that change must occur at the job-level and not because of top management judgements. Emergent change, in contrast to the typical planned and formal decisions, is a rapid, continuous, and informal process, that entails open-ended learning elements characterised by adaptation and experimentation, as it is closer to the frontline (Edwards et al., 2020). But knowledge-sharing behaviours are discretionary (Lombardi et al., 2019). In the hospitality industry, employee participation and engagement in this process creates an organisational environment that is conducive to successful change (Kruja et al., 2016; Tang & Tang, 2012). In fact, modern management has realised the potential value of employee constructive ideas through employee suggestion schemes (Mehrajunnisa & Jabeen, 2020), given that employee involvement has an effect on organisational outcomes (Beraldin et al., 2020).

As Chiang (2010) underlined, managers should listen to employees' suggestions, allowing them to participate in the organisational change process. In the framework of hospitality, the privileged position of frontline employees in interacting with customers allows them to gather first-hand information about them (e.g., Martinaityte et al., 2019) and it has been a traditional way of customer engagement, which is an increasingly relevant concept in the sector (Chen et al., 2021). Organisations that appreciate and encourage employee voice are better able to achieve their goals and objectives (Daley & Vasu, 2005). According to Morrison (2011), voice refers to the discretionary communication of ideas, suggestions, or concerns about work-related issues to improve the functioning of a unit or the organisation. LePine and Van Dyne (1998) specified that employee voice includes proposing suggestions for organisational improvements even when others disagree with them. Suggestion systems are used to capture good ideas generated by organisational members and encourage their participation in the organisation's decision-making process (Lasrado et al., 2016; Van Dijk & Van den Ende, 2002) and they reflect a relevant aspect of the organisational knowledge development and dissemination. These systems in hospitality firms comprise a wide array of methods, ranging from classical ones, like suggestion boxes or active comments in meetings

or to bosses privately, to online software on the intranet or corporate apps. Presbitero and Teng-Calleja (2017) established that when hotel employees can actively participate in change initiatives and monitor the change process, they will be more committed to the task. By making suggestions for change, hospitality employees can help their organisations improve products, processes, and services, and thereby adapt to a changing environment.

Frontline hotel employees play a key role in organisational effectiveness (Chen, 2019). For frontline employees to provide creative and/or even imitation-based ideas, it is necessary that they interact with customers, to understand their needs and suggestions, but also that they know the business model of hospitality firms. Only then will it be possible to propose ideas in line with the organisation's vision, values, and objectives (Viseu et al., 2020). Due to the potential low quality of some of those ideas (e.g., Khazanchi & Masterson, 2011), hospitality firms conduct a process to evaluate suggestions in order to filter out and discard those ideas that are not considered useful for implementation. According to Axtell et al. (2000), the proposal of a suggestion could be more associated with the personal attributes of employees (i.e., personality, etc.), while their adoption and deployment could be rather connected to group and firm features. Thus, it can be argued that making suggestions does not guarantee their implementation, as external factors, such as the evaluation and approval of suggestions by the organisation, are involved (Axtell et al., 2000).

As a first step for the employee is to propose a suggestion, a second step is to advocate for its acceptance and push for its implementation in the hospitality firm. According to Nijhof et al. (2002), when an employee has a novel idea, s/he must express the advantages and rationale underlying the suggestion with the right approach in order to convince decision-makers and evaluators of its potential. The employee must try to ensure that the suggestion is heeded; this involves developing the idea, proposing it to others, defending it against criticism, and dealing with the conflicts it may generate (Luria et al., 2009). As stated by Janssen (2004), employees promote their ideas by persuading potential groups and departments within the organisation that can provide support and have the power to implement the idea. In the hospitality industry, once frontline employees have come up with a potentially interesting suggestion, they have an important role to play in convincing management about its validity and feasibility to proceed with its implementation. Thus, an individual useful idea is transformed over time into a team and organisational idea, enhancing the pool of knowledge held by the hospitality firm and fostering innovative behaviours among its employees (Kim & Koo, 2017). Despite the crucial role of the hospitality organisation in the evaluation and

implementation of suggestions, there are consequently some individual characteristics of the employee suggesting the idea that can help to overcome the filter and gain the organisation's approval. Therefore, it is also interesting to analyse the implemented suggestions in hospitality companies from an individual perspective.

4.3. The frontline employee's personality and implemented suggestions in hospitality firms

Individual characteristics of frontline employees, such as their personality traits, are relevant in shaping their attitudes, behaviours, and performance at work (Buil et al., 2019). Personality is one of the factors that influence knowledge sharing in firms (Hussain et al., 2016). Agrawal et al. (2014) described personality as the set of personal characteristics that determine how individuals perceive and react to a given situation or context. Likewise, McCrae et al. (2000) stated that personality traits remain constant over time and influence individual's response to various circumstances. In service organisations, frontline employees' personality can influence customer perceptions of service quality, corporate image, and consumer loyalty, which can result, for example, in customer satisfaction and longer overnight stays. Therefore, frontline employees' personality is crucial for building a favourable image and the so-called brand personality (Ekinici & Dawes, 2009). A firm grasp of the role of employee personality is essential for hospitality organisations to manage employees more effectively and, thus, provide a better level of service (Huang, 2006; Leung & Law, 2010).

One of the most studied personality frameworks is the Big Five or Five-Factor Model (FFM) of personality, which categorises several traits into five groups comprising extraversion, neuroticism, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness to experience (Goldberg, 1990; McCrae, 2017; McCrae & Costa, 1987). The five-factor theory of personality argues that this model captures the major dimensions of personality that are common to most personality scales despite diverse origins, and at the same time each of the five factors has deep conceptual roots in psychological literature (McCrae & Costa, 1996). The study of personality allows to identify the main attitudinal, behavioural, and emotional characteristics of individuals, as well as their thought patterns (Funder, 2001; Lynn, 2021; Shahreki et al., 2020). The development of personality psychology was marked by the rise of several theoretical models, e.g., psychoanalytical, behavioural, humanistic, and linked to traits (Funder, 2001). Regarding the traits approach, there was a model of personality, the Big Five, which achieved a greater consensus, both theoretically and empirically (Funder, 2001). This model allowed the

organisation of this field of studies, which was characterised as chaotic and complex, where several constructs were proposed to measure the same aspects but using different labels (Funder, 2001). Nevertheless, the evolution of personality psychology suffered a few setbacks, some of them last until today, namely regarding the true nature of the five factors (Goldberg, 1993). For example, although there is a consensus on the number of factors, different authors have proposed different labels for them (Goldberg, 1993).

Nowadays, two different frameworks (i.e., McCrae & Costa, 1997b; Peabody & Goldberg, 1989) have reached an agreement on the number of personality factors, namely five. Costa and McCrae's (1997) five-factor model has gathered a solid empirical support across different activity domains, including the hospitality one (e.g., Kosker et al., 2019; Lynn, 2021). According to Funder (2001), these five dimensions are broad enough to measure personality, ensuring also adequate psychometric evidence. Since the 1990's, the Big Five model began to gain relevance at the workplace, with its personality dimensions being correlated with several job- and work-related outcomes, such as job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and job performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Judge et al., 2002; Kim et al., 2019). Personality assessment has also been the target of special attention. Thus, it has been observed that standardised measures (e.g., Revised NEO Personality Inventory [NEO-PI-R]; Costa & McCrae, 1995) have received greater acceptance, as they provide psychometric evidence that proves their suitability. Nevertheless, some other options have emerged recently and can evaluate the five-factor model of personality with a smaller pool of items.

Several studies have found that most employee personality traits have an important effect on their voice (e.g., LePine & Van Dyne, 2001). Thus, when employees speak out with the intention of changing current work processes or practices, they do not only propose ideas for improvement, but also focus their efforts on convincing leaders to implement change (Carnevale et al., 2017). Thus, personality can be associated with proposing and defending suggestions, and the personality traits of frontline employees of hospitality firms can exert a decisive influence in obtaining suggestions that will be implemented. Subsequently, the potential effects of the five-personality dimensions in the Big Five model regarding frontline employees and the generation of suggestions that obtain organisational approval are discussed.

4.3.1. Extraversion

The academic literature agrees that a person with a high level of extraversion tends to be sociable, dynamic, talkative, bold, optimistic, oriented to action, as well as assertive (e.g.,

Barrick & Mount, 1991). In organisations, extraverted employees are characterised by being less likely to settle for stable situations and are more prone to initiate change-oriented communication with their supervisors (e.g., Crant et al., 2011; Nikolaou et al., 2008). Compared to the other Big Five personality traits, extraversion is the most relevant feature regarding employee voice (i.e., expression of opinions and concerns by workers) (Tedone & Bruk-Lee, 2021).

Extraversion is generally associated with change behaviour (Karlsen & Langvik, 2021). According to Tedone and Bruk-Lee (2021), employees with a high degree of extraversion feel more confident making change-oriented suggestions to their supervisors. Maynes and Podsakoff (2014) stated that extraverted employees tend to express and defend their ideas and opinions about opportunities for improvement or about the organisation's current procedures, especially if it helps achieving goals. In the hospitality industry, frontline employees are in constant interaction with customers; because of this, organisations expect extraverted employees to be more customer-oriented, sociable, and friendlier, and to come up with good improvement ideas that result from successful interactions with customers (Ekinici & Dawes, 2009). Furthermore, several studies have validated that extraversion is positively related to employee voice behaviour (e.g., Crant et al., 2011; Nikolaou et al., 2008). This discussion leads to the proposal of the first hypothesis in this research:

H1: Frontline employees' extraversion is positively linked to the number of their implemented suggestions in hospitality firms.

4.3.2. Neuroticism

Neuroticism is the inability to adjust emotionally to the environment (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Kammeyer-Mueller et al. (2016) indicated that an individual with a high level of neuroticism tend to evaluate the environment as threatening and could often experience negative emotions like shame, insecurity, distress, irritability, fear, and low self-esteem, (e.g., Costa & McCrae, 1987). Raja et al. (2004) stated that neurotics do not tend to engage in relationships that require high social skills, trusting others, taking initiative, and long-term commitments.

As claimed by Sung and Choi (2009), neurotic individuals do not adapt well to changes in the workplace, they try to avoid new, uncertain, and risky situations, and are less likely to develop creative behaviours. Neurotic individuals often delay decision-making, believing that their voice will not impact or influence others (Ohana, 2016). Costa and McCrae (1992) stated

that neurotics tend to have irrational ideas, excessive impulses, and maladaptive responses. Applying Costa and McCrae's (1992) understanding to the hospitality industry, frontline employees who exhibit a high degree of neuroticism often feel insecure about their thoughts and ideas, so they are reluctant to propose suggestions for improvement or significant changes in their organisation. In this regard, LePine and Dyne (2001) showed that neuroticism tends to be negatively related to employee voice behaviour. Hence, the second research hypothesis proposed is:

H2: Frontline employees' neuroticism is negatively linked to the number of their implemented suggestions in hospitality firms.

4.3.3. Conscientiousness

According to academic literature, conscientious individuals are characterised as organised, planned, dependent, responsible, punctual, practical, self-disciplined, self-controlled, and achievement-oriented (e.g., Barrick & Mount, 1991; Costa & McCrae, 1992). Conscientious individuals are hard-working, purposeful, task-complete, and demanding at work (Agrawal et al., 2014). In addition, a high degree of conscientiousness is characterised by focussing on goals and commitment to achieve them, as well as concern for the success of the organisation (Nikolaou et al., 2008).

In the hospitality industry, conscientiousness reflects task-orientation or a need for frontline employees to satisfy customer preferences. Conscientious frontline employees are hence more likely to work hard to find solutions to customer problems and meet their needs/demands (Ashill et al., 2020). In academic literature, several authors concur with the idea that conscientious individuals are more likely to engage in voice behaviours (e.g., Avery, 2003; LePine & Dyne, 2001; Zare & Flinchbaugh, 2019). However, other authors disagree (e.g., Tedone & Bruk-Lee, 2021), arguing that conscientious individuals could avoid speaking out on work-related aspects, as they are likely to evaluate the risks involved. This could be related to knowledge hiding (Rao et al., 2021), caused by a lack of impulsiveness (Wang et al., 2020). In addition, conscientious employees have a certain orientation to be practical and proactive, so they may try to solve a given problem or situation themselves before sharing it with their supervisors, thus avoiding employee voice behaviour. Furthermore, regarding the development of creative suggestions, a negative relationship has been found between employee conscientiousness and their creative ability (Feist, 1998). The creativity levels of conscientious individuals may be negatively affected by their need for control and planning (Coelho et al.,

2018). Conscientious individuals may be then too dependent, inflexible, and rigid in their thinking, or too cautious and risk-averse, which is detrimental to creative performance (Coelho et al., 2018). Therefore, even if frontline employees propose their ideas to the organisation, they may not be novel and creative enough to be implemented. Based on this discussion, the third research hypothesis argues that:

H3: Frontline employees' conscientiousness is negatively linked to the number of their implemented suggestions in hospitality firms.

4.3.4. Agreeableness

Agreeableness is the tendency to be philanthropic (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Agreeable individuals are described as kind, trusting, generous, altruistic, cooperative, and tolerant (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Ekinci and Dawes (2009) established that agreeableness is associated with actions aimed at gaining acceptance from others. Highly agreeable individuals tend to maintain positive social relationships in the workplace (Park et al., 2021). In addition, agreeableness has been found to be a strong predictor of customer-oriented behaviours (Brown et al., 2002).

Agreeable frontline employees in the hospitality industry are expected to feel satisfied when they meet customer expectations and desires, which motivates them to produce novel and potentially useful ideas (Donavan et al., 2004; Oldham & Cummings, 1996). However, since agreeable employees place a high value on social harmony in the workplace (LePine & Van Dyne, 2001), they are unlikely to challenge current situations by making recommendations for change, as this may create social dissent and clashes with those who oppose the proposed suggestions. Agreeable individuals try to avoid conflict, so they tend to agree with the supervisor's decisions and support suggestions proposed by their colleagues (Avery, 2003; LePine & Van Dyne, 2001; Tedone & Bruk-Lee, 2021). Hence, agreeable employees are less prone to voice behaviours (e.g., Maynes & Podsakoff, 2014; Zare & Flinchbaugh, 2019). Though research about the impact of agreeableness on creativity presents mixed and inconclusive results (e.g., Coelho et al., 2018; Feist, 1998) the lack of determination to voice and defend ideas that entail change in work environments with colleagues and managers limits the likelihood of achieving implemented suggestions. Thus, the fourth research hypothesis states that:

H4: Frontline employees' agreeableness is negatively linked to the number of their implemented suggestions in hospitality firms.

4.3.5. Openness to experience

Openness to experience is characterised by intellectual curiosity, active imagination, and open-mindedness (Barrick & Mount, 1991). McCrae and Costa (1987) stated that openness to experience relates to those individuals who are proactive, have broad interests, and seek new and authentic experiences. Thus, frontline employees who are open to experience are imaginative, curious, original, intelligent, and have flexibility of thought (e.g., Ekinci & Dawes, 2009). Barrick and Mount (1991) find that employees with a high level of this trait are willing to consider information from multiple sources and are characterised by attitudes towards learning experiences. According to McCrae and Costa (1997a), people who are open to experience develop a variety of new ideas that they are willing and able to put forward, thus challenging the status quo.

In service organisations, frontline employees who are open to experience are likely to meet customer needs better than those employees who are less imaginative and novel in addressing customer problems (Ashill et al., 2020). McCrae (1987) stated that individuals who are open to experience can ‘think outside the box’, this results in the generation of novel and useful ideas. In fact, openness to experience tends to be viewed the most relevant personality factor in the Big Five model in predicting employee creativity (Zhang et al., 2020). Moreover, individuals with a high level of openness to experience value the opportunity to express their creative ideas and strive for change (Avery, 2003). Hence, a positive relationship between openness to experience and employee voice behaviour is expected (LePine & Van Dyne, 2001). Consistent with these arguments, the fifth research hypothesis defined is:

H5: Frontline employees’ openness to experience is positively linked to the number of their implemented suggestions in hospitality firms.

4.4. Methodology

To achieve the objective of the work, a mixed method based both on a quantitative approach and a qualitative one was used. Regarding the quantitative approach, frontline hotel employees from hotels located in the northern part of Tenerife were surveyed. Tenerife is one of the Canary Islands (Spain) and this archipelago is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Europe (e.g., Ahani et al., 2019). Apart from receiving the highest number of visitors on the Canary Islands, Tenerife was the island with the highest number of hotels (243) before the Covid-19 pandemic, followed by Gran Canaria with 180 hotels (ISTAC, 2021). Though it is not a homogenous industry, De Andreis (2020) indicated that the tourism sector of the Canary

Islands has reacted to several crisis scenarios in the past with particularly effective answers. Moreover, innovation is fostered by the island government in its tourism strategy (Turismo de Tenerife, 2017). Tenerife is a destination with a high level of hotel competition (Ropero-García, 2006), and competition is expected to stimulate change to adapt to the varying conditions of competitor moves.

This work has focused on receptionists as change agents in the hotel sector, as their constant interaction with customers provides them with valuable information about guests' needs and preferences, which can be used to propose improvements in the organisation (e.g., Engen & Magnusson, 2015). Hotel receptionists in front-office departments are important frontline employees in hospitality organisations. Thus, this kind of employees has been frequently chosen as adequate study subjects in academic analyses to represent frontline organisational members, as the works by Patah et al. (2009) or Pinto et al. (2020) show. The population of this study was composed of the receptionists of hotels with a category of three, four and five stars located in the northern part of Tenerife in 2019. Turismo de Tenerife (2019) and tourist accommodation metasearch engines provided information on the number of high-end hotels in the area, reaching 77 hotels. After direct contact with each hotel, the study's population comprised 484 receptionists.

The survey was based on a questionnaire. The dependent variable was measured as the total number of suggestions that the receptionist proposed during the previous month, and which had been implemented. This item was included and revised as part of a research project in which eight experts were interviewed for the definition of variables of interest. To measure the Big Five personality traits, the scale from Rammstedt and John's (2007) was applied, and its items were presented in a 7-point Likert-type format. This measure allows a quick assessment of the five-factor model based on the theoretical framework of Costa and McCrae (1997). The 10-item version of the Big Five Inventory (BFI-10; Rammstedt & John, 2007) aimed to evaluate these dimensions rapidly, while maintaining adequate psychometric properties, e.g., at the validity and reliability level. Regarding validity, this instrument showed convergent validity with the most known measure to address the Big Five according to the model of Costa and McCrae (1997), the NEO-PI-R.

The survey fieldwork consisted of personal visits to the 77 high-end hotels in the northern area of the selected destination, briefly presenting the study to be performed to the head of reception or the receptionist in charge at the time and asking for collaboration in filling out the questionnaires. In most hotels the response was positive, but 12 hotels refused to

participate. A self-selection sampling was used: For every hotel in the population the reception manager or equivalent position was provided with questionnaires and asked to pass one to each receptionist in his/her hotel, including all the front office shifts. A few days after the distribution of the questionnaires, the completed questionnaires were collected personally. The fieldwork resulted in 167 valid responses, which composed the final sample. The rate of responses is hence 34.5% and the margin of error is 6.14% with a confidence level of 95%. A basic description of the individuals in the sample shows that they are mostly females (58.7%), with an average age of 36 years old and an average of 10 years of experience as receptionists.

Regarding the qualitative approach, semi-structured interviews were conducted to delve into the quantitative findings. Based on the results previously obtained in the quantitative analysis, several open-ended questions were designed to allow respondents to express their views on why certain personality traits are positively or negatively associated with the suggestions made by receptionists and considered suitable by the company to be implemented. Elo et al. (2014) assert that in qualitative research, those individuals who best represent or are familiar with the research topic should comprise the sample. Therefore, in-depth interviews were conducted with 19 hotel receptionists from the north of Tenerife. The interviews were conducted in Spanish by video-call or face-to-face sessions. These interviews had a duration of between 11 and 47 minutes, with an average of 23 minutes, and were audio-recorded.

4.5. Results and discussion

In this study, the main variable to be considered was the number of suggestions that employees proposed and had been successfully implemented by their organisations. The number of suggestions by employees implemented during the last month in the hospitality firms considered are shown in *Table 4.1*. Most respondents (52.2%) did not propose any suggestions that were implemented; however, a large percentage of receptionists (39.5%) proposed one or two suggestions in their respective hotels during the last month that were approved by their company. It is interesting to note that the sample included a small number of respondents (4.2%) who are high contributors of valid, accepted suggestions (more than four per month).

Table 4.1. Implemented suggestions by the employee

	No. of implemented suggestions			
	0	1–2	3–4	>4
Number of employees	88 (52.7%)	66 (39.5%)	6 (3.6%)	7 (4.2%)

Source: own elaboration

Table 4.2. shows the Pearson correlation coefficients between the dependent variable (implemented suggestions) and the variables related to the employees' five personality traits. Mean values were computed for each personality dimension. A multiple regression analysis was conducted to statistically test the research hypotheses.

Table 4.2. Correlation matrix for dependent and explanatory variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Implemented suggestions	1					
2. Extraversion	0.108	1				
3. Neuroticism	0.208**	-0.116	1			
4. Conscientiousness	-0.223**	0.195*	-0.305**	1		
5. Agreeableness	-0.096	0.197*	-0.239**	0.392**	1	
6. Openness to experience	-0.016	0.030	-0.192*	-0.105	0.126	1

* $p < 0.10$; ** $p < 0.05$

Source: own elaboration

Table 4.3. presents the most significant aspects of the regression model. Respondent's gender and age were included as control variables. The F-value indicate the explanatory impact of the independent variables; consequently, the independent variables improve the fit of the sample data and it points out the relevance of personality on implemented suggestions. No multicollinearity problems were detected since no VIF value is higher than 10.

Table 4.3. Results of the multiple regression analysis

Independent variables	Standardized coefficients Beta	t-test	Sig.
Extraversion	0.163	2.119	0.036**
Neuroticism	0.145	1.776	0.078*
Conscientiousness	-0.205	-2.364	0.019**
Agreeableness	-0.015	-0.174	0.862
Openness to experience	-0.031	-0.393	0.695
Age	0.124	1.537	0.126
Gender (female)	0.120	1.535	0.127
$F=3.066$ (0.005)**			
$R^2=0.119$			
Adjusted $R^2=0.080$			

* $p < 0.10$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$

Source: own elaboration

An overview of the results indicates that there are three significant independent variables that explain the implemented suggestions that have been proposed by hotel receptionists. These significant variables are extraversion, neuroticism (linked to restless

individuals), and lack of direction. Consequently, H1 and H3 are accepted, H2 is rejected and H4 and H5 are not accepted.

The in-depth interviews corroborate the results of the quantitative study to a greater extent. Thus, regarding the receptionist's extraversion, most interviewees supported their relevance. One of them indicated that extraverted receptionists tend to "obtain more insights from customers about their needs and preferences or about what the hotel's competitors are doing". Another interviewee mentioned that extraverted receptionists "express themselves more easily and make their ideas known". An additional interesting statement taken from the interviews was that "extraverted receptionists have a greater ability to argue and defend their ideas, thus convincing management and getting their suggestions implemented". As for the receptionists' neuroticism, interviewees showed their support for the findings. One of them noted that "neurotic receptionists are extremely sensitive to situations that cause them anger or annoyance, so they anticipate this and strive to identify faults or possible opportunities for improvement in processes". Another interesting response was that "when neurotic receptionists become obsessed with a problem, they take responsibility for solving it themselves and do not rest until they have done so". Regarding conscientiousness, one of the interviewees indicated that conscientious receptionists "focus on the rules and procedures already established, internalising them, and becoming experts in planning and control, reaching a state of order from which they do not want to leave". Another one stated that "conscientious receptionists do not dare to come up with ideas because they do not allow themselves to fail, that is why they do not take risks", in contrast to the receptionists who show lack of direction.

On the other hand, interviewees also gave their feedback on the variables that were not significant in the regression analysis. Thus, regarding the receptionists' agreeableness, one of them pointed out that "agreeable receptionists may avoid coming up with ideas in case they are considered 'bad' or 'invalid' by management or colleagues". Likewise, several interviewees claimed that these receptionists always try to please everyone, so they don't want to go into aspects that generate conflict. Finally, the openness to experience of receptionists was a topic that generated a lot of interest from interviewees. One statement worth noting was that "receptionists who are open to experience often come up with a lot of ideas, but they tend not to filter them or analyse whether it is possible to implement them in the company". Another interviewee added that "they may propose crazy suggestions that are far removed from the reality of the company", and that "they may focus on quantity, but not on the quality of what

they suggest”. Thus, the results of the in-depth interviews demonstrate that what was previously developed in the work is in line with the reality or situation of hotel receptionists.

The findings of this work indicate that the extraversion of frontline employees is positively linked to the suggestions implemented in firms in the hospitality sector. Extraversion is positively related to change behaviour (e.g., Karlsen & Langvik, 2021). This idea is solid in the scientific literature as several studies stated that extraverted individuals find the opportunity through voice behaviour to express themselves and influence their environment (e.g., Avery, 2003). Furthermore, extraverts are prone to take risks and often propose change-oriented suggestions to modify and improve the *status quo* (Tedone & Bruk-Lee, 2021). On the other hand, the results show that frontline employees’ conscientiousness is negatively associated with the implementation of their suggestions. Conscientious individuals do not tend to be open to new thoughts or ideas, which is detrimental to their contribution of useful suggestions for implementation (Coelho et al., 2018). Thus, individuals who exhibit a low level of conscientiousness or a lack of direction could have more diverse thoughts and take risks, which would foster the contribution of original and valid suggestions for implementation. Highly conscientious employees’ underlying lack of impulsiveness (e.g., Wang et al., 2020) could be also a reason for knowledge hiding (Rao et al., 2021) since they are in a position to have a longer period of time to analyse the potential rewards of knowledge disclosure.

With regard to the unexpected results in this study, employees' neuroticism seems to be positively associated with the implementation of their suggestions. Inozu et al. (2020) indicate that neuroticism is a personality dimension that is closely related to symptoms of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), whereby it may lead to compulsive behaviours. Likewise, an employee with a high level of neuroticism may become obsessed with a problem, focus on it and remain persistent and motivated until it is effectively solved, and innovation is achieved (Brattström et al., 2018). Employee perseverance is associated with finding solutions to problems (Vele & Toader, 2016).

Furthermore, results show that there is no significant association between employees' agreeableness or openness to experience and their implemented suggestions in hospitality firms. Despite the negative relationship hypothesised in this work, agreeableness can positively affect organisational citizenship behaviour in the hospitality sector (e.g., Park et al., 2021) where suggestions for improvement is a relevant element. Moreover, leadership can influence the effect of employee personality on several dimensions of performance including organisational citizenship behaviour (Aboramadan et al., 2020; Yang et al., 2020), and those

external factors could become more salient for certain personality traits like openness to experience (e.g., Zhang et al., 2020).

6. Conclusion

This work has analysed the influence of frontline employee personality on organisational change in hospitality firms through the proposal and defence of valid suggestions. Hospitality firms are proactive in producing innovations or forced to adapt their strategies and operations to competitive/contextual pressures. Both paths require organisational change. In line with modern approaches based on talent and knowledge-based management, these changes can stem from employees who have operational and competitive knowledge to suggest modifications in practices and even strategic orientations. Employee-driven change is even more solid if the underlying ideas are originated in employees in contact with customers and thus indirectly with competitive dynamics. However, for frontline employee-driven change to happen, two different processes are required: the proposal of a suggestion by frontline employees, and the evaluation and positive decision about the implementation of that suggestion. Though the role of the worker in the first process is clear, his/her participation in the analysis and communication of the foundations regarding the suggestion is also decisive in the second process. Personality traits of certain employees become then relevant in the achievement of a competitive positioning of hospitality firms through the generation and implementation of organisational changes. The framework provided by the Five-Factor Model of personality provides a solid theoretical approach to address the study of frontline employees' personality traits regarding the proposal and analysis of suggestions as an input for organisational change.

This work has shown that frontline employees' extraversion, neuroticism, and lack of direction are relevant to implement an employee-driven change strategy in hospitality firms. These findings entail interesting theoretical implications. The study of novel ideas and behaviours has focused on the importance of states, i.e., phenomena that are momentary and easily modified (e.g., emotions; Jaussi et al., 2017), or motivated behaviours (e.g., what types of motivation lead to higher creativity levels; Jesus et al., 2013). This study proposed a different perspective by considering the role of personality traits, which are stable and durable, in the occurrence of employee suggestions. Frontline hotel employees constantly deal with the demands of colleagues, managers, and customers, so it is crucial to understand how they transform these demands into creative behaviours. This transformation from input (i.e.,

demands) into output (i.e., novel ideas) is closely related to employee personality, since there are traits that predispose workers to propose suggestions that improve work processes, which can act as catalysts to enhance hospitality firm performance. In addition, this work also contributes to the development of the literature on employee-driven change in hospitality firms by outlining the need for considering not only the change proposal but also the evaluation and implementation decision of the change. Despite the emphasis on creativity and idea proposal, the activities leading to idea evaluation and acceptance are also paramount in the change processes of hospitality firms. Moreover, another major implication of this work is that an employee's personality should not be neglected when analysing successful strategies to understand and foster change in hospitality firms from the individual level of analysis. Thus, the line of thought that defends those individual factors are only needed for obtaining suggestions and that organisational factors are more important in the evaluation and potential acceptance of those suggestions (e.g., Axtell et al., 2000) is further developed. The intervention of the author of the suggestion and his/her personality can be paramount in the communication and analytical process that the suggestion must go through after its proposal and before a decision is made about its validity and feasibility. This has also been hinted by Huang et al. (2020) in their discussion of the positive relationship between psychological traits and several performance dimensions in hotels. The tenet that personality traits are also required for increasing employee-driven change and innovation outputs in hospitality organisations beyond classical individual characteristics such as creativity, knowledge, and motivation is hence strengthened. This theoretical contribution can be made going beyond the recent statement by Al-Hawari et al. (2021) regarding the limited empirical research available to verify the link between frontline employees' personality traits and innovative behaviours in the hospitality sector. A final theoretical contribution lies in the need for observing the influence of each individual personality trait (and not of personality as a whole) on desired outputs of hospitality organisational processes, since only some of them exert a relevant impact on dynamics, such as change and innovation.

Regarding practical implications, managers in hospitality firms should bear in mind that frontline employees can be a relevant source of organisational change through the implementation of their own ideas. Though access to managerial knowledge possessed by organisational managers and external agents such as consultants can be also relevant, the specific position of frontline employees as boundary spanners due to their frequent and often intense contacts with customers makes their knowledge a valuable driver for obtaining and

implementing ideas that reinforce or advance the hospitality firm's strategic positioning. Another major practical implication of this work is that managers should increase and take advantage of several psychological traits in their staff as they seem to be related to more effective employee-driven change. Stemming from those practical implications, several recommendations can be proposed for human resource managers, general managers, and managers of operational front-of-the-house departments. Firstly, the selection process to hire employees should consider the evaluation of psychological traits not only for the fit of job candidates but also for the positive effect that employees' extraversion, neuroticism, and lack of direction have on organisational change and innovation. Moreover, the suggestion system should take a 'soft approach' with respect to the analysis and evaluation of suggestions. In that line, a two-step evaluation process would present clear advantages since it would allow for a first step with an informal meeting with fewer attendants and mostly with the presence of low-ranked managers, preferably supervisors of the proposing employee. This first meeting would serve as a voice channel for the employee to express the competitive foundations of the idea and comment on its validity, adequacy, and feasibility. The friendlier environment of this first meeting or analysis compared to formal meetings would tend to avoid problematic barriers for introverted individuals, bad impressions caused by the lack of direction of employees with a low level of conscientiousness/preparation, and tensions that a neurotic individual could not stand so easily. In addition, teamwork problem solving and training in social skills to overcome the problems of introversion in a work context, or creativity seminars to improve the skills of very organised employees could also become positive drivers for employee-driven change. Furthermore, considering extraversion and adaptability as selection criteria for frontline employees to be transferred to converted outlets/establishments requiring adapted change to smooth the process after hospitality acquisitions and mergers could be also very helpful.

The study has some limitations that must be considered. The use of a questionnaire to gather the data limited the knowledge of in-depth personality dynamics. Another aspect to consider is that the quantitative results have been obtained from data drawn from a small sample; it could be a question of concern, though Claudy (1978) specifically analyses research on psychological aspects and indicates that many applied studies employ multiple regression analysis for examining determinants from relatively small samples in the social and behavioural sciences. Moreover, the geographical context where the empirical approach has been undertaken poses barriers for extrapolation of the results. In that same line, and despite the relevance of the front-office department in many hotels, the focus on receptionists could

also limit the generalisation of findings to other frontline employees of hospitality firms; research on other employees in this category could be interesting to shed light in potential particularities regarding the provided service, the length of contact with customers, or the nature of the encounter (e.g., physical distance, customers who can choose the serving employee versus those who are forced to be assisted by a certain one). Another limitation is related to the use of the five-factor model. Although this model is the most consensual in personality psychology, there is no total agreement on the number of personality dimensions nor regarding their labelling (Goldberg, 1993).

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13. **CHAPTER V**

14. **FRONTLINE EMPLOYEE-DRIVEN INNOVATION THROUGH
SUGGESTIONS IN HOSPITALITY FIRMS: THE ROLE OF THE
EMPLOYEE'S CREATIVITY, KNOWLEDGE, AND MOTIVATION**

FRONTLINE EMPLOYEE-DRIVEN INNOVATION THROUGH SUGGESTIONS IN HOSPITALITY FIRMS: THE ROLE OF THE EMPLOYEE'S CREATIVITY, KNOWLEDGE, AND MOTIVATION

Abstract

As most hospitality firms turn to informal processes to create knowledge, employee-driven innovation becomes paramount in the sector, especially the one generated from frontline employees' suggestions. The work studied creativity, knowledge, and motivation as internal aspects of frontline hospitality employees for making innovative suggestions. The study of these three broad aspects leads to the presentation of six research hypotheses after discussing the potential influence of six specific factors on the generation of innovative suggestions; those factors are creativity, work experience and formal education (knowledge), along with internal motivation, direct rewards, and the perception of the validity of the suggestion system (motivation). Those hypotheses are tested with data from 153 front office employees from hotels in Tenerife (Spain).

Results show the relevance of frontline employees' creativity, work experience and perception that suggestions will be analysed and heeded, along with the positive effect of working in leisure hotels (versus business ones).

Keywords

Suggestions; frontline employees; employee-driven innovation; creativity; innovation ability; motivation to innovate.

5.1. Introduction

In today's highly competitive environment, the capacity for innovation is paramount for hospitality firms to compete successfully (Martin-Rios & Ciobanu, 2019). Innovation in service companies, and especially in hospitality firms, is more oriented towards informal sources of knowledge (Bogers & Lhuillery, 2006; Den Hertog et al., 2011), such as employee-driven innovation. Service employees in contact with customers often acquire exclusive, valuable, and context-specific knowledge, which is often not possessed by managers (Kesting & Ulhøi, 2010). Thus, firms that promote employee-driven innovation will have a higher innovation performance, as it will stimulate cooperation between employees and managers (Hansen et al., 2017). To this end, firms must develop channels of knowledge distribution and

exchange, such as suggestion systems, through which employees can share their creative ideas and are motivated to do so (Fairbank & Williams, 2001; Akram et al., 2011).

Presenza et al. (2019) highlight how innovation is gaining attention internationally as a critical issue for contemporary tourism. Kim and Koo (2017) recently found that hotel employees' innovative behaviour influences their job performance. When a company includes innovative and creative competencies in the strategic decision-making approach of the firm, it becomes the main driver of its success (Presenza & Messeni Petruzzelli, 2019). In fact, innovativeness is positively associated with company performance in the hospitality industry (Tajeddini & Trueman, 2012).

McLeod et al. (2010) defend that knowledge sharing among network members could drive innovation behaviour in hospitality firms. According to Hon (2011), one way to address the current challenges in the hospitality industry is to take into account the creative ideas put forward by employees, as these can contribute to innovation, productivity and the long-term success of hospitality companies. In fact, the study and management of the knowledge exchange between employees and their hospitality firm are considered essential due to the high turnover of employees (Yang, 2004). Employees in hospitality firms often contribute original and valuable ideas to better meet customer needs or better carry out internal tasks, which may involve creating or improving products, services, or processes in the organisation (Zhou & Shalley, 2003). Hotel chains are increasingly studying and implementing different suggestion systems to identify innovative contributions by their employees that have an impact on customer satisfaction or the organisational financial performance (Hinojosa, 2014).

Every organisation depends daily on the citizenship behaviour of its employees including acts of cooperation, helpfulness, and suggestions (Smith et al., 1983). Based on Li and Zhou's work (2019), a suggestion is a behaviour that aims at improving the environment and proposes constructive language to organisations or individuals through changing ways. Employee suggestion is a "technical, organisational or financial improvement that would introduce changes in the practices and solutions applied so far, which would benefit the company" (Szewczyk, 2019, p. 54). Brem and Voigt (2007) declare that suggestion systems have been used to include employees in the innovation process for decades. Innovative work behaviour is an individual's behaviour "that aims to achieve the initiation and intentional introduction (within a work role, group or organisation) of new and useful ideas, processes, products or procedures" (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2008, p. 5). Innovative suggestions are a measure of the employee's innovative behaviour (Choi et al., 2016). Thus, an employee's

innovative suggestion is an explicit contribution by an individual that provides an improvement in the organisational products, processes, or activities through any internal communication mechanism. Hinojosa (2014) documents the efforts of several Spanish hotel chains to 'listen' to employees, especially to those in direct contact with the customer, and obtain their suggestions, such as Meliá Hotels (through employee meetings supervised by a manager or "idea contests") or NH Hotel Group (with the NH Idea programme or corporate blogs). Examples of innovative suggestions in those programmes are invoice standardisation for less complex processing, the creation of a centralised stock system for products consumed in the hotels in search of more efficient management of the same, or the implementation of a certain award system in the customer loyalty programme based on customer expenses or overnights. The leading French chain Accor developed *Innovaccor*, an online tool to promote innovation among its employees. This tool allows staff to propose ideas, develop creativity and take initiatives in order to apply the best practices in the organisation. During 2011 the Accor Group implemented 2,000 ideas suggested by its employees (Hassanien & Dale, 2013).

Axtell et al. (2000) state that making suggestions is more related to the individual characteristics of the employee, while their implementation is undoubtedly linked to the characteristics of the team and the organisation. Amabile provides the theoretical foundations of the individual approach to understand the formulation of suggestions in the work context when she addresses the social psychology of creativity. In that line, this author presents the three elements of creative performance: creativity-relevant skills, domain-relevant skills, and task motivation. Thus, employee creativity, knowledge and motivation are considered relevant factors in making innovative suggestions (Amabile, 1983) and hospitality firms could take advantage of those resources for their innovation strategy. Suggestions are the results of employees' creativity, which leads to innovations driven by them (Lasrado et al., 2016). Not only does creativity play an essential role in generating innovations, but it is also fundamental to consider that individuals are knowledge holders, with their prior knowledge being one of the most important inputs in the processes of creating new knowledge and innovation (Holcomb et al., 2009). Furthermore, it is essential to consider that what drives the individual to act is his/her motivation (Locke & Latham, 2004). Thus, firms use the suggestion system to motivate employees to contribute new and useful ideas for the benefit of the organisation, turning creative ideas into potentially valuable innovations (Dunn & Lloyd, 1997; Fairbank & William, 2001).

Despite research conducted on the importance of organisational conditions for the development of frontline employee-driven innovation in service companies (e.g., Sørensen et al., 2013), authors such as Høytrup (2012) consider that what needs to be studied in greater depth in regarding employee-driven innovation is the search for new resources and innovation drivers. Academic research has tended to focus mainly on the generation of ideas and has neglected the study of knowledge exchange between employees and the organisation, especially the fact that employees have the ability and willingness to share their innovative suggestions, which is fundamental for innovation to occur (Axtell et al., 2000). Moreover, Martin-Rios and Ciobanu (2019) empirically find that the patterns of innovation in hospitality differ from other sectoral activities, and Gomezelj (2016) observes that innovative activities in tourism industries are still quite limited. Employees are a relevant aspect of innovation success in the hospitality sector (Ottenbacher, 2007). For Enz and Siguaw (2003), innovations are significantly affected by outstanding hospitality individuals. In that line, Slåtten and Mehmetoglu (2011) consider that frontline employees in the hospitality industry and their characteristics are paramount in the innovative behaviour of hospitality firms.

Attempting to bridge this research gap in the hospitality industry and based on the theoretical foundations of the individual factors in the model of creative performance formulated by Amabile (1983), this work aims to analyse the role played by frontline employees' creativity, knowledge, and motivation to suggest organisational changes as a basis for employee-driven innovation in hospitality firms. The work studies the employee from an individual perspective as an informal source of innovation in hotel firms and their participation in the company's suggestion system. The potential influence of the frontline employee's creativity, knowledge and motivation on innovative suggestions is discussed, leading to the presentation of six research hypotheses. These hypotheses are tested with data collected from a survey of hotel receptionists.

5.2. Employee-driven innovation in hospitality services: suggestions as a key element of informal innovation

In the context of services, innovation refers to “the changes affecting one or more elements of one or more vectors of characteristics (both technical and service) or of competences” (Gallouj & Savona, 2009). Changes that add novelty to the service in any dimension lie at the base of service innovation. Most innovations in the service industry tend

to be a mixture of major and minor changes and adaptations of existing services/products (Den Hertog, 2000).

Lush and Nambisan (2015) indicate that the body of scholarly research on service innovation has grown considerably, probably because service innovation is increasingly observed as the main engine of differentiation and growth (Helkkula et al., 2018). García-Villaverde et al. (2017) add that the study of innovation in the hospitality and tourism industry does not have a long tradition in comparison with manufacturing industries. However, innovation in the hospitality industry has generated a great deal of interest in recent times and has become a fairly broad field of research. As Kallmuenzer (2018) points out, the study of innovation in hospitality firms has so far mainly focused on investigating the role of entrepreneurship (e.g., Jogaratnam & Tse, 2006), innovation as a growth engine for companies (e.g., Ottenbacher, 2007), or the influence of company characteristics and markets on innovation (e.g., Martínez-Ros & Orfila-Sintes, 2012). Kallmuenzer's work (2018) shows that innovation in hospitality companies is driven by four main actors: entrepreneurs and employees are the main innovation drivers as internal company actors, while guests and competitors are the external innovation drivers. In their analysis of the streams of hospitality innovation, Chang et al. (2011) outline the relevance of the human resource management practices to innovation in hospitality firms and address the study of frontline employees as example of important topic across the three main research streams that they identify: critical procedures to develop innovation, typology of hospitality innovation, and factors to enhance innovation in the sector. According to Babakus et al. (2017) frontline employees in the service sector serve as a critical link between an organization's internal operations and external customers and play a crucial role in analysing customer needs that can lead to innovation initiatives and improved customer relations. This highlights the importance of studying employee-driven innovation. Hospitality literature indicates that with increasing competition, product and service innovations have become priorities and frontline employees are seen as key players in making these innovations happen (Schuckert et al., 2018). In their final remarks, Chang et al. (2011) connect the study of frontline employee's suggestions and innovative ideas with the achievement of hospitality firm innovation and call for more future studies on the topic. Despite the popular research trend on service innovation and the key role of employee contributions in improving service quality, only a few recent studies specifically address frontline employees as innovation drivers in service enterprises (Schuckert et al., 2018). In that line, Slåtten & Mehmetoglu (2011) mention the lack of research related to hospitality innovation on the individual level, and more recently

Kallmuenzer (2018) has observed that the study of innovation drivers in hospitality companies has been neglected. Hence, understanding hospitality frontline employees' innovative suggestions is an aspect that needs further academic exploration.

A relevant taxonomy for the development of studies on organisational innovation is the source/method to generate innovation. Small and medium-sized firms tend to carry out their innovative activities without specific financial and managerial resources and, in particular, without formalised procedures (Santarelli & Sterlacchini, 1990). Thus, a distinction can be made between formal or planned innovation and informal or unintentional one. For Gallouj and Savona (2009), the changes to generate service innovations can be planned/intentional or unintentional. The planned/intentional approach would be based on managerial systems with clear goals to come up with novel solutions, such as the outputs of formal research and development activities; the unintentional approach has an emerging nature based on an inertial learning process by the agents involved. Santarelli and Sterlacchini (1990) indicate that the concept of informal innovation is based on knowledge generation outside specific research and development departments and focused on design, production, and sales activities. Moosa and Panurach (2008) narrow that approach and underline that formal innovation is usually generated by the marketing or R&D department, while frontline employees generate informal innovation. The analysis of the innovation process in the hospitality industry shows the relevance of informal innovation since innovation activities tend to be less formalised, less explicitly managed and less often budgeted as compared to manufacturing sectors (Den Hertog et al., 2011).

The central elements of informal innovation are the employees and their knowledge, outside formal structures created to generate new knowledge such as specific departments or projects, since organisations are increasingly aware that their employees have great potential to develop innovation (Hansen et al., 2017). Kesting and Ulhøi (2010) define employee-driven innovation as the creation and implementation of new ideas, products and processes that originate from an employee or the interaction of a group of employees, who are not entrusted with the task of developing innovation. In this sense, employee-driven innovation consists of employee initiatives that are recognised and supported by managers, and it can be initiated without a clear goal of innovation. Thus, employee-driven innovation is not strictly constrained ex-ante by managerial perspectives. According to Radu and Vasile (2007), employees in the hospitality industry represent a source of value for the innovation process and, therefore, for the creation of competitive advantages.

The management literature has emphasised the relevance of the personal interaction between customers and employees on the frontline of service firms (Bettencourt & Gwinner, 1996). Frontline employees are paramount to delivering and providing quality services, building customer relationships, and increasing customer satisfaction (Singh, 2000). Additionally, these employees are also in a privileged position to detect customer needs, obtain information about competitors, identify potential resources and capabilities that the organisation can develop, and process knowledge to innovate. In fact, Moosa and Panurach (2008) recommend that organisations should encourage decentralised innovation and emphasise the role of frontline employees since it is they who are responsible for delivering products and services and are in direct contact with customers. In particular, employees in the hospitality industry have closer contact with customers than in many other industries (Grissemann et al., 2013). Frontline employees in the sector play a key role in developing innovation because of the simultaneity of production and consumption and the importance of human factors in service delivery (Ottenbacher & Harrington, 2007). Thus, employees know first-hand the specific demands and preferences of customers, which allows them to create new ideas, processes, products, or services to adapt the service to the consumer (Hallin & Marnburg, 2008). According to Chang et al. (2011), the interaction between employees and customers greatly favours service quality and innovation in hotels. Research shows that many innovative ideas in the hospitality industry are produced by employees in contact with the customer, who in turn implement and examine them (e.g., Ottenbacher, 2007; Ottenbacher & Harrington, 2009).

The role of frontline employees in innovation is further emphasised from some streams of recombinatory search literature that defends the need for employing external knowledge sources in the innovation process (Ardito & Messeni Petruzzelli, 2017). This is in line with the central tenets of the open innovation paradigm (Chesbrough, 2003). Thus, the inflow of knowledge from external sources such as customers or competitors can complement internal knowledge creation efforts (Ardito et al., 2018). Moreover, due to the interaction with customers, frontline employees would be in a position to obtain an adequate level of absorptive capacity regarding such external knowledge. As Nataliccio et al. (2018) indicate, the lack of absorptive capacity in the firm's human resources could hamper the innovation process in this context. Moreover, and based on the ideas of Messeni Petruzzelli (2008) the proximity dimensions between frontline employees and customers could foster the effective knowledge inflows in the firm. In the hospitality context the close physical proximity between a frontline

employee and a customer is due to the inseparability of production and consumption in some services. At the same time, the more distant knowledge/technological proximity expected between these two agents would be eased due to the nature of the direct service encounter that facilitates the transfer of knowledge via face-to-face interaction since it is a rich communication mechanism (Daft & Lengel, 1986; García-Almeida & Bolívar Cruz, 2020).

The success of employee-driven innovation lies primarily in the development of a fair and transparent process that encourages, captures, and reviews the ideas suggested by employees (Hansen et al., 2017). Employee involvement in the development of innovation brings with it the need for good and clear communication between employees and managers. In fact, managers may be involved in employee-driven innovation because they coordinate and systematise the process initiated by employees and because they foster those initiatives by inviting employees to participate (Høyrup, 2012). For Akram et al. (2011), organisations must develop channels of knowledge distribution and exchange through which employees can share their ideas. According to Yang (2010), hotels can boost their organisational effectiveness by promoting knowledge sharing among employees. Kim and Lee (2010) point out that this exchange of knowledge between employees is deeply linked to innovation in hotels as it encourages the development of creative ideas by employees. Likewise, the coordination of employees and their joint creative thinking is essential to increase customer satisfaction and service quality (Bouncken, 2002).

One of the most critical organisational channels in providing employees with the opportunity to share their innovative ideas is the implementation of suggestion systems. According to van Dijk and van den Ende (2002), suggestion systems consist of administrative procedures and infrastructures to collect, judge, and compensate ideas that are conceived by the employees of the organisation. Employee suggestion systems play a crucial role for organisations that want to be more innovative and stand out in the marketplace (Buech et al., 2010). Du Plessis et al. (2008) consider suggestion systems as tools that encourage employees to think creatively and innovatively about their work and everything around them, thus generating ideas that are beneficial to the organisation and for which the employee receive recognition. In the case of frontline employees, and according to their literature-based meta-analysis, Storey et al. (2016) indicate that systems must be in place to manage the knowledge that innovation driven by customer engagement generates. In the hospitality industry, the quality of service depends considerably on the ability of companies to obtain, develop, collect, and distribute knowledge assets (Bouncken, 2002). For individual knowledge to be converted

into organisational knowledge that forms valuable intangible assets in tourism firms (Yang & Wan, 2004), suggestion systems become relevant. Thus, when hospitality companies identify and leverage their organisational knowledge, they become more dynamic and achieve higher business performance (Baloglu et al., 2010).

5.3. Ability and motivation as potential determinants of employee-driven innovation

Though it is crucial to outline that there are organisational characteristics which make up the relevant context that may foster or hamper innovation processes (Høyrup, 2012; Sørensen et al., 2013), Axtell et al. (2000) empirically find that the suggestion of innovative ideas is linked to individual factors. Regarding the individual factors that determine the formulation of suggestions, this work is based on the theoretical model presented by Amabile (1983). That model addresses the elements of creative production through three major components: creativity-relevant skills, domain-relevant skills, and task motivation. This author views creativity skills as the capacity to produce work that is considered creative; moreover, domain-relevant skills include knowledge and familiarity with the specific domain for the innovation; and task motivation deals with the attitudes towards the task and perceptions of self-motivation for undertaking the task.

The theoretical foundations of the use of Amabile's model (1983) in the suggestion context is reinforced with advances in the behavioural performance of actions. Vroom (1964) explained performance in an activity as a function of the employee's ability and motivation. Thus, the two significant aspects concerning the execution of actions whether by individuals, groups, etc., are the ability and willingness to carry out these actions (García-Almeida et al., 2012). Consequently, frontline employees' creativity, constructed knowledge, and motivation could be relevant factors in making innovative suggestions. These factors are explained below.

5.3.1. Creativity as a process-based ability for innovative suggestions

The successful implementation of new products, services or procedures depends on a person or group having a good idea and developing it. As Amabile et al. (1996) outline, any innovation starts with creative ideas. According to Hargrove and Nietfeld (2015), creativity can be defined as an individual's ability to produce both original and useful work. When employees show creativity at work, they develop new responses that are helpful to face tasks in the organisation (Amabile, 2013). These creative responses may involve the creation of new procedures or processes to carry out tasks or the development of products or services to better

meet customer needs (Zhou & Shalley, 2003). According to De Bono (1970), creativity is a basic human capacity. Creative thinking involves the ability to break conventional rules of thinking or to develop new strategies, among others (Fink et al. 2007). Dietrich (2004) explains how creativity results from the factorial combination of several neurological mechanisms: neural computation that generates novelties could occur during two modes of thought (deliberate and spontaneous) and for two types of information (emotional and cognitive).

Suggestions are the result of the creativity of the employees (Madjar, 2005). Kirton (1989) states that not all employees are creative to the same extent, and indeed some employees are likely to think more creatively than others. According to Ford (1996), people who believe they have creative skills tend to be more creative, so employees who believe they have the ability to make suitable suggestions are more likely to share their ideas with the company. Ideas or suggestions are the results of employees' creativity, and that creativity gives rise to employee-driven innovations (Lasrado et al., 2016).

In the hospitality industry, employee creativity is also relevant. As this sector is labour-intensive and hospitality firms face a highly competitive environment, companies need a more creative workforce to deliver high-quality services and achieve high levels of customer satisfaction (Claver-Cortés et al., 2006; Mohsin & Lockyer, 2010; Wong & Pang, 2003). Therefore, the key to success for the performance of companies in the hospitality industry is to meet the multiple demands of customers by providing creative products and services (Horng et al., 2016). Thus, the creativity of employees favours the achievement of competitive advantages in organisations through innovation (e.g., Kim et al., 2010; Shalley, 1995). Consequently, the first research hypothesis of this work is set:

H1: Employee's creativity influences the creation of innovative suggestions in hospitality firms.

5.3.2. Knowledge as a content-based ability for innovative suggestions

Individuals' knowledge favours the production of new innovative ideas that allow organisations to achieve a competitive advantage (Urbancova, 2013). Holcomb et al. (2009) determine that prior knowledge is one of the most important contributions in the processes of creating new knowledge and innovation. Thus, this existing knowledge and skills in individuals are essential drivers of their behaviour and preferences (De Clercq & Arenius, 2006). Some studies in the field of hospitality have advocated the importance of employee knowledge management and transfer in optimising innovation, service quality and organisational

effectiveness (e.g., Hu et al., 2009; Kim & Lee, 2010). Regarding knowledge sources relevant in the work context, Holcomb et al. (2009) determine that the knowledge constructed by individuals is acquired in three ways: through direct experience, through observation of the actions and consequences of others, and education or codified sources such as books, articles, etc. The academic literature on knowledge management tends to outline the role of work experience and formal education to acquire content knowledge to innovate.

Tesluk and Jacobs (1998) indicate that an individual's past and current life experiences are continuously affecting the development and shape of their knowledge and skills. For Quiñones et al. (1995), work experience is relevant for many human resource functions and refers to events, which are experienced by an individual in relation to the performance of some job, and Ford et al. (1991) observe that most studies used time on the job to measure this concept. Knowledge constructed by individuals in years of experience as professionals allows them to understand customer needs and activities that require improvement and to evaluate the success or failure of possible innovations. Work experience allows individuals to detect innovation needs and new business opportunities, and it influences innovation (Hadjimanolis, 2000). Gabrielsson and Politis (2011) draw on experiential learning theories to explore the extent to which previous work experience is associated with business knowledge that can be used productively in those value creation processes. According to Hallin and Marnburg (2008), much of the specific knowledge of frontline staff in hotel organisations originate from their interactions with customers, colleagues, managers, suppliers, etc. Likewise, the effective management of such valuable knowledge contributes to creating competitive advantages over competitors in the hotel and tourism industry (Bouncken & Pyo, 2002). Carland and Carland (2000) argued that business ideas arise from knowledge and experience and are fostered by creative insight, which helps individuals to identify new opportunities in the organisation. Besides, in their empirical work focused on a food company, Cardoso et al. (2014) find a positive link between employee tenure in the firm and the number of suggestions made.

Although some authors consider that the importance of education in the business world has been overestimated or that the link between education and innovation capacity is weak or non-existent (e.g., Hadjimanolis, 2000), other authors such as Guzmán and Santos (2001) maintain that education can have a decisive impact on the ability to understand the market, innovate and foster collaboration. For Romero and Martínez-Román (2012), education is closely related to innovation, since education is a tool that provides techniques and content that allow us to observe things under new paradigms and seek new solutions to traditional ways of

doing things. In that line, Orfila-Sintes and Mattsson (2009) find that employees with higher education in the hospitality industry are positive determinants of innovation. Furthermore, Cardoso et al. (2014) report that the employee's schooling is positively associated with the number of suggestions.

The discussion of these ideas on the impact of constructed knowledge allows for setting two additional research hypotheses:

H2: Employee's work experience influences the creation of innovative suggestions in hospitality firms.

H3: Employee's formal education influences the creation of innovative suggestions in hospitality firms.

5.3.3. Motivation for innovative suggestions

Nelson and Winter (1977) state that the motivation to innovate is a key component in the innovation process. According to Locke and Latham (2004), motivation is made up of internal and external factors that drive the individual to act. Many authors state that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of employees influences their innovative behaviour (e.g., Lin, 2007; Aalbers et al., 2013). Though those are general approaches to work motivation, discrete work tasks rather than entire jobs are the most useful level of analysis of differences in work motivation (Stamov-Roßnagel & Biermann, 2012).

Deci (1971) stresses the importance of intrinsic motivation since intrinsically motivated behaviour consists of that activity which the individual performs for the pleasure or satisfaction it brings. Osterloh and Frey (2000) state that intrinsic motivation is of crucial importance, especially in tasks involving creativity and the transfer of tacit knowledge. According to Kreps (1997), intrinsic motivation is the key to the successful completion of these tasks. The reason for the relevance of this type of motivation stems from a desire for self-realisation and growth at a personal and/or professional level (Deci, 1971).

Extrinsic motivation responds to instrumental reasons, and it is stimulated from the outside offering economic incentives, promotions, or recognition, among other rewards; behaviour is carried out to achieve an end, and the individual does not get involved by himself (Gagné & Deci, 2005). The literature on the effectiveness of motivation indicates that externally provided incentives have limited success in motivating human behaviour over time (Kohn, 1993; Frey, 1997). However, extrinsic motivation is useful in the short term, but it

decreases with the achievement of particular objectives (Morgan et al., 1993). Büschgens et al. (2013) add that the reward system is an effective mechanism for motivating employees to innovate, as it produces positive changes in employee attitudes and behaviour.

The literature on suggestions and their impact on innovation pay attention to another organisational factor with clear connections to suggestions at the individual level: the existence of an effective suggestion system in the firm and how employees perceive it. According to Dunn and Lloyd (1997), the suggestion system is a formal mechanism that encourages employees to contribute new and useful ideas for the benefit of the organisation. For Fairbank and William (2001), suggestion systems in organisations motivate employees to think more centrally about organisational change and to share these thoughts with the company. However, the perception that the suggestion system is credible to heed and analyse the proposed suggestions seems to be a relevant motivational factor for the employee. When suggestions are ignored or rejected, and no adequate response is given to the individual, employees feel that they have not been taken into account and experience a failure that diminishes their confidence and, therefore, their participation in the suggestion system. Lasrado et al. (2016) consider that when employees propose suggestions, it is essential that they are given feedback for two reasons: the lack of it can make employees feel ignored and dissatisfied, and the feedback can help discover errors, and thus employees can further improve the quality of their ideas. Also, Fairbank and Williams (2001) indicate that motivation to make suggestions is greater when employees believe that their performance will be crucial to obtaining valuable results for the company and know that the company will consider their suggestions. Credible suggestion systems are thus paramount.

Focusing on the hospitality industry, Chang and Teng (2017) state that employees' intrinsic and extrinsic motivations reinforce their creativity and work performance. Besides, Chen (2011) states that hospitality management that encourages employees to take risks and rewards their creative ideas can motivate innovative behaviour. Likewise, when hospitality employees perceive that generating innovative ideas in their work environment is considered a valued and rewarded behaviour and management listens and takes into account their input, they are more likely to feel prepared to take risks and motivated to make innovative suggestions (Alzyoud et al., 2017).

The discussion on the potential role of motivation on innovative suggestions leads to the presentation of three research hypotheses:

H4: Employee's intrinsic motivation to innovate influences the creation of innovative suggestions in hospitality firms.

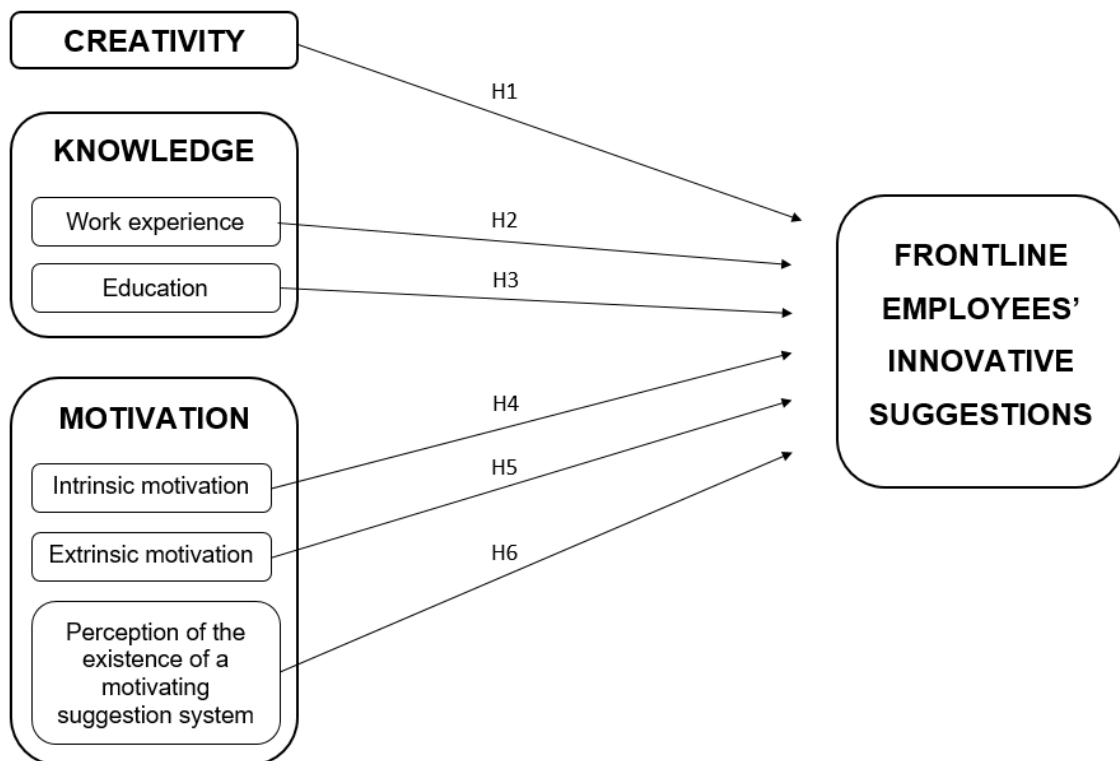
H5: Employee's extrinsic motivation to innovate through direct rewards influences the creation of innovative suggestions in hospitality firms.

H6: Employee's perception of the existence of a motivating suggestion system influences the creation of innovative suggestions in hospitality firms.

5.3.4. An ability and motivation model of frontline employees' innovative suggestions

As a result of the discussion in the three former subsections, *Figure 5.1.* presents the model to be tested in this research work. That model addresses the ability factors in terms of the employees' creativity and knowledge along with their motivational factors, and it shows six research hypotheses. The employee's knowledge reflects the education and work experience sources. The employee's motivation is observed from three different dimensions: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and the perception of the existence of a motivating suggestion system.

Figure 5.1. An ability and motivation model of frontline employees' innovative suggestions



Source: own elaboration

5.4. Methodology

Data were collected through a survey on frontline employees of hotels in the north of Tenerife (Canary Islands, Spain) to meet the goal of this work. According to the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report (World Economic Forum, 2019), Spain is the most competitive country in the world regarding travel and tourism. The importance of innovation in tourism and hospitality has been stated by the government of the Canary Islands, which included innovation in tourism to maintain competitiveness as an area of action in its Smart Specialisation Strategy for the period 2014-2020 (Gobierno de Canarias, 2013). Tenerife is one of the eight Canary Islands and a relevant destination in Spain. The tourism activity on the island is concentrated in the north and the south of the island. 6,110,838 international and domestic tourists visited the island in 2019, and 18.20% of them stayed in hotels in the north (Turismo de Tenerife, 2019). Tenerife is positioned as the island with most hotels (250) in the Canary Islands, followed by Gran Canaria with 179 hotels (ISTAC, 2020). The relevance of innovation for the island is shown in the tourism strategy formulated by its destination management organisation since the innovation and competitiveness strategy is one of the ten axes in its strategic plan for the period 2017-2020 (Turismo de Tenerife, 2017).

In order to find a homogeneous sample of employees, the category of frontline employees selected was the one of front office employees/receptionists. Front-office receptionists are relevant frontline employees in hotel firms, and they have been often selected as representative subjects of study in research work about frontline employees (e.g., Patah et al., 2009; Pinto et al., 2020). Moreover, Engen and Magnusson (2015) empirically find that frontline employees in hotels, including front office receptionists, possess a considerable potential to innovate. The population studied in this research includes the receptionists of 3, 4 and 5-star hotels in the north of the island in 2019. According to the data provided by Tourism of Tenerife (2019) and complemented by accommodation meta-searchers, 77 hotels of 3, 4 and 5-stars are located in the area of the study, encompassing 11,035 rooms. To further define the population, all the hotels were contacted to find out the number of receptionists currently employed. The number of receptionists that make up the population of the study is 484.

The questionnaire was developed by using two primary research approaches. The first one was a literature review. The second one consisted of in-depth interviews with 8 experts to adapt the variables to be used, as well as to measure those for which no support was found in literature. The experts were three hotel receptionists, two hotel managers, two hospitality management university professors, and one hospitality consultant. The questionnaire was

prepared in Spanish. All items were formulated with a 7-point scale of the Likert type ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), except for the number of suggestions. At the end of the first version, a pre-test was carried out with five receptionists.

Regarding the dependent variable, the total number of suggestions made by the respondent in the last month was weighted by the degree of innovativeness of those suggestions. The degree of innovativeness of the suggestions was inspired by one of the items included in the scale of organisational citizenship behaviour by Smith et al. (1983) and by one of the items encompassed in the scale of off-role behaviour by Somech and Drach-Zahavy (2000). Consequently, the dependent variable consisted of an indicator of the respondent's innovative suggestions.

Concerning the independent variables, the scale of creativity comprised 6 items, and it was taken from García-Almeida and Cabrera-Nuez (2020). The scale of the intrinsic motivation comprised 4 items, and it was also taken from the work by García-Almeida and Cabrera-Nuez (2020) due to its intrinsic approach. Besides, two items measured the employee's extrinsic motivation and the employee's perception of the existence of a motivating suggestion system, respectively; these items were developed after interviewing the experts indicated above. Moreover, respondents had to specify the level of education completed, and the variable was recoded to show if the respondent had earned a university degree. The work experience was measured by using a traditional proxy in management literature: the number of years working in the same professional work. Some additional questions included in the questionnaire were the respondent's gender and age, and the type of hotel segment (business or leisure).

Regarding the fieldwork, questionnaires were left at all the front offices of the hotels in the population. After a presentation of the study with its topic and main goals to the front office manager or senior receptionist in each hotel, collaboration to fill the questionnaires was asked and, in some cases, special authorisation had to be requested. In most hotels, authorisation to leave the questionnaires was granted, but in 12 hotels participation was denied due to confidentiality issues or lack of interest. As a result of the fieldwork, 167 questionnaires were collected, but only 153 were correctly completed and valid, and consequently make up the final sample for this research. This self-selection sample implies a valid response rate of 31.6% and a maximum margin of error of 6.56% to a 95% confidence level. Regarding the characteristics of the sample, 58.2% of the frontline employees are female. The average age is 35 years old. The current average salary is around 1,060 euros. On average, employees have been working as receptionists for 10 years, but only 7.5 years at the current firm.

5.5. Results and discussion

The primary variable of interest in this work is the number of innovative suggestions made by hotel receptionists. With the data from the survey, this variable was computed by weighting the total number of suggestions made by the employees by the degree of innovativeness that these employees recognised. The total number of suggestions by employees and the innovative suggestions computed following that conversion is displayed in *Table 5.1*. Most respondents made one or two suggestions during the last month, and 15% did not suggest any at all. Regarding innovative suggestions, some or part of those suggestions could not be considered innovative. However, still the majority of respondents could be assigned with some innovative suggestions with a positive value lower than 1.

Table 5.1. Innovative suggestions in the sample

Total number of suggestions				
	0	1–2	3–4	>4
Number of cases	23 (15 %)	88 (57.5%)	31 (20.3%)	11 (7.2%)
Number of suggestions weighted by innovativeness				
	0	>0–1	>1–2	>2
Number of cases	24 (15.7%)	58 (37.9%)	48 (31.4%)	23 (15.0%)

Source: own elaboration

Due to the direct linear nature of the hypothesised relationships, multiple regression analysis was selected as the statistical tool to test the research hypotheses. Before that analysis, exploratory factor analyses were conducted to reduce the dimensionality of two scales: the one for creativity, and the one for intrinsic motivation. In both analyses, only one factor was extracted.

Table 5.2. displays bivariate correlation values between the dependent variable and the explanatory ones. *Table 5.3.* shows the main results of the multiple regression analysis. In that regression model, three control variables were also included, namely the respondent's gender, age, and if s/he works in a business hotel. The F value shows the existence of explanatory influence, and the adjusted R² displays the level of that relevance. The analysis of multicollinearity confirms that all VIF values are lower than 10, and no condition index exceeds 30 as recommended in literature (e.g., Belsley, 1991; Hair et al. 2000).

Table 5.2. Correlation matrix for dependent and explanatory variables in the model

VARIABLES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Innovative suggestions	1						
2. Creativity	0.287***	1					
3. Work experience	0.276***	0.124	1				
4. Higher education	-0.080	-0.032	-0.379***	1			
5. Intrinsic motivation	0.128	0.557***	-0.025	0.257***	1		
6. Extrinsic motivation: direct rewards	0.119	0.131	-0.077	-0.046	0.121	1	
7. Extrinsic motivation: heeded suggestions	0.240***	0.056	0.220***	-0.160**	0.152*	0.309***	1

* p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01

Source: own elaboration

Table 5.3. Results of the multiple regression analysis

	Standardized coefficients	<i>t</i>	Sig.
	Beta		
Creativity	0.306	3.209	0.002***
Work experience	0.349	1.887	0.061*
Education: university degree	0.044	0.500	0.618
Intrinsic motivation	-0.096	-0.947	0.345
Extrinsic motivation: direct rewards	0.051	0.618	0.537
Extrinsic motivation: heeded suggestions	0.160	1.909	0.058*
Gender (female)	0.037	0.469	0.640
Age	-0.146	-0.791	0.430
Business hotel	-0.132	-1.723	0.087*

F = 3.975 (0,000)***

R² = 0.201

Adjusted R² = 0.151

*p<0.10, **p<0.05, *** p<0.01

Source: own elaboration

The general overview of the results shows the significant relevance of four independent variables to explain the respondents' innovative suggestions. Three of those significant influences (i.e., employee's creativity, work experience, and extrinsic motivation based on the suggestion system credibility) are related to the research hypotheses, and one refers to a control variable (i.e., the fact that the employee works in a business or a leisure hotel).

The fact that creativity is an individual aspect required for innovation is consolidated in the academic literature in the area of management (e.g., Oldham & Cummings, 1996; Madjar, 2005), since creative employees make sure that new ideas continually appear, and they become valuable staff in contexts where innovation and change are relevant for competitiveness in the hospitality sector. Moreover, work experience seems to serve as a significant input for identifying opportunities for improvement, as well as generating new ideas in the hospitality industry, since knowledge about the task, the business and the environment is constructed in a more extended period that allows for obtaining a deeper understanding of the business reality and being exposed to a broader array of situations, along with a longer development of networks. In addition, and in line with research into employee suggestion systems (Fairbank & Williams, 2001), the positive perception of the suggestion system in the sense that valid suggestions will be implemented is a significant motivational factor for employees in the front office of hotel firms, based on the idea that the rigorous consideration of their ideas acts as a catalyst factor to take the time to put the idea forward.

Regarding the unexpected results of this work, the potential influence of the employee's knowledge on innovative suggestions was addressed from a double perspective that not only considered work experience but also higher education. Based on the results obtained, the employee's higher education does not seem to exert any influence on suggestion creation. Consequently, the third hypothesis cannot be accepted. The lack of significance for the influence of a high level of education on innovative suggestions can be explained by over-education. Many non-managerial jobs in the hospitality sector are occupied by employees with university degrees, and in many cases of frontline jobs, such high qualifications are not required. Such a mismatch can generate problems of employee frustration. Agut et al. (2009) find that over-education is negatively associated with job content innovation. In that line, over-educated employees may feel that they receive inequitable rewards in terms of career development opportunities or salaries and consequently refrain from engaging in extra-role behaviours (Kulkarni et al., 2015). Thus, an implication for this idea to research innovation in the hospitality sector would be the need to consider the match between education and job

requirements as relevant for innovation. In general, a higher level of education than the one required to perform one's job seems to be negatively linked to extra-role behaviours.

The third group of explanatory factors referred to the potential influence of the employee's motivation to innovate on the creation of innovative suggestions in hospitality firms; two of them do not exert a significant influence on innovative suggestions. Hence, H4 related to intrinsic motivation and H5 related to extrinsic motivation are not confirmed. Though the important role of intrinsic motivation is vigorously defended in the academic literature, this can be required to make general suggestions to change and correct problems. However, if those suggestions are not generated by creative individuals and/or with a knowledge base that targets innovative developments, the unique nature of those suggestions do not seem sustained. In addition, the cognitive evaluation theory of motivation suggests that the presence of a salient external constraint could induce a change in the perceived locus of causality from internal to external, resulting in reduced intrinsic motivation (Ryan, 1982). External factors such as an intense workload or a defective suggestion system could act as such constraints and limit the suggestion of innovative ideas despite a high intrinsic motivation for these tasks. This would open up the possibility of the existence of barriers for the effectiveness of intrinsic motivation to increasing the number of innovative suggestions in hospitality firms.

Moreover, extrinsic motivation related to direct rewards is not revealed as being a determinant factor for making innovative suggestions. Shalley et al. (2004) indicate that there is little agreement among scholars concerning the likely direction of the effects of contingent rewards on the individual's expressed creativity. The findings of this work are in line with those by Yoon et al. (2015) who outline the lack of the direct effect of extrinsic rewards on creative performance. These authors indicate that the function of extrinsic motivation may be contingent on personal characteristics and/or other organisational contextual factors.

The fact that the employee works for a business hotel or a leisure one is also significant. The negative sign of the relationship of this variable with the dependent one indicates that front office employees working in leisure hotels tend to significantly put forward more innovative suggestions than their counterparts working in business hotels. This implies that frontline employees in hotels targeting the business segment are in a position characterised by greater difficulties or barriers to create suggestions leading to innovation than frontline employees working in hotels oriented to the leisure segment. A potential explanation of this unexpected finding could lie in the tourist's behaviour, since leisure tourists could spend, on average, more time interacting with front office staff than business tourists. This longer time in the service

encounter could translate into more inflowing information of needs, wishes, and detected problems that the receptionist obtains and uses as a knowledge input for novel suggestions.

5.6. Conclusions

This work analyses the impact of the employee's ability and willingness to innovate in hospitality firms. Since innovation in the hospitality industry is mostly associated with informal innovation due to the lack of formal R&D departments in most firms in the sector, the analysis of employee-driven innovation sheds light on understanding and fostering innovation in many firms in the industry. Strategic actors in the innovation process of hospitality firms are employees in direct contact with tourists since they are situated in the centre of a valuable information network and witness customers' reactions and needs. The empirical part of this study has focused on the innovative suggestions that employees in the reception department make, along with the ability- and willingness- related factors to make them. The significant results of this work have shown that the employee's creativity, work experience and positive perception of a working suggestion system increase the number of their innovative suggestions in the context of hotel front offices.

The findings of this work allow indicating some recommendations for the hospitality industry to increase employee-driven innovation. Madjar (2005) defends that human resource professionals can play critical roles in increasing employee creativity. By encouraging creativity through courses or seminars on how to stimulate creative thinking or advising on how to channel employee creativity, human resource specialists can increase the creative ideas suggested by employees. Moreover, creativity efforts and activities can be strongly constrained by an organisational culture that values risk avoidance and punishes behaviours that are out of the usual paths. Nybakk and Jenssen (2012) emphasise trust and openness as essential in modelling the climate for innovation, and supervisors and managers should support an atmosphere characterised by the freedom to suggest new ideas and test new things if they are aligned to the organisational strategy or face new challenges. In that sense, the role of the general manager is key in enhancing the generation of new ideas. Another initiative to support these creative activities is based on the assumption that creativity requires social interaction (Perry-Smith & Shalley, 2003). Thus, the organisation of meetings and seminars with colleagues oriented to problem resolution or potential improvements could stimulate joint creativity.

Regarding work experience, the primary recommendation is to push forward the experienced employees' knowledge. In that line, Rasca (2018) advocates for taking advantage of retaining experienced employees. An initial recommendation is to foster mentorship programmes in the hospitality firm where long-tenured employees or other employees who have worked in the sector for many years assist and explain hotel tasks and dynamics to newly hired employees. The organisation of meetings where experienced employees take the leading role in analysing situations and showing potential areas of improvement could be another line of action; in this case, employees with shorter periods of work in the tourism industry could understand the challenges and suggest new ideas based on their diversity and creative orientation.

The most relevant motivation factor that this study has highlighted is the positive perception of a working suggestion system in the firm. To increase those positive perceptions among employees, hotel general managers should emphasise the role and usefulness of the suggestion system for the desired innovation performance of the company. For Marx (1995), management commitment is an essential cornerstone for the success of the suggestion system. Thus, the general manager should communicate how suggestions will be communicated, analysed, and, if positively evaluated, heeded. Lower-level managers should also reinforce those messages and assure that they would give credit to employees who suggest novel ideas.

As this work has also found that there are fewer novel suggestions in business hotels, hotel management working in this segment faces an additional challenge to foster employee-driven innovation. An interesting recommendation would be that managers regularly provide information about trends, needs and problems that the business tourist segment is facing. This way, the relative lack of direct information exchanges with frontline employees could be corrected to a certain extent, and employees could have another knowledge input oriented to the generation of novel suggestions.

It is also important to outline the main limitations of this work. The fact that knowledge has been addressed with two sources could also be a limitation. In that sense, employees can also construct knowledge from other sources such as personal networks, institutions or codified sources like the Internet or books (Calero-Lemes & García Almeida, 2020), though the tradition in academic literature is to refer to education and work experience as reflected in this work. The use of a questionnaire to collect data on the independent variables may limit the understanding of the phenomena studied, since the variable measurement could not capture nuances and particular aspects in the responses. However, certain aspects have been mitigated

by the methodological design. Moreover, the sampling method of self-selection may pose some representativeness obstacles in the study, but it does comprise a relatively high response rate. Besides, the study has been carried out only in hotels, and specifically in their front-office department, which limits the extrapolation of results to other hospitality firms. The geographical extrapolation of the results must be also done with caution because the context of the research may affect innovation dynamics that are not present in other geographical areas.

This work also opens up opportunities for further research on the understanding of employee-driven innovation in hospitality firms. Thus, qualitative and longitudinal approaches would provide a thorough analysis of the individual view adopted in this study. In addition, the analysis of the external factors influencing innovative suggestions would complement the individual perspective. Another line of future research is to address models where the individual factors considered here interact among them and with external factors. In line with Singh et al. (2003), the replication of the study in the same industrial context (i.e., the hospitality sector) but in a different geographical scope would rise research validity and would also allow interesting conclusions to be drawn for comparison. It would also be of great interest to study other functional areas in hospitality firms, especially those departments with less interaction with the client, in order to find out their approach to innovative suggestions in their context. The creation of innovative suggestions in different types of hotels and non-hotel accommodation (e.g., low-end hotels, accommodation in the sharing economy, etc.) and even in restaurants and other F&B alternatives would contribute to increasing the academic knowledge of innovation in the hospitality sector from a global perspective.

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15. **CHAPTER VI**

16. **GENERAL CONCLUSIONS**

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

This doctoral dissertation has explored employee-driven change and innovation in the hospitality industry through the analysis of frontline employees' suggestions. External factors, like the recent Covid-19 pandemic has shown, demand changes so firms can survive. Moreover, competitive dynamics in the hospitality sector increasingly require innovation to increase competitiveness. Frontline employees can become relevant change and innovation agents that contribute to the improvement of the competitive positioning of their firms through their voice behaviour related to the suggestions that they can put forward.

The theoretical analysis of this work based on the review of academic literature has displayed the increasing relevance that change and innovation generated in the informal processes of the organisations are experiencing. This trend is especially outstanding in the hospitality sector, where firms do not tend to possess formal research and development departments. Moreover, due to bounded rationality and the complexity of processes in the industry, top management faces clear limitations to confront the continuous need for change and innovation in their organisations. Though external help for these change processes can be provided by consulting companies, mergers and acquisitions, competitive concerns and financial constraints often favour internal choices based on employee's ideas. Fostering voice behaviours through which employees make relevant suggestions is hence a growing tendency in many hospitality firms. That trend is even more conclusively supported in the literature for the case of frontline employees. Being in contact with customers that express their criticism towards the firm's policies, practices, and products along with their ideas about potential improvements substantiated in their experiences with the focus firm or some other competitors make frontline employees important candidates to initiate change and innovation, especially if they also have knowledge about the organisational business model.

The empirical findings of this doctoral dissertation have been obtained in order to meet its four formal objectives. Thus, the existence of service frontline employee groups based on their level of implication in change activities has been stated, as the focus of the first goal of this work asked for. The initial result of that taxonomy is the recognition of the presence of a group of individuals who reject or are not able to participate in change activities for the firm. Moreover, in the wider category of frontline employees who do engage in change processes, it is possible to observe a varying level of implication: some individuals can be describe as having

a low implication, and, very interestingly, some other individuals could be described as having a high implication in the change process of the firm.

In connection with the second objective of the doctoral dissertation, several characteristics have been found to distinguish the three groups of frontline employees identified according to their behaviour towards employee-driven change in hospitality firms. These features in general tend to characterise these groups in a growing or marked trend ranging from the one with no involvement in firm change in an active way to the one with a high one. The only individual characteristic linked to differences across the three groups is the gender since it has been found the increasing importance of female employees to describe the members of the group with a higher involvement in change processes. With regard to organisational and group aspects, the decentralisation of communication and participative leadership are associated with an active implication in change activities. The analysis of the relationship with customers has revealed that frontline employees' focus on customer satisfaction and the informational inputs received from clients are also positive aspect to determine a higher active involvement in firm change. As for job and work elements significantly describing the three groups, job satisfaction and the firm specific job knowledge constructed in the years spent as one of its employees seem to be relevant aspects to expect a growing number of contributions in the active process of change in the hospitality sector.

Regarding the third objective of the work related to the potential influence of frontline employees' personality traits on their implemented suggestions, the methodological approach and the subsequent results have shown the impact of several personality dimensions in the Big Five model. The employee's extraversion is a relevant personality aspect to make suggestions that will be later implemented in the organisation, probably underlining the role of the active relationship with other agents both to get ideas for the proposals and to convince decision-makers about their feasibility and interest. The lack of direction associated with an unorganised behaviour is also an important personality trait in this context; this finding could deal with the ability to have more diverse thoughts and go beyond the order that organisational routines set to improve practices and products. Finally, another relevant personality dimension identified in this work is neuroticism, since frontline employees who rank high in this trait could become obsessed with service failures and would put pressure to implement their change proposals.

With the aim of meeting the goal about the analysis of the frontline employees' creativity, knowledge, and motivation in the proposal of ideas to generate employee-driven innovation in hospitality firms, the findings of this work have shed light on the role of these

three aspects. Frontline employee's creativity has revealed as a powerful process-based ability for innovation in the hotel sector, as it is a significant trait to make more novel suggestions in the organisations operating in this industry. With regard to the content-based ability in employee-driven innovation in the firm, work experience provides frontline employees with relevant knowledge that allows for coming up with the basis for innovative initiatives. Motivation is also a relevant aspect for this kind of innovation, but within this broad concept and for this context the willingness connected to the perception of the existence of a valid suggestion system that will channel and analyse the implementation feasibility is the salient dimension. Finally, it is worth emphasising the fact that in leisure hotels there seems to be a greater tendency towards employee-driven innovation.

The findings obtained in the development of this doctoral dissertation provide theoretical and practical contributions. The main conceptual implications that have been derived from this work refer to the confirmation of frontline employees as active change agents, the identification of patterns that characterise the different degrees of implication in change processes, the relevance of durable and stable aspects such as personality traits opposed to the focus of states in the study of novel ideas, the importance of considering not only change proposals but also their evaluation and implementation decisions, the ideas that emphasise the relevance of individual factors in the implementation of suggestions and not only organisational aspects, and the update and extension of the influential model of social psychology of creativity developed by Amabile (1983) regarding the three elements of creative performance.

The main practical implications obtained in this work focus on the ideas that managers in the hospitality industry should take advantage of the frontline employees' extraversion, lack of direction, neuroticism, creativity, knowledge, and perception of a valid suggestion system to foster interesting suggestions oriented to change and innovation. These practical contributions translate in recommendations about the selection and training of frontline employees, communication channels, teamwork, strategies for service encounters, leadership style, configuration of the evaluation of the suggestion system, mentorship programmes, task assignments, and orientations for developing the organisational culture.

17. **CHAPTER VII**

18. SUMMARY IN SPANISH – RESUMEN EN ESPAÑOL

RESUMEN EN ESPAÑOL

7.1. Objetivos

Los retos actuales del sector turístico deben ser abordados por las empresas fomentando la participación e implicación de los empleados en los procesos de cambio e innovación, y teniendo en cuenta las sugerencias que proponen a partir de sus valiosos conocimientos dada su estrecha relación con el cliente. Estas sugerencias de los empleados, si son gestionadas adecuadamente por la dirección, podrían contribuir a la mejora de la productividad, la innovación y el éxito a largo plazo de las empresas turísticas (p. ej., Hon, 2011; Lasrado et al., 2016). Los retos identificados en la propuesta e implementación de sugerencias de los empleados en contacto con clientes en las empresas de hostelería y turismo (p. ej., hoteles, restaurantes) como agentes de cambio e innovación señalan la existencia de algunas lagunas de investigación en la literatura académica y son la base de los objetivos de esta investigación doctoral. De forma más específica, los objetivos de la tesis doctoral son los siguientes:

1. Explorar la existencia de grupos de empleados en contacto con el cliente de empresas de servicios en función de su nivel de implicación en las actividades de cambio.
2. Identificar las características individuales, organizativas/grupales, relacionadas con el cliente y del puesto de trabajo que permitan definir grupos de empleados en contacto con clientes de empresas de servicios en función de su nivel de implicación en los procesos de cambio.
3. Analizar la influencia potencial de las dimensiones de personalidad de los empleados en contacto con el cliente en sus sugerencias implementadas como implicación clave en el sistema organizativo para canalizar e implementar sugerencias con la identificación de mejoras factibles en las empresas turísticas.
4. Analizar el papel que desempeñan la creatividad, el conocimiento y la motivación de los empleados en contacto con el cliente para sugerir cambios organizativos como base para la innovación basada en el empleado en las empresas turísticas.

7.2. Resumen de la tesis

Este trabajo analiza el cambio y la innovación basado en el empleado a través de las sugerencias de empleados en contacto con el cliente en las empresas turísticas. El cambio y la innovación son aspectos muy relevantes para las empresas de servicios ante el dinamismo y

complejidad del entorno que contribuyen al logro del éxito competitivo y la supervivencia organizativa. Los empleados en contacto con los clientes están en una posición privilegiada para iniciar procesos de cambio e innovación ante su interacción con clientes que les permiten conocer sus demandas y preferencias e incluso las actividades de los competidores. En el trabajo de manera específica se estudian la existencia de grupos de estos empleados atendiendo a su nivel de implicación activa en los procesos de cambio y la identificación de características relevantes asociadas a esos grupos; asimismo, se aborda la posible influencia de la personalidad en las sugerencias planteadas por estos empleados que han sido implementadas suponiendo un cambio organizativo; además, se analiza el papel que desempeñan la creatividad, el conocimiento y la motivación en las sugerencias innovadoras.

Como base conceptual genérica se revisa la literatura académica sobre el cambio organizativo, la innovación organizativa y el comportamiento de voz y las sugerencias. Además, se han desarrollado marcos teóricos específicos para abordar de manera especializada los objetivos de la investigación y las hipótesis de investigación derivadas de los mismos.

En cuanto al planteamiento metodológico del trabajo, los objetivos de la tesis doctoral son abordados de manera empírica tanto con entrevistas en profundidad realizadas a expertos, como con una encuesta a recepcionistas de hoteles del norte de Tenerife. Los datos cuantitativos recogidos son analizados con técnicas estadísticas univariantes, bivariantes y multivariantes.

Los resultados del trabajo muestran la existencia de tres grupos de empleados en contacto con el cliente en las empresas de servicios atendiendo a su implicación activa en los procesos de cambio organizativo. Estos perfiles de empleados son definidos atendiendo a características individuales, organizativas y de grupo, relacionadas con la interacción con los clientes, y aquellas relativas al trabajo. Además, la extroversión, la ausencia de meticulosidad y la neurosis son dimensiones de la personalidad que tienen un impacto directo en las sugerencias propuestas por estos empleados que se consiguen implantar. Asimismo, la creatividad, la experiencia laboral, y la motivación de percibir que el sistema de sugerencias tiene en consideración las ideas planteadas, desempeñan un papel positivo en la propuesta de sugerencias innovadoras por parte de los empleados en contacto con clientes.

Estos hallazgos permiten plantear interesantes contribuciones en dos niveles: implicaciones teóricas relacionadas con el desarrollo de los campos académicos asociados al

cambio y a la innovación, e implicaciones prácticas basadas en recomendaciones a directivos de empresas turísticas.

7.3. Conclusiones generales

Esta tesis doctoral ha explorado el cambio y la innovación impulsados por los empleados en el sector turístico mediante el análisis de las sugerencias de los empleados de primera línea. Los factores externos, como ha demostrado la reciente pandemia del Covid-19, exigen cambios para que las empresas puedan sobrevivir. Además, la dinámica competitiva del sector turístico exige cada vez más innovación para superar a la competencia. Asimismo, los empleados de primera línea pueden convertirse en agentes de cambio e innovación relevantes que contribuyan a la mejora del posicionamiento competitivo de sus empresas a través de su comportamiento vocal relacionado con las sugerencias que puedan plantear.

El análisis teórico de este trabajo, basado en la revisión de la literatura académica, ha puesto de manifiesto la creciente relevancia que están experimentando el cambio y la innovación generados en los procesos informales de las organizaciones. Esta tendencia se observa especialmente en el sector turístico, donde las empresas no suelen poseer departamentos formales de investigación y desarrollo. Además, debido a la racionalidad limitada y a la complejidad de los procesos del sector, la alta dirección se enfrenta a claras limitaciones para afrontar la continua necesidad de cambio e innovación en sus organizaciones. Aunque las empresas de consultoría pueden proporcionar ayuda externa para estos procesos de cambio, las fusiones y adquisiciones, las preocupaciones competitivas, y las limitaciones financieras suelen favorecer las decisiones internas basadas en las ideas de los empleados. El fomento de comportamientos de voz a través de los cuales los empleados hacen sugerencias relevantes es, por tanto, una tendencia creciente en muchas empresas de turismo. Esta tendencia está respaldada de forma aún más concluyente en la literatura para el caso de los empleados de primera línea. El hecho de estar en contacto con los clientes que expresan sus críticas hacia las políticas, prácticas y productos de la empresa, junto con sus ideas sobre posibles mejoras fundamentadas en sus experiencias con la empresa en cuestión o con otros competidores, hace que los empleados de primera línea sean candidatos importantes para iniciar el cambio y la innovación, especialmente si también tienen conocimientos sobre el modelo empresarial de la organización.

Los resultados empíricos de esta tesis doctoral se han obtenido para cumplir sus cuatro objetivos formales. Así, se ha constatado la existencia de grupos de empleados de primera línea

de servicio en función de su nivel de implicación en las actividades de cambio, tal y como establecía el primer objetivo de este trabajo. El resultado inicial de esa taxonomía es el reconocimiento de la presencia de un grupo de individuos que rechazan o no pueden participar en las actividades de cambio de la empresa. Además, en la categoría más amplia de empleados de primera línea que sí participan en los procesos de cambio, es posible observar un nivel variable de implicación: algunos individuos pueden describirse como de baja implicación y, curiosamente, otros individuos podrían describirse como de alta implicación en el proceso de cambio de la empresa.

En relación con el segundo objetivo de la tesis doctoral, se han encontrado varias características que distinguen a los tres grupos de empleados de primera línea identificados según su comportamiento hacia el cambio impulsado por los empleados en las empresas de turismo. Estos rasgos, en general, tienden a caracterizar a estos grupos en una tendencia creciente o marcada que comprende desde el que no se implica en el cambio de la empresa de forma activa hasta el que lo hace de forma significativa. La única característica individual vinculada a las diferencias entre los tres grupos es el género, ya que se ha constatado la creciente importancia de las empleadas para describir a los miembros del grupo con una mayor implicación en los procesos de cambio. En cuanto a los aspectos organizativos y grupales, la descentralización de la comunicación y el liderazgo participativo se asocian a una implicación activa en las actividades de cambio. El análisis de la relación con los clientes ha revelado que el enfoque de los empleados de primera línea en la satisfacción del cliente y las aportaciones de información recibidas de los clientes son también aspectos positivos para determinar una mayor implicación activa en el cambio de la empresa. En cuanto a los elementos propios del puesto y del trabajo que describen significativamente a los tres grupos, la satisfacción en el trabajo y el conocimiento del puesto específico en la empresa que ha sido construido a lo largo de los años por sus empleados parecen ser aspectos relevantes para esperar un número creciente de contribuciones en el proceso activo de cambio en el sector turístico.

En cuanto al tercer objetivo del trabajo relacionado con la posible influencia de los rasgos de personalidad de los empleados de primera línea en sus sugerencias implementadas, el enfoque metodológico y los resultados posteriores han mostrado el impacto de varias dimensiones de personalidad del modelo de los Cinco Grandes. Asimismo, la extraversión del empleado es un aspecto de personalidad relevante para la realización de sugerencias que posteriormente serán implementadas en la organización, subrayando probablemente el papel de la relación activa con otros agentes tanto para obtener ideas que proponer como para

convencer a los responsables de su viabilidad e interés. La falta de dirección asociada a un comportamiento desorganizado es también un rasgo de personalidad importante en este contexto; este hallazgo podría tener que ver con la capacidad de tener pensamientos más diversos e ir más allá del orden que marcan las rutinas organizativas para mejorar las prácticas y los productos. Por último, otra dimensión de personalidad relevante identificada en este trabajo es el neuroticismo, ya que los empleados de primera línea que tienen un alto nivel de este rasgo podrían obsesionarse con los fallos del servicio y ejercerían presión para aplicar sus propuestas de cambio en la empresa.

Con el fin de cumplir el objetivo sobre el análisis de la creatividad, el conocimiento y la motivación de los empleados de primera línea en la propuesta de ideas para generar innovación impulsada por los empleados en las empresas turísticas, las conclusiones de este trabajo han arrojado luz sobre el papel de estos tres aspectos. La creatividad de los empleados de primera línea se ha revelado como una poderosa capacidad basada en el proceso para la innovación en el sector turístico, ya que es un rasgo significativo para hacer más sugerencias novedosas en las organizaciones que operan en esta industria. En cuanto a la capacidad basada en el contenido como factor relevante para la innovación impulsada por los empleados en la empresa, la experiencia laboral proporciona a los empleados de primera línea un conocimiento relevante que permite sentar las bases de las iniciativas innovadoras. La motivación es también un aspecto relevante para este tipo de innovación, pero dentro de este concepto amplio y para este contexto, la voluntad ligada a la percepción de la existencia de un sistema de sugerencias válido que canalice y analice la viabilidad de la implantación es la dimensión destacada. Por último, cabe destacar que en los hoteles vacacionales parece haber una mayor tendencia a la innovación impulsada por los empleados.

Los resultados obtenidos en el desarrollo de esta tesis doctoral aportan contribuciones teóricas y prácticas. Las principales implicaciones conceptuales que se han derivado de este trabajo se refieren a la confirmación de los empleados de primera línea como agentes de cambio activos, la identificación de patrones que caracterizan los diferentes grados de implicación en los procesos de cambio, la relevancia de aspectos duraderos y estables como los rasgos de personalidad frente al enfoque de *estados* en el estudio de las ideas novedosas, la importancia de considerar no sólo las propuestas de cambio sino también sus decisiones de evaluación e implementación, las ideas que enfatizan la relevancia de los factores individuales en la implementación de las sugerencias y no sólo los aspectos organizativos, y la actualización y

ampliación del influyente modelo de psicología social de la creatividad desarrollado por Amabile (1983) en relación con los tres elementos de la actuación creativa.

Las principales implicaciones prácticas obtenidas en este trabajo se centran en la idea de que los directivos del sector turístico deben aprovechar la extraversión, la falta de dirección, el neuroticismo, la creatividad, los conocimientos y la percepción de un sistema de sugerencias válido para fomentar la propuesta de sugerencias interesantes orientadas al cambio y la innovación. Estas aportaciones prácticas se traducen en recomendaciones sobre la selección y la formación de los empleados de primera línea, los canales de comunicación, el trabajo en equipo, las estrategias para los encuentros de servicio, el estilo de liderazgo, la configuración de la evaluación del sistema de sugerencias, los programas de tutoría, la asignación de tareas y las orientaciones para desarrollar la cultura organizativa.

Referencias

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19. **APPENDIX**

APPENDIX

ENCUESTA A RECEPCIONISTAS DE HOTELES DE 3, 4 Y 5 ESTRELLAS DEL NORTE DE TENERIFE

(1) N° de cuestionario: ____

Me llamo Tamara González y soy una estudiante del Máster Universitario en Dirección de Empresas y RRHH. En la actualidad, me encuentro realizando mi Trabajo de Fin de Máster sobre las sugerencias de los recepcionistas en el sector hotelero. Es por ello, por lo que le pido su útil colaboración, que agradecería enormemente para poder llevar a cabo esta investigación.

Las respuestas a este cuestionario serán estrictamente confidenciales. No existen respuestas buenas o malas, sino distintas realidades que se desean conocer. Una vez más, muchísimas gracias por su ayuda.

A continuación, se plantea una serie de preguntas sobre ciertos aspectos de su trabajo. Por favor, responda en las columnas redondeando el número de la opción que mejor se ajuste a lo que considere, teniendo en cuenta que 1 significa que está en total desacuerdo/ ninguno/ nunca/ bajo cumplimiento/ nada buena/ nada, y 7 que está en total acuerdo/ mucho/ constantemente/ alto cumplimiento/ muy buena.

(2) Número aproximado de sugerencias que ha propuesto en el último mes sugerencias
(3) Número aproximado de sugerencias que ha propuesto en el último mes y que se han implementado sugerencias implementadas
(4) Número aproximado de sugerencias que ha propuesto en el último mes, que se han implementado y se consideran exitosas sugerencias implementadas y exitosas

	Totalmente en desacuerdo							Totalmente de acuerdo						
(5) Me considero una persona creativa	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(6) Me gustan las novedades y salirme de la rutina cuando hago una actividad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(7) Me considero una persona ingeniosa y con recursos	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(8) Tengo ideas originales y sorprendentes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(9) Tengo ideas valiosas, lógicas, útiles y comprensibles	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(10) La aplicación de mis ideas consigue resultados complejos, elegantes y bien hechos	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(11) Valoro positivamente el hacer sugerencias	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(12) Estoy muy motivado/a para hacer sugerencias siempre que se permita	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(13) Creo que para mejorar el rendimiento es importante que los empleados hagan sugerencias	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(14) Prefiero que los empleados hagan sugerencias a que los jefes nos digan siempre lo que hay que hacer	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Totalmente en desacuerdo							Totalmente de acuerdo						
(15) Para asuntos que pueden tener consecuencias serias, expreso mis opiniones honestamente aún cuando otros puedan estar en desacuerdo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(16) A menudo motivo a otros a expresar sus ideas y opiniones	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(17) Animo a otros a probar nuevas y más efectivas formas de hacer su trabajo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(18) Animo a mis compañeros indecisos o callados a expresar sus opiniones, ya que de otra manera no hubiesen hablado	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(19) Frecuentemente comunico a mis compañeros de trabajo sugerencias sobre cómo el grupo puede mejorar	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(20) Trabajo para sobrepasar lo que espera un cliente	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(21) Siempre ayudo a mis compañeros cuando lo necesitan	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(22) Me siento responsable del éxito de esta empresa	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(23) Tengo una actitud resolutoria en mi trabajo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(24)trato a todos los compañeros con respeto	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Totalmente en desacuerdo							Totalmente de acuerdo						
(25) Creo que con nuestras acciones y decisiones influimos decididamente en lo que nos ocurre en la vida	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(26) Creo que la suerte influye decididamente en lo que nos ocurre en la vida	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(27) Creo que las acciones y decisiones de otros influyen decididamente en lo que nos ocurre en la vida	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(28) Tengo confianza en que mis habilidades o capacidades igualen o excedan las de mis compañeros	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(29) Mis conocimientos me permiten confiar en que puedo hacer buenas sugerencias en este departamento	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(30) Estoy seguro de que mis sugerencias serían buenas	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Totalmente en desacuerdo							Totalmente de acuerdo						
(31) El equipo de este departamento está unido en el intento de alcanzar su objetivo de rendimiento	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(32) En este departamento, todo el mundo intenta ayudar si alguno tiene problemas	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(33) Los miembros de este departamento se comunican con libertad sobre lo que tiene que hacer cada uno	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(34) La innovación está presente en esta empresa y no es simplemente una palabra	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(35) Nuestros altos directivos son capaces de transmitir de forma eficaz el mensaje de innovación en toda la organización	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(36) Tenemos una visión de innovación que está alineada con proyectos, plataformas o iniciativas	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(37) La innovación es un valor fundamental en esta organización	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Totalmente en desacuerdo				Totalmente de acuerdo			
(38) Me considero una persona reservada	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
(39) Me considero una persona que confía fácilmente en los demás	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
(40) Me considero una persona que tiende a ser perezoso	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
(41) Me considero una persona relajada, manejo bien el estrés	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
(42) Me considero una persona extrovertida, sociable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
(43) Me considero como alguien que tiende a encontrar faltas en los demás	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
(44) Me veo como alguien que hace un buen trabajo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
(45) Me veo a mí mismo como alguien que se pone nervioso fácilmente	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
(46) Me considero una persona con una imaginación activa	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
(47) Me considero una persona con interés artístico	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

	Ninguno				Muchos			
(48) En el último mes, ¿los clientes le han planteado a usted quejas o comentarios para mejorar el servicio?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

	Totalmente en desacuerdo				Totalmente de acuerdo			
(49) En esta empresa, la información sobre el trabajo solo se comparte entre los jefes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Con frecuencia, discutimos entre nosotros temas sobre la realización del trabajo

	Nunca				Constantemente			
(50) ¿Deja su jefe participar a sus subordinados en la toma de decisiones?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
(51) ¿Recompensa su jefe de alguna forma a sus subordinados cuando hacen buenas sugerencias?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

	Bajo cumplimiento				Alto cumplimiento			
(52) ¿Se cumplen estrictamente las condiciones laborales de su contrato de trabajo?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

	Nada buenas				Muy buenas			
(53) ¿Son buenas sus condiciones laborales?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

	Nada				Mucho			
(54) ¿En qué grado se identifica usted con esta empresa y sus objetivos?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
(55) ¿En qué grado desea usted seguir trabajando en esta empresa?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
(56) ¿Considera usted que en su empresa las sugerencias propuestas por los empleados son escuchadas/atendidas?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
(57) ¿Considera usted que en su empresa las sugerencias propuestas por los empleados se comentan con ellos para evaluar su validez?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
(58) ¿Considera usted que sus sugerencias son innovadoras?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
(59) En general, ¿está satisfecho con su trabajo?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

DATOS DEL ENCUESTADO	
(60) 1. Sexo:	<input type="checkbox"/> Hombre <input type="checkbox"/> Mujer
(61) 2. Edad:
(62) 3. Nivel de estudios terminados:	<input type="checkbox"/> Sin estudios <input type="checkbox"/> Primarios <input type="checkbox"/> Bachillerato <input type="checkbox"/> Universitarios <input type="checkbox"/> Universitarios superiores (Máster/Doctorado)
(63) 4. Número de años trabajando como recepcionista: años
(64) 5. Número de años trabajando como recepcionista en esta empresa: años
(65) 6. Salario mensual medio: euros

¡MUCHÍSIMAS GRACIAS POR SU VALIOSA AYUDA!

Pasaré a recoger este cuestionario en un par de días.