Do feelings matter? The effect of leader affective presence on employee proactive customer service performance

Jing Jiang
School of Tourism Science, Beijing International Studies University, Beijing, China

Yanan Dong
School of Economics and Management, Tsinghua University, Beijing, China

Bin Li and Huimin Gu
School of Tourism Science, Beijing International Studies University, Beijing, China, and

Larry Yu
Department of Management, The George Washington University, Washington, District of Columbia, USA

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Abstract

Purpose – Applying affect-as-information theory, this research analyzed the relationship of leader affective presence and employee proactive customer service performance (PCSP) in hospitality organizations. It further explored when and how leader affective presence influenced employee PCSP.

Design/methodology/approach – Taking a sample of 110 teams with 361 pairs of leaders and employees in Chinese hotels, a moderated mediation model was tested across individual and team levels using hierarchical linear modeling.

Findings – This study found that leader positive affective presence (LPAP) had a positive effect on employee PCSP, whereas leader negative affective presence (LNAP) had a negative effect on employee PCSP. Employee prosocial motivation mediated the relationship between leader affective presence and employee PCSP. The employee power distance value weakened the LNAP–employee prosocial motivation relationship, which subsequently mitigated the negative indirect effect of LNAP on employee PCSP through employee prosocial motivation.

Research limitations/implications – The sample was drawn from one hotel group in China, which may limit external validity.

Practical implications – Hospitality organizations should emphasize the affective traits of leaders in employee initiatives. Leader affective presence should be considered during recruitment and promotion. Management should pay more attention to employee emotional management and value alignment.

Originality/value – The findings provide deeper insight into the role of LPAP and LNAP in influencing employees' PCSP. It sheds new light on the mechanisms and conditions through which leader affective presence might heighten or hinder employee PCSP.

Keywords China, Power distance, Prosocial motivation, Proactive customer service performance, Leader affective presence

Paper type Research paper

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1. Introduction

Because of consumers' diverse, individualized and sometimes unexpected demands, employee assigned roles cannot handle nonroutine interactions with guests (Raub and Liao, 2012). Employees are expected to be self-starters with strong commitment and enduring performance behaviors. Defined as proactive customer service performance (PCSP), such performance is highly valued by hospitality management (Rank *et al.*, 2007; Raub and Liao, 2012; Chen *et al.*, 2017; Ye *et al.*, 2019). Scholars have attempted to understand the causes of employee proactive service behaviors by examining personal and contextual factors (Tuan, 2018; Lyu *et al.*, 2016; Ling *et al.*, 2016; Chen *et al.*, 2017; Raub and Liao, 2012). In the context-oriented view, one factor that has been considered critical is leadership, such as the impact of positive or negative leadership on employee PCSP (Lyu *et al.*, 2016; Tuan, 2018). These studies have mainly demonstrated that leaders' supportive or dysfunctional behaviors help or impede employees in taking the initiative to engage in service behaviors. Hospitality is a people business, and the way in which leaders make their subordinates feel positive or negative in their day-to-day interactions is particularly important for influencing employees' attitudes and behaviors toward customers (Tuan, 2018; Jiang *et al.*, 2019). Nevertheless, few studies have explored the effect of the daily function of leaders' interpersonal-laden and affect-related personality traits, such as leader affective presence, on employee PCSP.

The concept of leader affective presence captures the effect of leaders' affect on employees' feelings, whether positive or negative (Madrid *et al.*, 2016a; Jiang *et al.*, 2019). Specifically, leader positive affective presence (LPAP) is the degree to which leaders induce employees to feel happy, enthusiastic, and inspired (Madrid *et al.*, 2016b; Jiang *et al.*, 2019). Leader negative affective presence (LNAP) is the degree to which leaders activate feelings of stress, tension and worry among employees (Madrid *et al.*, 2016a, 2016b). To date, only one study has examined the effect of LPAP on subordinates' formalized work role performance within the hospitality context (Jiang *et al.*, 2019). However, employees' negative affective experience may hamper their willingness to exhibit PCSP. Even worse, they may pass on the negative emotions to customers (Zhu *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, it is important to consider both LPAP and LNAP.

Furthermore, the education level and salary of frontline employees are not generally high in the hospitality industry, employees use their affective experience to determine how hard they work to a large extent (Jiang *et al.*, 2019). Leader affective presence offers important affective information cues to subordinates. Affect-as-information theory expounds that individuals' affective experiences are important information cues that shape their cognitive judgments (Schwarz, 2012). Based on this theory, positive affective experience influences utility judgments and stimulates employees to strive for proactive goals and to strongly value the positive outcomes of behaviors (Parker *et al.*, 2010; Schwarz, 2012). Contrary to positive affect, negative affect narrows cognitive processing and tends to increase risk estimates and evasive behaviors (Schwarz, 2012; Parker *et al.*, 2010). Thus, our first purpose was to explore how and when leader affective presence influences employee PCSP based on affect-as-information theory.

Because the core of hospitality service is to satisfy customers, we asked whether leader affective presence can fuel employees' customer-oriented motivation to exhibit PCSP. Prosocial motivation refers to the motivation an individual has for helping others through increased effort (Grant, 2008; Patil and Lebel, 2019), which has been highly valued in promoting employees' service quality in hospitality management (Tsaur *et al.*, 2014; Chen *et al.*, 2017; Cheng and Chen, 2017). Based on the affect-as-information theory, positive affective experience makes people judge that they are in a conducive environment, which stimulates their motivation to help others (Grant, 2008). In contrast, negative affective

experience leads to effort withdrawal and triggers employee avoidance motivation because of high-risk estimates (Schwarz, 2012; Madrid *et al.*, 2016b). In this vein, there is a logic that leader affective presence can influence employees' prosocial motivation and further influence their PCSP. Therefore, our second purpose was to test the leader affective presence–employee prosocial motivation–employee PCSP linkage based on affect-as-information theory.

Moreover, the management effectiveness of hotels is often influenced by the values of employees (Raub and Robert, 2013; Daniels and Greguras, 2014). China has a high power distance (PD) culture (Hofstede, 1993). The degree to which individuals attach importance to power influences the judgment of affective information, which in turn affects the influence of leader affective presence on employee motivation and proactive behaviors. Therefore, based on affect-as-information theory, our last purpose was to test whether the employee PD value moderates the leader affective presence–employee prosocial motivation–employee PCSP linkage in the Chinese context (Figure 1).

2. Literature review and hypotheses

2.1 Affect-as-information theory

Affect-as-information theory explicates that affect performs an informational function, which influences individuals' judgment of their situations (Schwarz, 2012). Different feelings provide different types of information. People in a positive affect state process information heuristically and globally and interpret their situation as benign (Schwarz, 2012). In contrast, those in a negative affect state process information diagnostically and locally and interpret their environment as problematic (Schwarz, 2012). The affect-as-information theory underlies the influence of negative affect on service performance and standards (Scott and Cervone, 2002). King *et al.'s* (2006) research revealed that individual perception of a meaningful life can be effectively predicted by positive affect. Scholars also applied this theory to the field of consumer behavior, examining mainly the factors that influence the use of affect in consumer judgments (Kramer and Yoon, 2007; Avnet *et al.*, 2012).

We used affect-as-information theory to underpin our conceptual framework for three main reasons. First, the reliance on affect depends on the chronic stimulation of information sources (Schwarz, 2012). A leader's affective presence is a type of affect-related personality trait that can exert long-lasting affective influence on subordinates. Employees' inner motivations and behaviors are deeply influenced by their daily emotional experience interacting with their superiors (Schwarz, 2012). Second, whether people rely on their affective experience for judgment depends, to a large extent, on the information value (Schwarz, 2012). Because of the prominent power of the leader, employees' emotional experience in the interaction process with their supervisors is an important indicator of

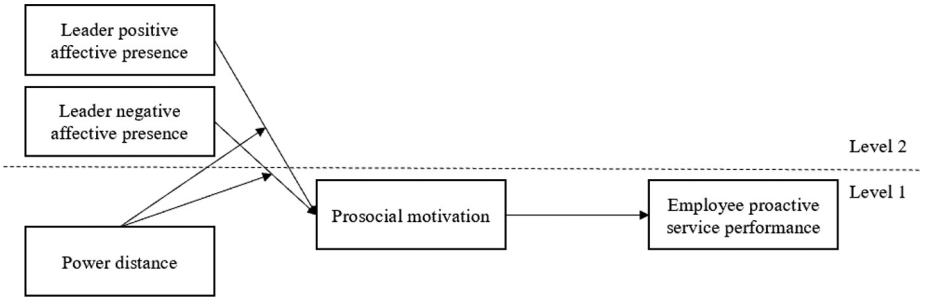

Figure 1.
Theoretical model

whether the leaders are satisfied with the work of their subordinates (Jiang *et al.*, 2019). Leader affective presence has salient information value for employees to judge their situation and further shape their motivation and behaviors. Third, in the Chinese context, people attach great importance to their feelings and usually deal with things according to the principles of affect, reason and law (Hu, 2012). Thus, leader affective presence is an important information cue for employees' performance.

2.2 Leader affective presence and employee proactive customer service performance

Studies of employees' performance beyond their job descriptions follow two strands of literature: PCSP and extra-role customer service performance. However, while the employee PCSP concept emphasizes initiative and is discretionary, the extra-role performance by employees involves their frequent natural reactions (Raub and Liao, 2012; Chen *et al.*, 2017). PCSP requires long commitment with positive and innovative thinking behavior, which is not exhibited in extra-role customer service performance (Chen *et al.*, 2017). Additionally, PCSP shows a customer-oriented mentality in a persistent way, whereas extra-role customer service performance can be an instant behavior (Lyu *et al.*, 2016; Chen *et al.*, 2017).

Because the self-initiated, committed, forward-thinking and enduring orientation of PCSP leads to improved customer experience (Zhu *et al.*, 2017), we decided to study PCSP as an outcome in the current study. The positive influences of LPAP on employee PCSP are noted for the following reasons. Service employees, motivated by positive affective experiences with their leaders, become optimistic and confident, and their leaders elicit their willingness to proactively set goals and achieve superior performance (Jiang *et al.*, 2019). Pleasurable affective experiences can also activate employees' forward-thinking approach and flexibility (Madrid *et al.*, 2016a, 2016b; Jiang *et al.*, 2019), and employees will anticipate customers' needs and proactively improve service quality. Extant studies have also found that positive affect significantly predicts employee work-related performance (Barsade and Gibson, 2007; Jiang *et al.*, 2019). More importantly, according to affect-as-information theory, LPAP conveys a message that employees are respected, trusted and appreciated, which creates a strong sense of ownership over their work among employees. They will then be more proactive, align their own values to the long-term interests of the organization, and spontaneously serve customers beyond their formalized duties (Jiang *et al.*, 2019; Madrid *et al.*, 2016a).

Conversely, LNAP makes employees feel stressed, tense and worried (Madrid *et al.*, 2016a). Under such conditions, employees have to suppress their own unpleasant affect to meet role requirements, or they may even vent their daily negative affect on customers (Medler-Liraz, 2014). Evidence demonstrates that negative affect causes job dissatisfaction, turnover intentions and fatigue (Thoresen *et al.*, 2003; Karatepe *et al.*, 2012). Employees who experience negative affect every day feel difficult to actively serve customers. Furthermore, based on affect-as-information theory, employees judge that they are being ostracized and are untrustworthy based on LNAP (Madrid *et al.*, 2016a, 2016b). They are more prone to concentrate on the negative aspects of work and believe that the more they do, the more mistakes they make (Karatepe *et al.*, 2012; Medler-Liraz, 2014). Thus, they prefer to do things according to job specifications rather than taking the initiative to serve. Following the above analyses, we present two hypotheses:

H1a. LPAP positively impacts employee PCSP.

H1b. LNAP negatively impacts employee PCSP.

2.3 Employee prosocial motivation as a mediator

Prosocial motivation is about the motivation for helping others, which encourages individuals to anticipate and meet the needs of others (Grant and Berry, 2011; Zhu and Akhtar, 2014). In this research, we argue that leader affective presence can influence employee prosocial motivation and further affect employees' engagement in PCSP behaviors.

Leader affective presence exerts an impact on employee prosocial motivation. Prosocial motivation is governed by the "hot" experiential system (Grant and Berry, 2011; Zhu and Akhtar, 2014). Individuals who experience positive affect tend to be triggered by their inner motivation to benefit others and perceive other individuals or events with generally positive attitudes (Karatepe *et al.*, 2012). Evidence also demonstrates that positive affect significantly predicts cooperation, help behaviors, and interpersonal performance (Barsade and Gibson, 2007). In this vein, when service employees enjoy interacting with their leaders, their motivation for caring for others is likely to increase. However, individuals having negative affective experiences are likely to pick up on the negative areas concerning their work and organizations and are prone to perceive the dysfunctional side of organizations (Karatepe *et al.*, 2012). Negative affective experiences with their leaders make employees dwell on their own or others' failures and shortcomings, prompting their avoidance motivation to reduce risks rather than contribute to others (Lench and Darbor, 2014; Karatepe *et al.*, 2012). Thus, we state:

H2a. LPAP positively impacts employee prosocial motivation.

H2b. LNAP negatively impacts employee prosocial motivation.

Employee prosocial motivation has a positive relationship with employee PCSP. In hospitality services, it is not uncommon for employees to encounter and solve nonroutine or unexpected customer service issues (Chen *et al.*, 2017; Raub and Liao, 2012). Previous findings demonstrated that prosocially motivated employees tend to pursue collective goals and interests (Perry and Hondeghem, 2008), help customers (Bolino, 1999) and engage in organizational citizenship behavior (Hu and Liden, 2015) and perspective taking (Grant and Berry, 2011). In support of these arguments, prosocially motivated employees have a higher propensity for taking action to benefit their customers beyond their explicitly prescribed job requirements and to set high service performance goals.

Based on the affect-as-information theory, we contend that leader affective presence influences employee prosocial motivation and further impacts employee PCSP. LPAP offers a positive information cue that employees are being treated like family members, are respected and are trustworthy (Schwarz, 2012; Jiang *et al.*, 2019; Madrid *et al.*, 2016b). Such a humanized job setting triggers employee prosocial motivation to care about customers. Reciprocally, employees will spontaneously use all kinds of resources to engage in customer-oriented behaviors (Chen *et al.*, 2017). However, LNAP makes employees judge that they are in a serious and indifferent environment (Schwarz, 2012; Madrid *et al.*, 2016a, 2016b). Employees are more likely to be activated by self-oriented motivation to calculate their own gains and losses, which in turn will drive them to perform based solely on their assigned duties (or do as little as possible) to reduce mistakes rather than participating in service behaviors beyond their formal requirements. In summary, we propose:

H3a. LPAP positively impacts employee PCSP via enhancing employee prosocial motivation.

H3b. LNAP negatively impacts employee PCSP via weakening employee prosocial motivation.

2.4 Power distance as a moderator

In Hofstede's culture dimensions, PD refers to social-level cultural norms (Hofstede, 1993; Guillet *et al.*, 2019). In organizational research, PD essentially captures employees' cognition of the superior-subordinate relationship (Raub and Robert, 2010). Additionally, culturally endorsed implicit leadership (CIL) theory demonstrates that employees generally have certain perceptions or prototypes of their leaders' behaviors and attributes (Eden and Leviatan, 1975). Leaders are considered highly effective if their behaviors are perceived as consistent with employees' CIL theory, and vice versa (Eden and Leviatan, 1975). Integrating CIL theory and affect-as-information theory, researchers have reported that employees holding a high PD value are task-oriented and submissive to the hierarchy (Raub and Robert, 2010; Hofstede *et al.*, 2010). To these employees, leaders are always in high power positions, authoritative and demanding (Raub and Robert, 2010; Hofstede *et al.*, 2010). In this vein, service employees valuing high PD will undermine positive reaction to leaders' positive affective information but enhance interpretations of leaders' negative affective delivery, which will weaken the positive (negative) effect of LPAP and LNAP on employee prosocial motivation.

Conversely, employees valuing low PD are relationship-oriented and pursue democratic and engaging superior–subordinate relationships (Raub and Robert, 2010; Hofstede *et al.*, 2010). Positive affective experiences from interactions with leaders are consistent with the value of low PD. Those holding a lower PD value tend to accentuate interpretations of leaders' positive affective information but resent negative affection transmission from their supervisors, which will augment the positive (negative) effect of LPAP and LNAP on employee prosocial motivation and relationship. Following the above analyses, we propose:

H4a. The positive effect of LPAP on employee prosocial motivation is weakened when employees have a higher PD rather than a lower PD.

H4b. The negative effect of LNAP on employee prosocial motivation is weakened when employees have a higher PD rather than a lower PD.

According to the arguments above, an individual's CIL theory influences his or her evaluation of affective information; thus, the positive affective experiences of employees induced by their leaders are more in line with employees' value of low PD, whereas the negative affective experiences of employees induced by their leaders are in line with their value of high PD. Service employees valuing a high PD, therefore, tend to emphasize hierarchical norms and prefer to fulfill the prescribed role norms (Raub and Robert, 2010; Hofstede *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, the indirectly positive (negative) effect on employee PCSP by leader positive (negative) affective presence via employee prosocial motivation will be weakened. Conversely, those valuing a low PD strongly expect an equal power distribution and proactively engage in organizational activities (Hofstede *et al.*, 2010).

Therefore, the indirectly positive (negative) effect of LPAP and LNAP on employee PCSP will be enhanced via employee prosocial motivation. Our final hypotheses are stated as follows:

H5a. The indirectly positive effect of LPAP on employee PCSP via employee prosocial motivation is weakened when employees have a higher PD rather than a lower PD.

H5b. The indirectly negative effect of LNAP on employee PCSP via employee prosocial motivation is weakened when employees have a higher PD rather than a lower PD.

3. Methodology

3.1 Data and procedure

Seven midscale to upscale hotels in Beijing and one luxury hotel in Qingdao were contacted for participation in this study. The seven hotels in Beijing averaged 40 employees, and the luxury hotel in Qingdao had 580 employees. These hotels promote a culture of employee empowerment and customer orientation. We chose these hotels because they value the customer experience and empower employees to perform beyond their formalized work role to meet customers' diverse, individualized and sometimes unexpected demands. From these hotels, we sought participation from employees in departments that have opportunities to interact with guests.

We coded all questionnaires to match leader–employee dyads. The coded questionnaires, marked for one team leader and his or her team employees, were placed in one large envelope. Then human resource (HR) managers helped distribute the leader questionnaires to the team leaders. Team leaders were instructed to give demographic information about themselves and their teams and evaluate team members' PCSP. They were then asked to match the code on the questionnaire with an employee's evaluation with the code on the questionnaire given to that employee. Employees filled in the questionnaire to rate their immediate leader's affective presence, their own PD value and their prosocial motivation. Once questionnaires were completed, leaders and employees sent them directly to the HR managers, who mailed the responses to the first author in sealed envelopes.

The suggestions of Podsakoff *et al.* (2012) were followed to avoid social desirability bias and ensure the quality of data. We first explained that our purpose was only academic investigation, and responses would not have any impact on performance appraisals. Second, we stressed that questionnaires were confidential and the information would be aggregated for analysis, rather than observed personally. Third, we explained that it was completely voluntary for employees to participate in the survey. Finally, we explained to the team leaders and HR managers on how to complete the questionnaire. If they had any other questions in completing the questionnaires, they were asked to contact us directly using the contact information on the cover of the questionnaires.

There were three to six employees in each team; for teams with more than six members, we selected six of them randomly. We distributed the questionnaires to 111 teams composed of 370 employees; 231 employees were from the seven midscale to upscale hotels, and 139 were from the luxury hotel. After removing responses with missing data and unmatched data, the overall response rate was 99.10% on the team level ($N = 110$) and 97.57% on the individual level ($N = 361$).

3.2 Measures

Following the requirements for translating and back-translating the instruments (Brislin, 1980), we first converted the English instrument into Chinese and then vice versa. A five-point Likert scale was used to measure the variables and all construct measures were reliable, as shown in Cronbach's alpha values being greater than 0.70 (Cavana *et al.*, 2000; Nunnally, 1978).

3.2.1 Leader positive affective presence. Madrid *et al.'s* (2016b) scale of three items ($\alpha = 0.70$) was used for measuring LPAP because it was widely adopted and validated in prior studies (Madrid *et al.*, 2016a; Yik *et al.*, 2011; Jiang *et al.*, 2019). To aggregate the employees'

ratings at the team level, r_{wg} was calculated and its value was above 0.70, indicating that the level of interrater agreement was appropriate (James *et al.*, 1984). The degree of team-level variance compared with individual-level variance was assessed by analyzing the intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC)(1). Then the reliability of the group mean was determined by ICC(2) (Bliese, 2000). Following the recommended criteria, ICC(1) ranged from moderate (0.10) to strong (0.25), and ICC(2) ranged from moderate (0.50) to strong (0.60) (LeBreton and Senter, 2008). The results, $r_{wg} = 0.87$, ICC(1) = 0.27, ICC(2) = 0.55, showed justification for the aggregation of LPAP rated by employees at the team level.

3.2.2 Leader negative affective presence. We also used the three items developed by Madrid *et al.* (2016b) to measure LNAP by asking the employees the extent to which interacting with their team leader made them stressed, tense, and worried ($\alpha = 0.93$). The justification for aggregating the team employee ratings to the team level was supported [$r_{wg} = 0.71$, ICC(1) = 0.46, ICC(2) = 0.74].

3.2.3 Power distance. The measurement for PD was deployed by using the scale of six items ($\alpha = 0.89$) developed by Dorfman and Howell (1988).

3.2.4 Prosocial motivation. Employee prosocial motivation was measured based on Grant's (2008) four items ($\alpha = 0.82$).

3.2.5 Employee proactive customer service performance. Employee PCSP was rated by the leaders using the seven-item scale ($\alpha = 0.82$) from Rank *et al.* (2007).

*3.2.6 Control variables.*Based on prior studies (Johnson and Spector, 2007; Jiang *et al.*, 2019), we selected certain demographic characteristics as control variables – including age, gender and educational level of team leaders and employees, as well as leaders' tenure in the present position – because they influence individuals' work attitudes and behaviors. Both team leaders' and team employees' tenure for working together was selected as a control variable because studies have shown that the longer employees work with team leaders, the more exposure employees have to their team leaders' affective presence (Madrid *et al.*, 2016a).

3.3 Analytic strategy

The theoretical model in Figure 1 shows a multilevel model with constructs both on team level (leader affective presence) and the individual level (employee PCSP). Moreover, hierarchical data were sampled as the employees were selected from different teams. Thus, the conceptual model was tested with hierarchical linear modeling. The independent variables at the individual level, except for gender, were centered by grand mean. This centering approach excludes the multicollinearity effect in the estimation of the team level by controlling the effects of the individual level (Hofmann and Gavin, 1998). The PRODCLIN program was then applied for the mediation hypotheses (MacKinnon *et al.*, 2007) to perform a 95% confidence interval (CI) estimate. Finally, the moderated mediation hypotheses were tested by following Edwards and Lambert's moderated path analysis (2007).

4. Results

4.1 Preliminary analysis

The results of preliminary statistical analysis are reported in Table 1. Confirmatory factor analyses were then performed before the hypothesis testing to assess the constructs' discriminant validity in the model (Table 2). Although LPAP and LNAP were ultimately aggregated at the team level, we followed previous research to examine the two factors at the individual level to determine their discriminant validity (Farh and Chen, 2014). A baseline model consisting of five factors – LPAP, LNAP, prosocial motivation, PD and employee PCSP—fit the data quite well ($\chi^2_{(220)} = 403.82$, CFI = 0.95, TLI = 0.94, IFI = 0.95,

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Individual level									
1. Employee gender	0.62	0.49	–						
2. Employee age	30.41	9.04	−0.08	–					
3. Employee education	1.50	0.58	−0.32**	−0.28**	–				
4. Leader–employee relationship length	19.99	38.22	−0.37**	0.44**	0.07	–			
5. Prosocial motivation	4.22	0.52	−0.02	0.07	−0.08	−0.01	(0.82)		
6. PD	2.73	0.96	−0.22**	0.07	0.10	0.15**	0.10	(0.89)	
7. Proactive service performance	4.05	0.51	0.14*	0.08	−0.18**	−0.08	0.17**	−0.10*	(0.82)
Team level									
1. Leader gender	0.48	0.50	–						
2. Leader age	31.29	7.30	−0.11*	–					
3. Leader education	1.63	0.56	0.02	−0.45**	–				
4. Leader tenure	68.17	73.35	−0.26**	0.64**	−0.10	–			
5. LPAP	4.13	0.45	−0.06	0.02	−0.11*	0.00	(0.70)		
6. LNAP	2.58	0.90	0.06	0.06	0.07	0.09	−0.11*	(0.93)	

Notes: Individual = 361, team = 110. The diagonal shows the reliability estimates (coefficient alpha). Level 1 variables were centered by grand mean in all models. Gender: 0 = male, 1 = female; Education: 1 = high school and below, 2 = college, 3 = bachelor's, 4 = graduate and above; *$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$ (two-tailed)

Table 1. Correlation metrics

Models	χ^2	*df*	$\Delta\chi^2$	CFI	TLI	IFI	RMSEA	SRMR
Five-factor model	403.82	220		0.95	0.94	0.95	0.05	0.05
Four-factor model	610.94	224	207.12***	0.90	0.88	0.90	0.07	0.07
Two-factor model	2047.86	229	825.98***	0.51	0.34	0.51	0.15	0.14
One-factor model	2694.80	230	646.94***	0.33	0.26	0.34	0.17	0.18

Notes: CFI indicates comparative fit index; TLI, Tucker–Lewis index; IFI, incremental fit index; RMSEA, root mean square error of approximation; SRMR, standardized root mean square residual

Table 2. Results of confirmatory factor analysis

RMSEA = 0.05, SRMR = 0.05). Reviewing previous studies (Farh and Chen, 2014), we also compared the baseline (unconstrained) model with an alternative constrained model. In the first constrained model, we combined LPAP and LNAP into one factor. In the second constrained model, we then combined the constructs measured by employees into one factor (LPAP, LNAP, employee prosocial motivation and PD value). Finally, we combined all the constructs into one factor. Test outcomes demonstrated the better fit of the baseline model with the data than competing models, thus supporting the discriminant validity (Table 2).

We evaluated the factor loadings, AVE values and composite reliability values to determine the constructs' convergent validity (Table 3). All factor loadings showed significance and were higher than 0.50 (Chin, 1998; Hair *et al.*, 2010). Except for employee PCSP, the AVE values reached the criterion of 0.50 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Even though PCSP's AVE value was lower than 0.50, each construct's composite reliability was greater than the minimum cutoff of 0.60, suggesting that convergent validity was still acceptable (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988).

We adopted the one-factor analysis by Harman (1976) to detect the presence of common method variance (CMV) bias. If a considerable CMV bias exists, one common factor among all items would emerge to account for the most variance (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). Our tests

Construct	Factor loadings	AVE	SAVE	CR
Employee proactive service performance		0.40	0.63	0.82
My staff member proactively shares information with customers to meet their financial needs	0.60**			
My staff member anticipates issues or needs customers might have and proactively develops solutions	0.68**			
My staff member uses own judgment and understanding of risk to determine when to make exceptions or improvise solutions	0.57**			
My staff member takes ownership by following through with the customer interaction and ensures a smooth transition to other service representatives	0.49**			
My staff member actively creates partnerships with other service representatives to better serve customers	0.62**			
My staff member takes initiative to communicate client requirements to other service areas and collaborates in implementing solutions	0.73**			
My staff member proactively checks with customers to verify that customer expectations have been met or exceeded	0.70**			
PD		0.61	0.78	0.88
It is frequently necessary for a manager to use authority and power when dealing with subordinates	0.68**			
Managers should seldom ask for the opinions of employees	0.87**			
Managers should avoid off-the-job social contacts with employees	0.90**			
Employees should not disagree with management decisions	0.75**			
Managers should not delegate important tasks to employees	0.67**			
Managers should make most decisions without consulting subordinates	0.68**			
Prosocial motivation		0.54	0.73	0.82
I am motivated to do my work because I care about benefiting others through my work	0.69**			
I am motivated to do my work because I want to help others through my work	0.80**			
I am motivated to do my work because I want to have positive impact on others	0.75**			
I am motivated to do my work because it is important to me to do good for others through my work	0.68**			
LPAP		0.46	0.68	0.71
To what extent interacting with your team leader makes you feel happy	0.78**			
To what extent interacting with your team leader makes you feel enthusiastic	0.60**			
To what extent interacting with your team leader makes you feel inspired	0.63**			
LNAP		0.83	0.91	0.94
To what extent interacting with your team leader makes you feel stressed	0.86**			
To what extent interacting with your team leader makes you feel tense	0.96**			
To what extent interacting with your team leader makes you feel worried	0.91**			

Table 3.
Statistics of construct items

Notes: *$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$ (two-tailed). AVE indicates average variance extracted; CR, composite reliability; SAVE, the square root of AVE

revealed that the eigenvalues were greater than 1.0 for the four factors (LPAP, LNAP, prosocial motivation and PD), with the first factor accounting for 27.34% of the variance. Therefore, CMV bias was not present in this study. In addition, to further examine CMV bias, we conducted an unmeasured latent method factor analysis by introducing an unmeasured latent variable with all the indicators loading on it (Eichhorn, 2014). This technique allowed all the factor loadings to be set as the same, and the variance of the common latent variable was 1. The results showed that the factor loading was 0.28 and explained 7.84% of the total variance, below the threshold of 50% (Eichhorn, 2014). In all, the results eliminated the potential existence of common method bias.

4.2 Hypothesis testing

Table 4 reports hierarchical modeling regression results. Model 5 showed that team LPAP and employee PCSP had a significant, positive relationship ($\beta = 0.18, p < 0.05$). This finding supported *H1a*, the positive association of team LPAP with employee PCSP. *H1b* posited that team LNAP was negatively associated with employee PCSP, which was verified by the analysis in Model 4 ($\beta = -0.11, p < 0.01$). Then, in Model 7, we introduced simultaneously two independent variables for obtaining robust results; the analyses showed that the relationship between LPAP and employee PCSP was marginally significant ($\beta = 0.15, p < 0.1$), yet we found a significant relationship between LNAP and employee PCSP ($\beta = -0.10, p < 0.01$). With these results taken together, both hypotheses were supported.

H2a proposed that LPAP had a positive effect on employee prosocial motivation. The findings in Model 1 supported *H2a* ($\beta = 0.29, p < 0.01$). *H2b* stated that LNAP was negatively related to employee prosocial motivation, which was supported by Model 2 ($\beta = -0.11, p < 0.01$). Moreover, the findings from Model 3, which simultaneously included the two independent variables, lent more support for *H2a* and *H2b*.

H3a suggested that employee prosocial motivation served as an intervening mechanism for linking team LPAP and employee PCSP. The outcomes from PRODCLIN analysis illustrated that the indirect relationship of team LPAP and employee PCSP through employee prosocial motivation was significant (95% CI = [0.001, 0.051], not containing 0). Thus, *H3a* was verified. *H3b* posited a mediating role of employee prosocial motivation in linking team LNAP and employee PCSP. We tested the mediation effect following a procedure similar to that used for *H3a*, and the results supported *H3b* (95% CI = [−0.0199, −0.0004], not containing 0).

Regarding *H4a*, we did not find a significant interactive effect of employee PD and LPAP on employee prosocial motivation ($\beta = -0.01$, n.s.). Therefore, we rejected *H4a*. *H4b*, which suggested that the relationship between LNAP and employee prosocial motivation was moderated by employee PD, was verified by Model 4 ($\beta = 0.12, p < 0.01$ A slope test illustrated in Figure 2 further verified *H4b*, showing that when employee having low PD, the relationship of LNAP and employee prosocial motivation became more negative ($\beta = -0.23, p < 0.01$), however, when employee having high PD, the relationship became insignificant ($\beta = 0.01$, n.s.). Therefore, *H4b* was verified.

The moderated mediation method was applied for testing *H5a* and *H5b* (Edwards and Lambert, 2007). Applying moderated path analysis, we estimated the effects at 1 SD higher and lower than the mean of the moderators. *H5a* predicted that employee PD was a moderating factor in the indirect effect of team LPAP on employee PCSP through employee prosocial motivation. However, because the test for the first-stage relationship between LPAP and employee prosocial motivation was insignificant ($\beta = 0.01$, n.s.), the effect of employee PD as a moderator was not found and this hypothesis was not supported. *H5b* proposed that employee PD moderated the indirect effect of team LNAP on employee PCSP

Table 4.
Hierarchical linear modeling regression results

Variable	Prosocial motivation					Proactive service performance				
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
Level 1									
Employee gender	−0.06 (0.07)	−0.07 (0.07)	−0.07 (0.7)	−0.03 (0.06)	−0.01 (0.05)	−0.02 (0.05)	−0.02 (0.05)	−0.01 (0.06)	−0.01 (0.05)
Employee age	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Employee education	−0.06 (0.06)	−0.04 (0.06)	−0.05 (0.06)	−0.05 (0.06)	−0.01 (0.04)	−0.00 (0.04)	−0.00 (0.04)	−0.00 (0.04)	−0.00 (0.04)
Leader–employee relationship length	−0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	−0.00 (0.00)	−0.00 (0.00)	−0.00 (0.00)	−0.00 (0.00)	−0.00 (0.00)	−0.00 (0.00)
PD				−0.30 (0.30)					0.31 (0.22)
Prosocial motivation								0.07*(0.04)	
Level 2									
Leader gender	−0.03 (0.06)	−0.02 (0.06)	−0.01 (0.06)	0.01 (0.06)	−0.02 (0.07)	−0.01 (0.07)	−0.00 (0.07)	−0.00 (0.07)	−0.00 (0.07)
Leader age	0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	−0.01 (0.01)	−0.01 (0.01)	−0.01 (0.01)	−0.01 (0.01)	−0.01 (0.01)
Leader education	0.02 (0.06)	0.01 (0.07)	0.04 (0.07)	0.03(0.06)	−0.06 (0.06)	−0.06 (0.06)	−0.04 (0.06)	−0.05 (0.06)	−0.04 (0.06)
Leader tenure	−0.00 (0.00)	−0.00 (0.00)	−0.00 (0.00)	−0.00 (0.00)	−0.00 (0.00)	−0.00 (0.00)	−0.00 (0.00)	−0.00 (0.00)	−0.00 (0.00)
LPAP	0.29**(0.07)		0.24** (0.07)	0.24** (0.06)	0.18* (0.09)		0.15^{+} (0.09)	0.14 (0.09)	0.13 (0.08)
LNAP		−0.11** (0.03)	−0.10** (0.03)	−0.11** (0.03)		−0.11** (0.04)	−10**(0.04)	−0.10* (0.04)	−0.10* (0.04)
Cross-level interaction									
LPAP*PD				−0.01 (0.07)					−0.09 (0.05)
LNAP*PD				0.12** (0.04)					0.01 (0.03)

Notes: Individual = 361, team = 110. Level 1 variables were centered by grand-mean for all models. Gender: 0 = male, 1 = female; education: 1 = high school and below, 2 = college, 3 = bachelor's, 4 = graduate and above; $^{+}p < 0.1$; $^{*}p < 0.05$; $^{**}p < 0.01$ (two-tailed)

via employee prosocial motivation. *H5b* was supported by the test results: when the employee PD value was low, a significantly negative indirect effect of team LNAP on employee PCSP via employee prosocial motivation ($\beta = -0.031$, 95% CI = [−0.060, −0.009], not containing 0), whereas when employee PD was high, there was no significant relationship ($\beta = 0.000$, 95% CI = [−0.012, 0.012], containing 0).

5. Discussion and conclusions

This study found that LPAP can inspire employee PCSP, whereas LNAP exerts a negative effect on employee PCSP. Employee prosocial motivation serves as an effective underlying mechanism that strengthens the linkage between leader affective presence and employee PCSP. The employee PD value weakens the LNAP–employee prosocial motivation relationship and further attenuates the indirect negative effect of LNAP on employee PCSP via employee prosocial motivation. However, no significant effect of employee PD was detected on the LPAP–employee prosocial motivation–employee PCSP linkage.

5.1 Theoretical implications

This study has implications for theory in five areas. First, we enriched the affect-as-information theory by applying it to hospitality management. As far as we know, this is the first stud applying this theory to explain employee PCSP in the hospitality management field. Prior research used a proactive motivation model or conservation of resource theory to study employee PCSP (Chen *et al.*, 2017; Li *et al.*, 2016). Schwarz (2012) called for an examination of the source of affect. This study answered his call by focusing on the affect sources of service employees from their leaders, providing a more comprehensive understanding of affect-as-information theory in hospitality management.

Second, this study provided evidence that, as a personal affective trait, leader affective presence is an important antecedent of employee PCSP. This finding expands and enriches previous literature focusing on general self-efficacy, leadership, sexual harassment, high-commitment HR practices and workplace ostracism to understand service employee proactive behaviors (Chen *et al.*, 2017; Raub and Liao, 2012; Lyu *et al.*, 2016; Tuan, 2018; Zhu *et al.*, 2017). Furthermore, the study of Jiang *et al.* (2019) explored the effects of the only LPAP on employee service performance. Little is known about how and when LNAP may influence employee PCSP. Service employees may transfer negative emotional experiences from supervisors to customers, which may result in financial loss if customers are not well

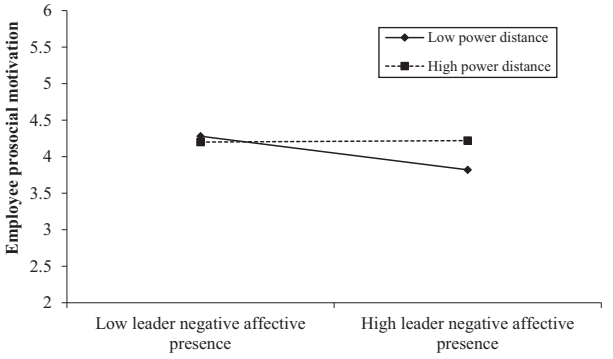

Figure 2.
PD moderates the relationship between LNAP and employee prosocial motivation

served (Medler-Liraz, 2014). Examining LNAP can help us better understand what prevents employee PCSP.

Third, this study explored motivational pathways to link different kinds of leader affective presence with employee PCSP, thus lending new empirical support to research on motivation and leadership. Existing research has attempted to bridge leader and employee PCSP based on employees' affective psychological response, such as social identity and work engagement (Lyu *et al.*, 2016; Tuan, 2018). Our study examined the information function of affect, which can shape employees' prosocial motivation and further affect their proactive behaviors (Schwarz, 2012). This finding provides a novel perspective to investigate the mechanism between leader affective traits and employee PCSP.

Fourth, we integrated affect-as-information theory and CIL theory to explain the boundary conditions of employee PD, which responds to the call by Madrid *et al.* (2016b) to explore and understand the influence of affective presence on work effectiveness under certain conditions. Previous literature revealed that collectivism values and discretionary HR practices had moderated the leadership–PCSP relationship (Lyu *et al.*, 2016; Tuan, 2018). Based on affect-as-information theory and CIL theory, power inequalities can not only influence individuals' judgment of affective information, but also affect their judgment of leadership effectiveness. Therefore, PD can have a regulating role in the linkage of leaders' affective trait and employee PCSP.

Finally, our findings elucidated the different roles of LPAP and LNAP in employees' proactive service behaviors in the context of employees' cultural values. We cannot simply assume that the two affective traits have opposite effects on employee PCSP in the Chinese context. This conclusion conveys that although LPAP is inconsistent with the expectations of employees holding a high PD value, this cognitive conflict does not diminish the positive effects of positive affective experiences because they are inherently rewarding (Lawler, 2001; Madrid *et al.*, 2016a; Jiang *et al.*, 2019). However, employees' negative affective experiences are prone to narrow their cognitive process (Parker *et al.*, 2010) and make them pay closer attention to their own anticipation (Lench and Darbor, 2014). Because LNAP conforms to the expectations of employees valuing high PD, employee prosocial motivation can be weakened by the negative effect of LNAP.

5.2 Practical implications

This research offers four implications for practice. First, hospitality enterprises should emphasize the role of the affective traits of leaders in employee initiative. Hotel organizations can use affective trait assessment to recruit and promote leaders of high emotional intelligence. In addition, hotels can provide training for supervisors to enhance their emotional intelligence, conversation skills, and communication methods. More focus can be placed on employees' emotional management, making them feel like family members who are respected, trusted and protected. When employees feel appreciated, they will invest more effort and energy in performing duties beyond their prescribed work, such as taking the initiative to care for customers' needs.

Second, hospitality management should cultivate service employees' prosocial motivation to induce proactive service behaviors. Although the salaries of frontline employees are generally not high, managers should strive to create a caring and engaging environment for employees. Moreover, hotels can organize team-building activities, from which employees can learn sharing, empathizing and perspective-taking. Furthermore, hotel management should fulfill their social responsibilities by encouraging employees to participate in activities benefiting social well-being and cultivating their sense of responsibility. In this way, employees will pay more attention to others in their daily work.

Third, hotel management should appreciate the values of employees. On the one hand, even in the face of subordinates valuing high PD, leaders should try to create a positive affective experience with employees, which is more conducive to employees' caring about others and engaging in proactive service behaviors. On the other hand, hotel organizations should not only consider the technical ability of employees, but also acknowledge their values. Particularly, it is advisable for leaders with negative affective traits to care more about subordinates who have a low PD value.

Fourth, because Western and Eastern countries have different levels of PD, conclusions should be applied with caution in different cultural contexts. We believe that the positive effect of LPAP will not be mitigated by PD in Eastern or Western cultures because of the inherently rewarding nature of positive affective interactions with leaders. For LNAP, the effect may vary in different cultural contexts. Chinese society is influenced by Confucian culture, which has a high PD; therefore, the negative reactions of employees to the negative affective transmission of leaders will be weakened (Daniels and Greguras, 2014). However, in Western countries characterized by a relatively low PD, PD as a mitigating factor may not work. Employees valuing a low PD are relationship-oriented and pursue democratic and engaging superior–subordinate relationships (Raub and Robert, 2010; Hofstede *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, LNAP is inconsistent with the judgments or expectations of those employees. In this vein, the transmitting effect from LNAP to employees' attitudes or behaviors will not be attenuated. Thus, employees' PD as a boundary condition in Western countries requires further testing.

5.3 Limitations and future research

Our study has limitations that need to be recognized. First, although efforts were made to prevent common method bias by using multiple data sources (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003), a quasi-field experiment or a longitudinal study would help tease out causal effects. Second, we only chose Chinese hotel organizations to test our conceptual framework, which limits external validity. In particular, whether PD plays the same adjustment role in different cultural contexts should be further explored. Third, the previous literature reported significant relationships between positive leadership (such as participative leadership, transformational leadership) and negative leadership (abusive leadership) and employee proactive service behaviors (Rank *et al.*, 2007; Tuan, 2018). Future studies should control these antecedents to test the additional effects of LPAP and LNAP on employee PCSP.

Other directions for future research remain. First, future studies should consider diverse cultural contexts and different types of hotels to gain deeper insight into the linkage between leader affective presence and employee PCSP. Second, leaders' positive and negative affective presence may take different paths in affecting employees' PCSP, and further study could examine different mediation mechanisms. Third, consumers experience the service quality of the hotel in the process of interacting with frontline service employees. Therefore, the affective presence of service employees is particularly important to the experience and satisfaction of consumers. Future study could focus on the effect of employees' affective presence on customers' service experience.

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About the authors

Jing Jiang is an Associate Professor at the School of Tourism Science, Beijing International Studies University, Beijing, China. Her research focuses on leadership, corporate culture and hospitality management.

Yanan Dong is a PhD candidate in the School of Economics and Management, Tsinghua University, Beijing, China. Her research focuses on team creativity, leadership and employee service performance.

Bin Li is an Associate Professor at the School of Tourism Science, Beijing International Studies University, Beijing, China. His research focuses on strategic management, enterprise innovation and hospitality management.

Huimin Gu is a Professor at the School of Tourism Science, Beijing International Studies University, Beijing, China. Her research focuses on corporate social responsibility, international management and hospitality management.

Larry Yu is a Professor of Management at the School of Business, The George Washington University, Washington, District of Columbia, USA. His research interest includes leadership and management innovation. Larry Yu is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: lyu@gwu.edu