



The impacts of perceived organizational support and psychological empowerment on job performance: The mediating effects of organizational citizenship behavior

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ABSTRACT

Hotels are under constant pressure from the need to compete, not just the need to respond to rapid changes in the market. Hotels, moreover, must inspire their employees to perform their best and encourage employees to fulfill their responsibilities as citizens. Academia and industry recognize the importance of organizational citizenship behavior. This study assessed how hotel employees perceive organizational support, psychological empowerment, organizational citizenship behavior, and job performance; and examined the causal relationships among these variables. A total of 513 employees of Taiwan hotels participated in the study. Data was analyzed through descriptive statistics, confirmatory factor analysis, and the structural equation modeling.

Results indicated that perceived organizational support and psychological empowerment both positively affected organizational citizenship behavior. Perceived organizational support did not positively influence job performance. Psychological empowerment and organizational citizenship behavior positively influenced job performance. Organizational citizenship behavior acted as a partial mediator between perceived organizational support and job performance, as well as between psychological empowerment and job performance. A number of suggestions on theory and managerial implementation were proposed.

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1. Introduction

The Taiwan hotel industry faces an increasingly competitive environment nowadays. Increasing numbers of Chinese tourists are arriving to sightsee, and the expansion of international hotel chains demands employee sacrifice and diligence. Employee work attitudes and service performance are vital to achieving business objectives as well as maintaining competitive advantages and performance efficiency (Karatepe and Sokmen, 2006). In addition to continuously training employees to enhance work performance, hotels must encourage certain behaviors beyond regular job functions, like helping customers resolve problems, cooperating with colleagues, preventing unexpected incidents, and paying extra attention to the organization. In other words, hotel employees not only must complete their job but also act beyond their own obligations to the hotel and others. This, in turn, improves organizational efficiency (Podsakoff et al., 2000). Motivating employees to go beyond their job role has increasingly attracted scholarly attention. Self-initiated and positive employee behavior is called organi-

zational citizenship behavior (OCB) (Smith et al., 1983; Organ, 1988).

Organ (1988) suggested that OCB effectively attributes financial and human resources, as well as assists organizational efficiency in operations. In other words, employees surpass organizational requirements, not only completing their obligations and tasks but also initiating voluntary actions beyond their work roles, making sacrifices, helping others, and offering advice (Organ, 1990). Today, the hotel industry places more emphasis on service-oriented behavior, which is essentially OCB (Morrison, 1996). However, OCB is voluntary, going beyond the influence of the formal incentive mechanism (Organ, 1988, 1990). OCB cannot be spurred by formal rewards or incentives (Podsakoff and MacKenzie, 1997). Therefore, encouraging employees exhibiting OCB and understanding what influences OCB are important research topics both in academia and in practice.

Generally, past studies of OCB used personality traits, employee attitudes, perceptions of fairness, leader behavior, and job characteristics as antecedent variables (Podsakoff et al., 2009). Perceived organizational support (POS) was, however, a more important antecedent variable of OCB (Eisenberger et al., 1990). When employees feel the organization emphasizes employees' personal contribution and welfare, they tend to develop a sense of obligation toward the organization (Eisenberger et al., 1986). With the sense

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of obligation, employees not only actively seek to fulfill responsibilities, but also are more likely to demonstrate OCBs beyond their job roles.

When employees are willing to exhibit OCB, they take the initiative to help colleagues with heavy workloads or those who are behind schedule. This suggests that organizations should encourage employee actions from those who are not in management, allowing these employees to take responsibility and demonstrate authority in making decisions (Pitts, 2005). Past studies have focused mainly on the organizational level, the distribution of decision-making power and increasing available resources for employee action. Conger and Kanungo (1988) suggested that the focus should be psychological, i.e., “psychological empowerment” (Conger and Kanungo, 1988; Hancer and George, 2003; Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas and Velthouse, 1990). Psychological empowerment may alter an employees’ source of internal motivation; this feeling may boost one’s personal motivation and stimulate active OCB (Yen et al., 2004). Furthermore, the feelings prompt employees’ dedication, as well as their determination to complete tasks, encourage problem resolution, and seek to improve overall job performance. Therefore, researchers consider psychological empowerment as one essential factor in the tourism and hospitality industry (Chiang and Jang, 2008; Hwang, 2005; Yen et al., 2004).

For OCB in tourism and hospitality industry, research subjects have mainly comprised restaurant employees and student employees in university dining services (e.g., Cho and Johanson, 2008; Hwang, 2005; Koys, 2001; Ravichandran and Gilmore, 2007; Ravichandran et al., 2007; Stamper and Van Dyne, 2003; Walz and Niehoff, 2000). However, employees working at hotels face more diverse customer demographics, including foreign customers; compared to other service industries, the hotel industry requires more service professionalism and expertise, as well as service quality and job performance. Raub (2008) suggested that hotel employees should demonstrate more OCB in the workplace. Thus, among all service enterprises, the hotel industry is the one that should promote OCB among employees and make the most effective use of human and organizational resources.

When employees develop OCB in the workplace, they willingly put extra effort into their work, help colleagues, and diligently seek better ways to do their work, resulting in better productivity (Van Scotter and Motowidlo, 1996). In fact, OCB is one indicator for evaluating job performance (MacKenzie et al., 1991; Motowidlo and Van Scotter, 1994), and studies confirm OCB is one attribute of good job performance (Podsakoff and MacKenzie, 1994; Turnipseed & Rassuli, 2005; Van Scotter and Motowidlo, 1996). Clearly, POS, psychological empowerment, and OCB are closely associated with job performance (Chow et al., 2006; Kirkman and Rosen, 1999; Liden et al., 2000; Niehoff et al., 2001; Peccei and Rosenthal, 2001; Spreitzer et al., 1997). OCB results from POS and psychological empowerment; it is, moreover, the antecedent variable for employee job performance.

Perceived organizational support and psychological empowerment have been studied as antecedent variables of OCB (Eisenberger et al., 1990; Shore and Wayne, 1993; Wayne et al., 1997, 2002; Yen et al., 2004). Many scholars have studied the direct correlation between employees’ POS and job performance (Eisenberger et al., 1990; Shore and Wayne, 1993; Wayne et al., 2002). According to a meta-analysis study by Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002), employees’ POS correlates positively with job performance. Niehoff et al. (2001) suggested that when employees feel empowered, they realize the meaning of work and feel they can finish their work by making their own work decisions; they see their work affect the organization, which, in turn, enhances employees’ competence and advances job performance. Therefore, psychological empowerment and job performance correlate positively. Podsakoff and MacKenzie (1994), Turnipseed and Rassuli

(2005), and Van Scotter and Motowidlo (1996) all mentioned that OCB enhances organizational performance. In summary, OCB may mediate among these variables. After studying managers and employees from hotels in South Korea, Kim et al. (2009) noted that proactive behavior can affect job performance; proactive behavior is one medium between emotional competence and job performance.

Thus, this research focused on Taiwan hotel employees to explore the relationship among POS, psychological empowerment, OCB, and job performance. The purposes of this study were to (1) examine the influence of employees’ POS on OCB; (2) investigate the influence of employee psychological empowerment on OCB; (3) verify the influence of employee OCB on job performance; (4) explore the mediating effect of OCB between POS and job performance and of the influence of psychological empowerment on job performance.

2. Literature review

2.1. Organizational citizenship behavior

Smith et al. (1983, p. 653) and Katz (1964) proposed that to achieve effective organizational operation, the following three kinds of behaviors are necessary: employee willingness to remain with the organization, employee actions that surpass their job description, and employee proactive behavior beyond job responsibilities. The first two kinds of behaviors are within employee roles, whereas the third goes beyond, to include cooperation among colleagues, self-improvement, and creating a positive organizational image. For an organization to function effectively, innovative and spontaneous behaviors are essential. These behaviors, though not required for job performance, can greatly contribute to the operation and performance of an organization. Organ (1988, p.4) defined OCB as self-initiated by employees. Although this kind of behavior can enhance the overall effectiveness of organizational functions, the formal organizational reward system does not recognize the behavior. Williams and Anderson (1991) stated that OCB refers to the proactive cooperation and assistance among coworkers; OCB for an organization, behaviors displayed by employees to make good for the organization.

Various approaches assess the dimensions of OCB. Organ (1988) classified OCB into the following dimensions:

- (1) *Altruism*: taking the initiative to help members of an organization resolve problems;
- (2) *Conscientiousness*: in addition to complying with organizational rules, going beyond minimum requirements through hard work;
- (3) *Sportsmanship*: obeying organizational regulations, tolerating imperfect situations without complaint;
- (4) *Courtesy*: to avoid work problems, remind and inform other coworkers in advance;
- (5) *Civic virtue*: remaining attentive and proactive when participating in organizational activities.

Podsakoff et al. (1990) also used five dimensions to evaluate OCB. Williams and Anderson (1991) categorized OCB into two dimensions: OCB of individuals (OCB-I) and OCB toward organizations (OCB-O). Podsakoff et al. (1997) proposed three dimensions of assessment: helping behavior, sportsmanship, and civic virtue. Van Dyne and LePine (1998) categorized OCB into two dimensions: helping behavior and voice behavior. As mentioned before, Podsakoff et al. (2009) pointed out that, although many researchers use different evaluative dimensions, the two most common measurement methods were the five dimensions proposed by Organ

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