



Investigating the effects of job demands and job resources on cabin crew safety behaviors



Ching-Fu Chen ^{a, 1}, Shu-Chuan Chen ^{a, b, *}

^a Department of Transportation and Communication Management Science, National Cheng Kung University, No.1, University Road, Tainan 701, Taiwan, ROC

^b Department of Air Transportation Management, Aletheia University, 70-11 Pei-Shi-Liao, Matou, Tainan 721, Taiwan, ROC

HIGHLIGHTS

- This paper examines the effects of job demands and job resources on cabin crews' safety behaviors.
- Job demands are negatively related to cabin crews' safety behaviors, while job resources positively related to them.
- Job resources may buffer the negative impact which job demands have on cabin crews' safety behaviors.
- The implications of the results for both human resource managers and airline safety are discussed.

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 18 April 2013

Accepted 20 August 2013

Keywords:

Job demands

Job resources

Cabin crew

Safety behavior

Upward safety communication

ABSTRACT

Cabin crews are crucial to the cabin safety performance of airlines, and may enhance air travel safety and alleviate passenger concerns. Within the limited literature devoted to cabin crew related research, this study aims to examine the causal relationships among “job demands”, “job resources” and cabin crew safety behaviors. Data from a survey of 339 flight attendants working for Taiwanese international airlines were analyzed using structural equation modeling. A variety of fit indices confirmed the overall model fit, and all the paths in the model were statistically significant. Framed in the context of the job demands-resources model, the results reveal negative causality between “job demands” and “cabin crew safety behaviors”, whereas “job resources” are positively related to “upward safety communication”, “in-role” and “extra-role” safety behaviors. The implications of the results for practitioners and future research are discussed.

© 2013 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Cabin crews play a vital role in in-flight safety and services. In particular, flight attendants' safety behaviors deserve attention, since they are crucial to the overall safety performance of airlines (Kao, Stewart, & Lee, 2009). However, with regard to the teamwork context of cabin duty, existing research related to cabin crew job outcomes has mostly focused on general organizational behaviors, such as turnover intention, organizational commitment, work engagement and performance (e.g. Chen, 2006; Chen & Kao, 2011; MacDonald, Deddens, Grajewski, Whelan, & Hurrell, 2003; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Heuven, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2008). Further research clearly is needed to enhance the literature on

cabin crews' perceptions of individual safety behaviors and the possible factors that impact these.

In practice, employees' safety behavior is often regarded as a mandatory norm instead of a form of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Safety climate and safety training have thus been widely recognized as major antecedents to predict employees' safety behavior (Cooper & Phillips, 2004). Nevertheless, the influences of other organizational and social factors on safety behavior have been discussed and confirmed (Mullen, 2004). In the last decade, researchers have applied the concept of OCB to distinguish safety behavior into in-role and extra-role behaviors (Fugas, Silva, & Melia, 2012; Hofmann, Gerras, & Morgeson, 2003). The current study thus aims to explore whether the previously identified causalities linking various organizational antecedents and employees' OCB exist between cabin crews' specific job demands/resources and their safety behaviors.

Over the last decade, the Job Demands-Resources model (JD-R) has been widely-applied to explore the causal relationships among job outcomes and organizational antecedents in various

* Corresponding author. Department of Air Transportation Management, Aletheia University, 70-11 Pei-Shi-Liao, Matou, Tainan 721, Taiwan, ROC. Tel.: +886 6 5703100x7435; fax: +886 6 5703834.

E-mail addresses: cfchen99@mail.ncku.edu.tw (C.-F. Chen), geniechen2006@gmail.com (S.-C. Chen).

¹ Tel.: +886 6 2757575x53230; fax: +886 6 2753882.

professions (Bakker, Demerouti, Taris, Schaufeli, & Schreurs, 2003; Chen & Kao, 2012; Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006). The JD-R model assumes that every work environment has unique job demands and resources, which initiate two psychological processes and eventually result in divergent organizational outcomes (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001). Job demands refer to the physical, social, or organizational aspects of a job that require sustained physical or mental efforts, and are therefore associated with certain physiological or psychological costs. In contrast, job resources are regarded as the physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of a job which may reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs, as well as help staff to achieve work goals, and/or stimulate personal growth, learning and development (Demerouti et al., 2001; Hakanen, Schaufeli, & Ahola, 2008). To date, few studies have applied the JD-R model to explore the positive and negative forces that affect employees' safety behavior, nor have they examined this issue in the context of flight attendants. It is thus believed that examining whether job demands and job resources may discourage or boost frontline employees' safety behaviors not only opens a door to advance the application of the JD-R model, but also contributes to the current safety related literature and may enhance actual practices.

Cabin crew members are rated the second in injuries and lost workdays among staff in the airline industry (IATA, 2006), behind ramp personnel. Their safety behaviors are critical not only for preventing personal injuries, but also for enhancing overall cabin safety. This work thus constructs a conceptual model which aims to identify key job demand and resource indicators, and empirically test their effects on cabin crews' safety behaviors. The empirical results reveal the significant impact of specific job demands (i.e., emotional demands and work overload) and job resources (i.e., job autonomy and professional development) related to flight attendants' job characteristics on three types of safety behaviors, namely in-role safety behavior, extra-role safety behavior and upward safety communication. The findings can be used as references to aid in managerial planning and implementation with regard to both policy-making and job design.

2. Theoretical background and hypotheses development

2.1. Job demands and job resources

Karasek (1979) proposed that there are two main ways in which job conditions influence workers' mental health, and based on this presented the job demands-control (JD-C) model. Accordingly, Demerouti et al. (2001) developed the job demands-resources (JD-R) model, which assumes that employee well-being is related to a wide spectrum of work characteristics that can be classified as either job demands or resources. While job resources generate positive exchanges between an organization and its employees, negative exchanges are invoked as job demands (Bakker, Demerouti, & Verbeke, 2004).

Since cabin crews are customer service personnel working on board flights, their duties can be regarded as a form of emotional work (Hochschild, 1983). According to Bakker et al. (2004), work overload and emotional demands are commonly seen as front-line employees' job demands, whereas job autonomy and professional development are seen as their job resources. Numerous empirical studies have confirmed the negative impact which high emotional demands and work overload may have on employees' job outcomes (e.g. Karatepe, 2013; Schaufeli, Bakker, & Rhenen, 2009). As for flight attendants, they are typically characterized as performing work that may result in emotional exhaustion, since cabin duty tends to allow restricted job autonomy and sometimes requires

long working hours (Williams, 2003). In addition, working in a confined space under time constraints and with limited resources, the work overload and emotional labor caused by changing schedules, long working hours and dealing with demanding or aggressive passengers, can be seen as general job demands that cabin crews face, and thus these are selected as key indicators of job demands examined in the current research.

The most frequent challenge which flight attendants encounter at work is satisfying passengers' varied requests. Prior research has confirmed that employees with high job autonomy are generally expected to have greater motivation and better performance (Argote & McGrath, 1993; Langfred & Moye Neta, 2004; Morgeson, Delaney-Klinger, & Hemingway, 2005), and it is thus rational to assume that job autonomy may enhance cabin crews' motivation to take the initiative to help out and meet passengers' individual demands. Bakker et al. (2004) also claim that opportunities for professional development appear to be the strongest correlate with job performance, while Chen and Chen (2012) provide empirical evidence to support the argument that cabin crews' professional development may elevate their work engagement, which results in positive job outcomes. To effectively and efficiently perform cabin work, flight attendants must well prepare themselves to cope with various uncertainties, on top of their routine service and safety tasks (Liang & Hsieh, 2005). Professional development based on continuous learning can help cabin crews to upgrade their professionalism and enhance their contingency management skills. Job autonomy and professional development are thus identified as the sub-constructs to represent cabin crews' job resources in the current work.

In addition to the general perception that job demands and job resources are negatively related, previous research has also provided evidence which suggests that the latter may buffer the consequences of the former (Bakker et al., 2003, 2004). Whether similar moderating effects are also found between job demands and cabin crews' safety behaviors is another issue that the current study examines.

2.2. Safety behavior

Individuals tend to recognize themselves as having some specific roles at work, based on a sense of what they are supposed or prefer to do, and this also applies to the performance of work-related safety behaviors. Hofmann et al. (2003) extend the concept of role orientation to the occupational safety domain, and define the citizenship behaviors that are related to workplace safety as safety citizenship. Similar to the concept of organizational citizenship behaviors, which differentiates in-role (part of the role) from extra-role (beyond the role) behaviors (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000), safety behavior may also be viewed as combining two categories of performance, namely compliance safety behavior (or in-role safety behavior) and proactive safety behavior (or extra-role safety behavior) (Fugas et al., 2012). This bi-dimensional view of safety behavior is consistent with the theoretical approach led by Griffin and Neal (2000), who differentiate such behavior into two types: safety compliance (termed in-role safety behavior in the current study) and safety participation (termed extra-role safety behavior in this work).

In-role safety behaviors refer to employees correctly using protective equipment, obeying safety policies and properly performing procedures to reduce the risk of potential hazards and injury. On the other hand, helping develop a safety-supportive environment instead of guaranteeing personal safety, helping co-workers, promoting safety programs and volunteering to take part in safety activities are viewed as extra-role safety behaviors (Fugas et al., 2012). As for cabin crews, adhering to the safety policies and regulations issued by aviation authorities and airlines is

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1012114>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1012114>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)