



Are employees with higher organization-based self-esteem less likely to quit? A moderated mediation model

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on striving for achievement as an important antecedent forming Organization-Based Self-Esteem (OBSE) and the relationship between achievement striving and turnover intention in the hospitality industry. More specifically, employees with higher achievement striving traits show a stronger negative correlation between OBSE and turnover intention, through organizational commitment. An online survey was distributed to restaurant employees; 160 valid responses were analyzed. An analytic framework based on confirmatory factor analysis and logic regression was used to examine the hypotheses. The results show that organizational commitment fully mediated the relationship between OBSE and turnover intention, and higher levels of individual achievement striving significantly modified the conditional indirect relationship. The results showed that the mediation model and achievement striving strength accounted for 15.7% of the variance in turnover intention at the 50th, 75th, and 90th level and was most effective for low OBSE employees. Theoretical implications and future research are included.

1. Introduction

Organization-Based Self-Esteem (OBSE) is the degree to which an individual believes he/she is a capable, significant, and worthy member of an organization (Pierce et al., 1989). OBSE affects physical health, life satisfaction, and family/social relationships (Brough et al., 2009). OBSE has become a subject of research among scholars as well as of interest to practitioners (Jung and Yoon, 2016; Karatepe, 2014; Suan and Nasurdin, 2014). The research has indicated that organizational members who believe they are important and competent have lower turnover intention than employees who believe they are not important or efficient (Pierce and Gardner, 2004). This relationship between OBSE and turnover intention typically ranges between $r = -0.17$ and -0.49 (Arshadi and Damiri, 2013; Gardner and Pierce, 2001; Phillips and Hall, 2001; Riordan et al., 2001; Vecchio, 2000).

Despite advances in our understanding that OBSE is linked with positive individual and organizational outcomes (Bakker, 2011; Bowling et al., 2010), research focusing on OBSE using hospitality employees is still lacking (Lee et al., 2016). Understanding OBSE in the hospitality industry is important. Given that employees working in the restaurants frequently interact with customers, employees' attitudes and behaviors toward their customers are strongly associated with

customer positive outcomes, such as customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, which eventually lead to higher profits for the service organizations (Chung and Schneider, 2002).

Recently there have been more studies directed toward the identification of the boundary conditions under which OBSE develops (Gardner and Pierce, 2013), thus explore the possibility with restaurant employees can help lead towards a more generalizable understanding of the theory. Furthermore, the direct and indirect relationships between OBSE and turnover intention is still perplexing because of the suppression effect, where the magnitude of the relationship between the independent and dependent variable becomes larger when a third variable is included (Shrout and Bolger, 2002).

Previous studies have revealed that the level of OBSE varies based on individual empowerment cognition, personality, and levels of organizational commitment (Bowen and Lawler, 1992; Hom et al., 2012; Lapointe et al., 2011; Spreitzer, 1995). Empowerment cognition involves the perceived ability to control, be responsible for, and make decisions on work outcomes (Spreitzer, 1995). An important personality trait for empowerment cognition is achievement striving, defined as a continuous attempt to achieve and accomplish personal and professional goals (Friedman and Ulmer, 1984). When employees who have an achievement striving personality think they are empowered,

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they do have higher levels of commitment and self-esteem to perform job-related tasks (Lee et al., 1993; Schaubroeck and Williams, 1993). For example, Hom et al. (2012) proposed the Proximal Motivational State, which describes the appropriate triggering effect to form an intention that is compatible with the motivational state at the time. Although hospitality researchers have explored different motivational conditions, all have found different effects of mediation and moderation among different personal resources, organizational commitment, and job-related outcomes (Garg and Dhar, 2014; Jung and Yoon, 2016; Karatepe, 2014, 2015; Karatepe and Karadas, 2014; Terglav et al., 2016; Tian et al., 2014; Xu et al., 2014). Few studies have attempted simultaneous analysis of these variables (Preacher et al., 2007) to address the suppression effect and further advance research in the area.

Recently, researchers have begun to investigate the impact of personality on the psychological well-being of employees (Jung and Yoon, 2016; Li et al., 2016; Vassou et al., 2017). Psychological well-being can be an important antecedent of employee turnover intention. However, the restaurant industry suffers from an average turnover rate that increased from 66.7% in 2014 to 72.1% in 2015 compared to a national average turnover rate of 45.9% in 2015 (Department of Labor, 2016; NRA, 2016). Each time an employee turns over, it costs restaurant operators nearly \$5900 per employee (Jaffee, 2016; Tracey and Hinkin, 2006). Moreover, psychological exhaustion or burnout, the opposite of psychological well-being, causes low OBSE and less organizational commitment, contributing to poor employee self-efficacy and productivity as well as turnover (Dickerson, 2009; Jauhari, 2006; Lu et al., 2016). Conversely, higher levels of psychological well-being create increased employee morale, less emotional exhaustion, and enhanced professional efficacy and productivity, thus reducing turnover (Han et al., 2016; Hancock et al., 2013; Hinkin and Tracey, 2000; Jaffee, 2016; NRA, 2016; Lu and Gursoy, 2016). However, studies of relationship between OBSE and voluntary turnover behavior within the hospitality industry are lacking (Lee et al., 2016).

Despite the heavily investigated mediation and moderation effect of personality and organizational commitment within the broader business management literature, Meyer and Maltin (2010) reported conflicting evidence of the moderation effect of employee commitment on employee well-being and turnover-related behaviors. Most research within the existing management literature has focused on either student samples (Wu and Norman, 2006; Wheeler et al., 2014) or samples limited to a single profession (Albdour and Altarawneh, 2014; Morin et al., 2011). The theoretical and practical implications of employee commitment research could be strengthened by including participants of a variety of professions (Lee et al., 2000; Morin et al., 2011). Few studies within the hospitality literature explore the moderation effect of achievement striving on employee well-being and turnover-related behaviors. Of those studies, the findings about the conditions of mediation and moderation remain unclear. Thus, our study should help specify which moderation and mediation conditions of employee commitment affect the relationships between employee well-being and turnover-related behaviors (Hancock et al., 2013; Morin et al., 2015).

One moderated mediation model has been developed (Edwards and Lambert, 2007; Muller et al., 2005; Preacher et al., 2007) that jointly examines organizational commitment as the mediating mechanism and achievement striving traits as the moderator, to enhance the validity and precision of the Organizational Commitment Theory for stable personality traits (Pierce et al., 1989; Pierce and Gardner, 2004). The purpose of our study was to determine if achievement striving moderates the mediating effect of organizational commitment on the relationship between OBSE and turnover intentions and if the negative relationship between OBSE and turnover intention through organizational commitment is stronger for employees with higher achievement striving traits.

2. Literature review

2.1. Organization-based self-esteem (OBSE) and turnover intention

For many, work and career are an important part in defining who they are, in their experience, and in their relationships with others. Work and career affect physical well-being and psychological functioning (Ryff, 1989). The work environment often generates perceptions of self-competence or incompetence, which are often referred to as OBSE.

Derived from Coopersmith's (1967) conceptualization of global self-esteem, OBSE is a domain-specific facet of self-esteem. People develop domain-specific facets of self-esteem in many of life's roles (parent, child, student, employee, etc.), which when aggregated, form individual global self-esteem (Rosenberg et al., 1995). Individuals with high OBSE perceive themselves as trusted, valued, and contributing members of an organization. In addition, evidence shows that workplace well-being is shaped by intra-organizational forces and the employee's disposition (Brough et al., 2009; Danna and Griffin, 1999). One strong intra-organizational force is organizational commitment, the focus on work and organizational conditions that promotes work-related attitudinal, motivational, and behavioral effects (Judge and Bono, 2001; Meyer et al., 2004). Organizational conditions that promote feeling personally competent show the relationship between disposition and work-related behavior, which supports an examination of personality traits of OBSE and employee turnover intention.

Tharenou and Harker (1982) suggested that employees want to do well, which is among the most consistent correlates of individual assessments of work competence and perceptions of self-worth. Organizational members who believe they are important and contributing to the organization often develop organizational-specific self-esteem, considered a positive intra-organizational force that reduces turnover intention and voluntary turnover (Meyer et al., 2004; Pierce and Gardner, 2004). Specifically, effectively performing a job helps to maintain high self-perceptions among employees, whereas performing a job poorly allows individuals with low self-esteem to maintain their negative self-perceptions (Judge and Bono, 2001; Tett and Guterman, 2000). Existing business literature supports a negative relationship between OBSE and voluntary turnover behavior (Arshadi and Damiri, 2013; Gardner and Pierce, 2001; Lapointe et al., 2011).

H₁. Employee OBSE negatively predicts employee's turnover intention.

2.2. The mediating role of organizational commitment

Organizational commitment refers to an employee's psychological attachment to an organization (Meyer and Allen, 1991; Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001). According to Meyer and Maltin (2010), the key to higher levels of commitment is to satisfy the basic psychological needs of employees. High commitment can be achieved by motivating employees who are predisposed to motivation but ultimately depends on creating work content that affords satisfaction and contributes to positive work esteem (Meyer and Maltin). Moreover, individuals with high levels of OBSE hold positive images of themselves, thus bolstering their commitment to the organization (Bowling et al., 2010; Gardner and Pierce, 2016). Previous meta-analysis combining data from 24 studies of OBSE found employees with high OBSE were strongly influenced to commit to their places of employment (Bowling et al., 2010). Kostova et al. (1997) found that OBSE partly mediates the relationship between the perception of level of influence in an organization and employee organizational commitment. Therefore, successful work-related experience that boosts self-esteem and bonding (i.e., positive organizational commitment) strengthens the relationship between employees and organization, thus leading to positive work-related outcomes and the potential for reducing turnover (Gardner and Pierce, 2016; Meyer et al., 2013).

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