

Going Extra Mile in Service: The Drive of Social Resources and Work Engagement

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Abstract:

Service-oriented Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (SO-OCB) denotes the extra-role behaviour of service employees which consists of three dimensions, namely loyalty, service delivery and participation. In hospitals, nurses deliver services to patients and have the most frequent patient contacts. Thus, the SO-OCB exhibited by nurses is imperative in warranting outstanding service quality of private hospitals. The objective of this paper is to present a model linking social resources (co-worker support and patient cooperation) as the predictors of SO-OCB among nurses in Malaysian private hospitals. In addition, work engagement has been proposed as the mediator in this paper. A review of the literature to support the proposed model is provided.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Over the last decade, there is a trend of growth in the private hospital sector in Malaysia. The flourishing industry of medical tourism is one of the factors that lead to the growth of private hospitals. According to Malaysia Healthcare Travel Council (2017), the total contributed revenue from medical tourism stood at RM1 billion from an estimated 900,000 medical tourists in 2016. The development of healthcare industry is deemed important for the national economy, as estimated by the National Key Economic Area (NKEA) the healthcare industry can generate

RM9.67 billion in revenue by 2020 (Amalina, 2017).

Nurses are the backbone of hospitals. As the frontline personnel of hospitals, nurses deliver healthcare services to patients and have the most frequent interactions with patients (Kazemipour, Amin, & Pourseidi, 2012). The statistics by the Ministry of Health Malaysia (2016) shows that nursing personnel comprise the biggest proportion of healthcare givers in hospitals. Specifically, 50.22% from the total hospital employment is nurses.

It is well-acknowledged that organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) enhances organizational performance and

effectiveness (Organ, 1988). Employees who exhibit OCB are simultaneously investing their cognitive, physical and emotional energies in their work (Gupta, Shaheen, & Reddy, 2017). Organ (1988) has defined OCB as work behaviours of employees that are discretionary in nature and not formally recognized in the organization's reward system. In the service context, Bettencourt, Meuter, and Gwinner (2001) have asserted that the construct of Service-Oriented Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (SO-OCB) is more appropriate to measure the organizational citizenship behaviour of service employees. SO-OCB includes three dimensions namely, loyalty OCB, service delivery OCB and participation OCB (Bettencourt et al., 2001). These extra role behaviours are particularly important for service organizations because the loyalty OCB of service employees can help to enhance the organization image to outsiders while the participation OCB of service employees can enhance the service quality by continuous improvement (Bettencourt et al., 2001). Lastly, service delivery OCB which refers to the conscientious behaviour of service employees (Bettencourt et al., 2001) is similarly important because this key characteristic of service employees is an advocate to service organizations in delivering quality service.

Therefore, it is essential to promote SO-OCB among nurses in hospitals. Hospitals are considered as service organizations while nurses who have direct interactions with patients are their customer contact employees. Consequently, the healthcare services which are delivered by nurses have the most direct impact on patients' satisfaction. Thus the disposition to deliver conscientious services such as responsiveness, reliability and assurance will ultimately enhance the service quality and exert patients' satisfaction (Castro, Armario, & Ruiz, 2004). Utterly, the extra role behaviour of nurses will reap benefit to hospitals.

Despite the importance of SO-OCB among nurses, the review of previous literature which relates to SO-OCB has revealed that there are limited studies. Most of the previous studies on SO-OCB were conducted on different occupational fields, such as transportation (Limpanitgul, Robson, Gould-Williams, & Lertthaitrakul, 2013), hospitality (Chen, 2016; Choo & Nasurdin, 2014b; Lin & Lin, 2011; Tang & Tang, 2012; Tang & Tsaor, 2016; Wu & Liao, 2016), and banking (Chiu, Lin, & Han, 2015; Lin & Lin, 2011; Muhammad, 2014). Hence, focus on identifying the predictor of SO-OCB in healthcare industry such as private hospitals are needed. In addition to the literature of SO-OCB in healthcare, most of the previous studies is confined to the factors that promote SO-OCB within the scope of job resources, such as autonomy and social support as proposed by Bakker, Demerouti, and Verbeke (2004), performance feedback as suggested by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) and opportunities for professional development as recommended by Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, and Schaufeli (2009).

Obviously, limited studies have examined the role of social resources, except for the study of supervisory support by Tang and Tsaor (2016), the co-worker support and customer cooperation study as proposed by Limpanitgul et al. (2013) and the support from colleagues study as examined by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004). Observing the irrefutable aspect of nurses who are working closely with their co-workers and patients in accomplishing their tasks (Kazemipour et al., 2012), this study is focused on the issue by examining the role of social resources in predicting SO-OCB.

Recognizing the work of Othman and Nasurdin (2012) in the context of Malaysian nurses and in harmony with the Job Demand-Resources (JD-R) model concerning the work engagement role in mediating the relationship between resources and positive behaviour, work

engagement is proposed as the mediator in this study. Specifically, work engagement is defined as positive, fulfilling, and work-related state of mind characterized by vigour, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, & Bakker, 2002). The following sections will review the relevant literature to SO-OCB and the role of social resources and work engagement in promoting SO-OCB.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Service-Oriented Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (SO-OCB)

Extending the work of Organ (1988), Bettencourt et al. (2001) have introduced the construct of SO-OCB as a specific form of OCB performed by service employees in service settings. From the review of previous studies, the antecedents of SO-OCB can be categorised as organizational resources (e.g. employment status, high-performance HR practices, perceived organizational support), social resources (e.g. co-worker support, customer cooperation, supervisory support climate) and personal resources (e.g. volunteerism, work values) (Chen & Kao, 2012; Chiu et al., 2015; Choo & Nasurdin, 2014a; Jain, Malhotra, & Guan, 2012; Limpanitgul et al., 2013; Tang & Tang, 2012; Tang & Tsaur, 2016; Wang, 2009a, 2009b, 2010).

In summary, results from the past studies have indicated that resources are drivers of SO-OCB since resources can help to achieve work goals, reduce job demands as well as physiological and psychological cost, stimulate personal growth, learning and development (Salanova, Agut, & Peiro, 2005). In particular, resources play an important role in helping individuals to overcome threatening situations and eliminate negative outcomes. When employees have sufficient resources to do their job, they are most likely to complete their tasks

easily which additionally anticipates the motivation to engage in their work thus perform discretionary behaviour such as SO-OCB.

Social Resources as Predictors of SO-OCB

Social resources refer to the social aspects of a job which help to achieve work goals, reduce job demands as well as physiological and psychological cost, and for the same reason to stimulate personal growth, learning and development (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Salanova et al., 2005). In the study by Xanthopoulou, Baker, Heuven, Demerouti, and Schaufeli (2008), social resources such as supervisor and co-worker support have an intrinsic motivation role to fulfil employees' need to belong. In addition, a study conducted by Ng and Sorensen (2008) has revealed that social resources such as supervisor and co-workers are valuable source of support and have positive influence on employees' well-being.

Zooming into the nursing context, it is equitable to surmise that social resources play an important role. This is because nurses are working closely with their co-workers and patients in accomplishing their task (Lampert, 2015). Therefore, this study will focus to examining the role of social resources in predicting work engagement which in turn leads to SO-OCB. In particular, co-worker support and patient cooperation is conceptualized as social resources in this study.

Co-Worker Support as Predictors of SO-OCB

Zhou and George (2001) have defined co-worker support as the willingness of co-workers to assist and support one another during the execution of tasks. Joiner (2007) has explained that co-workers support refers to the situation where employees are working together while building a harmonious relationship and peaceful working environment.

Co-worker support is important in workplace because it involves interaction among

co-workers, ergo the impact on employees' work performance (Gountas, Gountas, & Mavondo, 2014). Co-workers who support each other are more willing to share information, knowledge and expertise to reduce employees' work uncertainties and help employees to complete their tasks successfully (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008) as well as to achieve work goals (Kundu & Lata, 2017). Hence, co-workers support enables work engagement which allows nurses to exhibit discretionary behaviours essentially correlating empathy in patients; engaging in hospital marketing specifically promoting of products and services as well as projecting a good image to patients; maintaining an open communication between the hospital and co-workers towards enhancing the service quality; all of which is conceptualized as SO-OCB.

In a more recent empirical study among 335 cabin service crews in Thailand conducted by Limpanitgul et al. (2013) has showed that co-worker support has positive effect on service employee citizenship behaviour. As adapted from the study by Limpanitgul et al. (2013), co-workers support also play a significant role in the nursing context because co-workers support can help to promote discretionary behaviour among nurses. Therefore, it can be posited that:

Proposition 1a: Co-worker support will have positive and significant relationship with SO-OCB.

Patient Cooperation as Predictors of SO-OCB

Bendapudi and Leone (2003) have defined patient cooperation as the willingness of patient to cooperate in receiving the services delivered from nurses. According to Van Dolen, De Ruyter, and Lemmink (2004), smooth cooperation between nurses and patient can create positive and pleasant service experiences for both nurses and patients. Likewise, Korczynski (2003) has advocated that

cooperation from patients is an important source of work experiences for nurses. In contrast, patients' unwillingness to cooperate with nurses can destroy the best treatment planning provided by hospitals.

Empirical evidence is available in the study among 335 cabin service crews in Thailand which was conducted by Limpanitgul et al. (2013), it has been proven that customer cooperation has positive effect on the service employee citizenship behaviour. Similarly, it can be speculated that the cooperation and full support given by patients can create smooth working experiences to nurses which subsequently allow them to complete their job, therefore empower more resources (such as energy and time) to exhibit extra role behaviour relatively being SO-OCB. Based on above discussion, it is posited that:

Proposition 1b: Patient cooperation will have positive and significant relationship with SO-OCB.

Social Resources as Predictors of Work Engagement

Schaufeli et al. (2002) have defined work engagement as positive, fulfilling, and work-related state of mind characterized by vigour, dedication and absorption. Vigour refers to the exhibition of high levels of energy and mental resilience by employees at work, willingness to invest effort on the job and persist in the face of difficulties in work (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Dedication describes employees who are strongly drawn in their work and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride and challenge (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Absorption denotes to employees who are happy and engrossed in their work, whereby time passes quickly and hardly detached from their work (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

In the nursing context, co-worker support enhances work engagement. As a result of positive co-workers support, it creates a harmonious work environment which in turn motivates employees to be more energetic, dedicated and happy at work (Shuck, Rocco, & Albornoz, 2010). Empirical evidence is available in the study conducted by Anitha (2014) among 383 middle managerial level and lower managerial level employees from small-scale organizations. The result showed that team and co-worker relationship has statistically significant and positive impact on employee engagement. Likewise, the study conducted by Kundu and Lata (2017) among 211 employees from manufacturing and service industry has found that supportive work environment which include peer group interactions is positively and significantly related to organizational engagement.

In addition to co-worker support, patient cooperation can enhance nurses work engagement in workplace. Van Dolen et al. (2004) have explained that smooth cooperation between nurses and patient can create positive and pleasant service experiences for both nurses and patients. Likewise, Korczynski (2003) has asserted that patients' willingness to cooperate with nurses is important to access work experience. Empirically, Schaufeli and Bakker's (2004) study among 1698 employees from four different organizations has revealed that social support is important in enhancing employees' engagement. Similarly, a study among 2,000 Finnish teachers by Bakker and Demerouti (2008) has indicated that social support is positively associated with work engagement. Based on above discussion, two propositions are stated as follows:

Proposition 2a: Co-worker support will have positive and significant relationship with work engagement.

Proposition 2b: Patient cooperation will have positive and significant relationship with work engagement.

Work Engagement Mediates the Relationship between Social Resources and SO-OCB

Perrin (2003) has indicated that employees who exhibit high work engagement in their work will have high job performance, productivity, commitment and willingness to perform discretionary effort, in the form of spending extra time and energy in their work. Saks (2006) has explained that employees who have high engagement towards their job will make substantive contribution to their organization which can lead to organizational success. There are various studies to investigate the relationship between work engagement and extra-role behaviours among employees. A study by Sulea et al. (2012) among 258 employees from three Romanian organizations has indicated that work engagement is positively related to OCB. While, Saks (2006) has conducted a study among 102 employees working in various fields and organizations in Canada and has found that job engagement is positively related to OCB. In addition, the study by Saks (2006) also has indicated that job engagement as a mediator of organizational support and social support towards OCB. Based on the above discussions and evidences, in reference to previous studies, proposition 3 is as follows:

Proposition 3a: Work engagement will mediate the relationship between co-worker support and SO-OCB.

Proposition 3b: Work engagement will mediate the relationship between patient cooperation and SO-OCB.

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Based on the discussions above, a research framework is proposed and labelled as Figure 1.

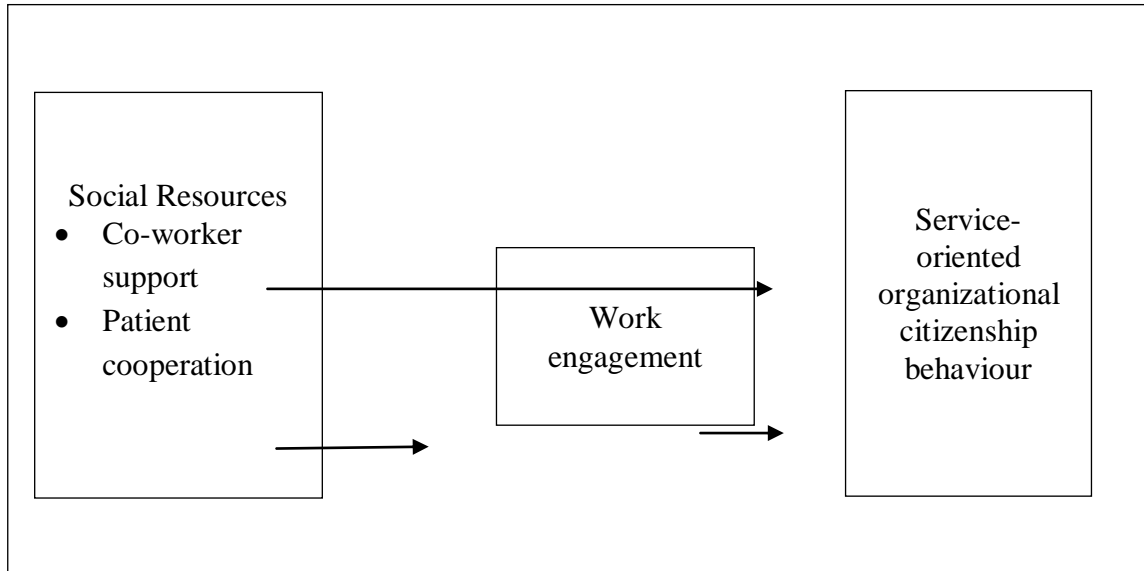


Figure 1: Research Framework

III. CONCLUSION

There is a trend of growth in the private hospital sector. In consequence of the rising wave of medical tourism, with more affluent tourists shifting for healthcare services offered by the private hospitals in Malaysia, the management of private hospitals should gear up their efforts to grab more market share by improving their service quality. Responding to the shift and in a similar vein to provide high service quality, the management of private hospitals should encourage work engagement and commitment of their customer contact employees particularly nurses. Work-wise engaged nurses are more likely to perform with passion, which in turn leads to SO-OCB. The review of previous literature has showed positive relationships between social resources and SO-OCB, thus a framework of conceptual research model is developed linking social resources (co-worker support and patient cooperation) as predictors of SO-OCB. Work engagement is proposed as

mediator considering that engaged employees are more willing to spend extra time and energy in their work. This posited the relationship between social resources and SO-OCB.

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