Perceived Organizational Support, Organizational Commitment and Service-Oriented Organizational Citizenship Behaviors

Chao-Chan Wu
Department of Cooperative Economics, Feng Chia University
100, Wenhwa Rd., Seatwen, Taichung 407, Taiwan
E-mail: chaocwu@fcu.edu.tw; chaochan0829@gmail.com

Na-Ting Liu
Department of Business Administration, Ming Chuan University
250, Zhong Shan N. Rd., Sec. 5, Taipei 111, Taiwan
E-mail: nating.liu@gmail.com

ABSTRACT
This study empirically examines the relationships among perceived organizational support (POS), organizational commitment, and service-oriented organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs), based on a survey of 255 call center customer service representatives at five large call centers in Taiwan. Structure equation modeling was used to examine the hypotheses. The results indicate that POS is positively related to three types of service-oriented OCBs – loyalty, service delivery, and participation – and that organizational commitment fully mediates the relationships between POS and service-oriented OCBs. The study suggests that call center managers should seek to enhance the perception of organizational support to customer service representatives in order to increase their commitment to the company.

Keywords: Perceived organizational support, organizational commitment, service-oriented organizational citizenship behaviors, call center
1. INTRODUCTION

A great deal of research on the employment relationship is predicated on the view that it constitutes an employees’ trade of effort and loyalty for tangible benefits (e.g., pay) and social rewards (e.g., self-esteem) from the organization [March and Simon, 1958; Mowday et al., 1982]. This view dovetails with social exchange theory, which explains the formation and maintenance of interpersonal relationships in terms of the reciprocation of valued resources between two interacting individuals [Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960]. Increasingly, social exchange theory has provided the conceptual lens through which the employment relationship should be viewed.

A major social exchange mechanism in an organizational context is perceived organizational support (POS), which refers to global beliefs held by employees regarding the extent to which their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. Organizational scholars have examined the relational ties between POS and employee work outcomes. There is evidence that employees who perceive a high degree of organizational support in terms of the extent to which an organization cares about their well-being [Eisenberger et al., 1986; Wayne et al., 2002] display increased organizational commitment, job satisfaction, job performance, and organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs), as well as reduced turnover [Cropanzano et al., 1997; Eisenberger et al., 1986; Moorman et al., 1998; Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002; Shore and Wayne, 1993; Van Knippenberg and Sleebos, 2006; Wayne et al., 1997].

The positive contributions that OCBs make toward business performance are reasonably well accepted in the literature [Podsakoff and MacKenzie, 1994; 1997]. OCBs can be defined as “discretionary behaviors on the part of an employee that directly promote the effective functioning of an organization, independent of an employee’s objective productivity” [MacKenzie et al., 1998, p. 89]. Borman and Motowidlo [1993] observed that some types of OCBs “are
probably more appropriate for certain types of organizations than others. Service companies have special requirements on dimensions related to dealing with customers and representing the organization to outsiders” [p. 90]. Accordingly, Bettencourt and Brown [1997] coined the term “service-oriented OCBs” to describe “discretionary behaviors of contact employees in servicing customers that extend beyond formal role requirements” [p. 41].

Although OCBs are critical to the performance of all organizations [Podsakoff and MacKenzie, 1997], the nature of a service organization makes this class of discretionary behaviors particularly important. The defining attributes of service suggest that “the customer experience is as important as, if not more important than, the consumer good” [Bowen and Waldman, 1999, p. 164-165]. This statement suggests a customer-driven definition of employee performance in a service setting. Thus, it becomes important to determine how a service sector organization creates an environment that motivates behaviors that go beyond formal job requirements and are particularly effective at achieving desirable customer outcomes.

The relatively recent emergence of the call center industry has spawned research specifically focusing on the specific characteristics of call centers [e.g., Adler, 2002; Adorno and Binning, 2001; Bennington et al., 2000; Holman et al., 2002; McCulloch and Turban, 2001]. The current study contributes to our understanding of the increasingly pervasive development of organization-customer management – that of call center customer service representatives – and further investigates the relationships between POS and service-oriented OCBs.

Although past studies have confirmed the positive relationship between POS and employees’ OCBs [e.g., Moorman et al., 1998; Shore and Wayne, 1993; Wayne et al., 1997], we do not yet fully understand the intricacies embedded within the mechanisms. Armeli et al. [1998, p. 289] found that “less attention has been given to the mechanisms presumed to underlie the positive relationship between POS and work-related outcomes.” The importance of the
employee-organization relationship in a changing employment context is coupled with the demonstrated outcomes of POS. Rhoades and Eisenberger [2002] suggested a need for research to continue to examine the mechanisms through which POS influences some work outcomes. Accordingly, the current study further examines the mediating influences of organizational commitment in the relationships between POS and service-oriented OCBs.

2. THEORETICAL CONSTRUCTS AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

This section discusses perceived organizational support (POS), organizational commitment, service-oriented organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs), the impact of POS on service-oriented OCBs, and the mediating role of organizational commitment.

2.1. Perceived Organizational Support

Perceived organizational support (POS) is based on the perspectives of social exchange theory and has attracted considerable research interest in the area of organizational behavior. Eisenberger et al. [1986] noted that POS considers the quality of the relationship between an employee and the organization by evaluating the extent to which employees believe that their organizations value their contributions, are willing to reward their efforts, and care about their well-being. Specifically, POS can reflect employee perceptions of their organization’s inclination to provide aid when needed to carry out their job effectively and meet their socio-emotional needs [Eisenberger et al., 1986; Leveson et al., 2009]. Employees with high levels of POS believe that the organization values their contributions and cares about them. Furthermore, compared with low-POS employees, high-POS employees more strongly believe that greater efforts will yield greater rewards.
The concept of POS has been accepted as a critical factor influencing individuals’ work attitudes and behaviors. Prior studies have found that POS is positively associated with job satisfaction [Eisenberger et al., 1997], organizational commitment [Eisenberger et al., 1990], and in-role and extra-role performance [Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002]. In addition, several studies have shown that POS is negatively related to withdrawal behaviors such as absenteeism, tardiness, and turnover [Cropanzano et al., 1997; Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002]. In summary, high levels of POS are helpful for increasing positive work outcomes and decreasing negative ones. In the context of a call center, POS holds the position of a pioneer because it may influence customer service representatives to incorporate organizational membership and role status into their self-identity, thereby increasing pro-social behaviors that are carried out on behalf of the organization.

2.2. Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment, often considered one of the most important employee attitudes, has been extensively discussed and emphasized by both academics and practitioners. Organizational commitment is defined as the relative strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in an organization. Committed employees believe in and accept organizational goals and values, and are willing to remain within their organizations and exert more effort in their work [Mowday et al., 1979]. Furthermore, employees who possess high organizational commitment tend to be more enthusiastic and are more likely to contribute to organizational mission and goals [Freund, 2005].

Meyer and Allen [1991] proposed that commitment is multi-dimensional and identified three components of organizational commitment: affective, normative, and continuance commitments. Affective commitment is the employee’s emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization. Normative commitment refers to the employee’s feelings of obligation to remain
within the organization. Continuance commitment is the employee’s perception of the costs associated with leaving the organization. The three-component model is a popular framework for comprehending the concept of organizational commitment [Boselie, 2010]. Affective commitment is the most important component for explaining key organizational outcomes such as OCB [Meyer and Allen, 1997; Meyer et al., 2002]. In the field of call centers, customer service representatives’ emotional and psychological attachment to their company may contribute to the achievement of service objectives. Hence, affective commitment was selected in this study for further examination.

2.3. Service-Oriented Organizational Citizenship Behaviors

In general, OCBs have been defined as behaviors that are discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promote effective organizational functioning [Organ, 1988]. In other words, OCBs are the additional things that employees do that are beneficial to the organization, although these things are not required of them as a part of their job [Huang et al., 2004]. OCBs may contribute to organizational performance by lubricating the social machinery of the organization, such as enhancing co-worker and managerial productivity, helping to coordinate activities both within and across work groups, freeing up resources for more productive work, reducing the need to devote scarce resources to simple maintenance functions, and so on [Podsakoff et al., 2000; Smith et al., 1983].

With the growth of research interest in OCBs, the OCB constructs have been expanded and diversified [Kim, 2006]. A number of studies have discussed the concept of OCBs that are directed at customers and have verified that certain OCBs are positively related to effective customer service, customer satisfaction, and service delivery [Bienstock et al., 2003; Castro, 2004; Schneider et al., 2005; Yoon and Suh, 2003]. In particular, Bettencourt et al. [2001] extended the concept of OCBs to the service context, and defined service-oriented OCBs as
citizenship behaviors typically performed by customer-contact employees and directed at customers. Three dimensions of service-oriented OCBs — loyalty, service delivery, and participation — were further identified.

Bettencourt et al. [2001] suggested that the three categories of service-oriented OCBs correspond to three fundamental roles of customer-contact employees in the field of service. Loyalty suggests that employees act as advocates of their organization through the promotion of its products, services, and image to outsiders. Service delivery means that employees behave in a conscientious manner toward customers in service delivery activities. Participation implies that employees take individual initiative to improve service delivery to meet the changing needs of customers. In the service context, it is difficult to specify in advance the full range of tasks that a customer-contact employee might have to perform in response to unpredictable customer requests [Bowen et al., 1999]. Thus, in terms of call center customer service representatives, service-oriented OCBs play vital roles in service encounters.

2.4. The Impact of POS on Service-Oriented OCBs

In a review of previous studies, there is ample evidence that POS has a significant effect on OCBs. According to organizational support theory, if employees feel they are well supported by their organization, they are likely to respond with greater attendance and efforts, which in turn improves work performance [Eisenberger et al., 1986]. Eisenberger et al. [2001] further found that employees who perceive more support from their organizations tend to reciprocate by engaging in more OCBs than those with lower levels of POS. Subsequently, several empirical studies on this issue verified that POS is strongly associated with OCBs [Asgari et al., 2008; Huang et al., 2004; Piercy et al., 2006]. Although previous studies have shown positive relationships between POS and OCBs, few studies have considered the influence of POS on service context OCBs. In the service context, therefore, call center customer service
representatives with higher POS are more likely to perform service-oriented OCBs, such as loyalty, service delivery, and participation, than those with lower POS. The hypotheses can be expressed as follows:

**H1.** *POS will be positively related to the three types of service-oriented OCBs (loyalty, service delivery, and participation). Specifically, customer service representatives with a higher level of POS will display more service-oriented OCBs.*

### 2.5. The Mediating Role of Organizational Commitment

It is apparent from preceding studies that employees with high degrees of POS exhibit high degrees of commitment to their organizations [Cropanzano et al., 1997; Wayne et al., 1997]. According to social exchange theory, when employees believe that the organization is concerned about them, they feel obligated to commit to their organization [Eisenberger et al., 1986]. Employees who perceive high levels of organizational support in terms of how their organization values their contribution or cares about their welfare will demonstrate increased commitment to reciprocate. Higher POS should lead to the greater organizational commitment. Moreover, a number of studies have found that POS is positively associated with affective commitment [Leveson et al., 2009; Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002; Rhoades et al., 2001].

Past studies have generally considered organizational commitment as a main predictor of OCBs. Considering social exchange theory, committed employees tend to reciprocate pro-social behavior, such as OCBs [Payne and Webber, 2006]. A meta-analysis demonstrated that affective commitment was significantly associated with both the altruism and compliance dimensions of OCBs [Organ and Ryan, 1995]. Moreover, a number of studies have offered theoretical and empirical evidence to support the positive correlation between affective

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commitment and OCBs. For instance, Meyer and Allen [1991] suggested that affective commitment was strongly related to OCBs, whereas continuance commitment was unrelated. Morrison [1994] argued that affective commitment was positively related to all dimensions of OCBs, but that normative commitment was related to only one. Bolon [1997] pointed out that affective commitment is the most crucial commitment component for explaining variance in OCBs. Meyer et al. [2002] reported that affective commitment has the strongest positive correlation with OCBs among the three components of commitment. Obviously, the fact that employees with high levels of affective commitment, such as those that identify with the organization and feel emotionally attached, are inclined to perform in a manner that helps their organization. This can be considered as substantial logic sustaining the influence of affective commitment on OCBs. Furthermore, some studies have proposed that affective commitment is a determinant of discretionary service behaviors in the context of customer service [Allen and Grisaffe, 2001; Simons and Parks, 2000].

The relationships discussed above seem to imply the mediating effect of organizational commitment in the correlation between POS and service-oriented OCBs. The concepts of social exchange mechanism indicate that employees who perceive that their organization values and cares about them may feel that they ought to be committed to their organization, and in turn reciprocate by exhibiting behaviors that are beneficial to their organization [Organ, 1990; Wayne et al., 1997]. On the basis of the reciprocity norm, POS should create a felt obligation to care about the organization’s welfare [Eisenberger et al., 2001]. The obligation to exchange caring for caring may enhance employees’ affective commitment to the organization. Employees who have high levels of affective commitment identify with the organization, feel emotionally attached, and share the organization’s values and goals [Allen and Meyer, 1990]. As a result, they are inclined to behave in a manner that helps the organization.

Apparently, the theoretical foundation of social exchange provides a precise logic wherein organizational commitment plays a mediating role between POS
and service-oriented OCBs. In view of the theoretical perspective and the relationships among the three constructs discussed earlier, this study proposes that call center customer service representatives with higher POS will have more commitment toward their companies, and in turn perform service-oriented OCBs including loyalty, service delivery, and participation. Hence, this study hypothesizes the following:

**H2.** Organizational commitment will mediate the relationships between POS and the three types of service-oriented OCBs (loyalty, service delivery, and participation). Specifically, the higher the POS level, the higher the organizational commitment, and the higher the service-oriented OCBs.

3. **METHOD**

This section includes a discussion of sample and procedure for this study, as well as measures.

3.1. **Sample and Procedure**

The participants in this study were customer service representatives who work at five large call centers in Taiwan – Chinatrust Commercial Bank (CTCB), Hua Nan Bank, Far Eastone Telecommunications Corporation, Unalis Corporation, and Telexpress Corporation. The first two companies are in the banking industry, and the third and fourth companies are in the communications and information software industries, respectively. All of the companies have many customers. Telexpress is an out-sourced bureau call center that provides professional customer service for enterprises. The responsibilities of customer service representatives include responding to customer requests, answering customer queries, and recommending services over the telephone.

A total of 375 customer service representatives agreed to participate in this study. In all, 255 usable questionnaires were returned, for a response rate of
68%. More than half of the respondents were female (64.3%). The majority (94.1%) of respondents were between the ages of 20 and 40, and most (87.1%) had at least a college education. With regard to tenure of service, 24% had been working at their respective companies for less than one year, 49% between one and three years, and 27% for more than three years. In addition, more than 80% had been working in the call center industry for at least one year.

3.2. Measures

The survey data was collected by sending questionnaires to 375 customer service representatives. In order to increase the accuracy of the response, researchers included with each questionnaire a cover letter that explained the purpose of the study and guaranteed anonymity for the respondent. To maximize the response rate, the researchers, after two weeks, sent follow-up letters and e-mails and made telephone calls. Employees were asked to answer questions about POS, organizational commitment, service-oriented OCBs, and their demographic characteristics. The employee is the only one who can respond to his or her own POS and organizational commitment. With respect to OCB, employee self-evaluation is a useful way to execute an effective survey, as many genuine actions can escape the attention of the manager, who may notice only those who impress him or her most [Organ, 1988].

Likert-type scales of five points were used for the latent character of variables considered in this study (1 = “strongly disagree” and 5 = “strongly agree”). All items on the questionnaire were first translated into Chinese and then translated back into English in order to ensure synonymy of the measures in the Chinese and the English versions. The researchers and customer service managers also examined the questionnaire to ensure that the items were interpretable in Chinese. Finally, the questionnaire was pre-tested with 35 customer service representatives.

Perceived Organizational Support. The construct of POS was measured using seven items taken from scale developed by Eisenberger et al. [1986].
Sample items from the scale are “The organization really cares about my well-being” and “The organization takes pride in my accomplishments.”

Organizational Commitment. As prior discussion on the section of theoretical constructs and research hypotheses, affective commitment was used as a surrogate measure of organizational commitment. The concept of affective commitment was measured with seven items developed by Allen and Meyer [1996]. Sample items from the measure are “I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization” and “This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me.”

Service-Oriented Organizational Citizenship Behaviors. Service-oriented OCBs were measured using the scale proposed by Bettencourt et al. [2001]. The concept of service-oriented OCBs consists of loyalty, service delivery, and participation. This study uses five items to measure loyalty. Sample items from the measure are “I tell outsiders this is a good place to work” and “I say good things about the organization to others.” A six-item scale was used to measure service delivery. Sample items from the scale are “I follow customer service guidelines with extreme care” and “I follow up in a timely manner on customer requests and problems.” The five-item scale was used to measure participation. Sample items from the measure are “I contribute many ideas for customer communications” and “I make constructive suggestions for service improvement.”

4. RESULTS

The hypothesized relationships were tested by structural equation modeling (SEM). SEM was chosen for the analyses because it allowed us to take into account measurement error, simultaneously estimated all path coefficients, and evaluated the fit of the overall model to the data. Following the two-step approach recommended by Anderson and Gerbing [1988], the measurement
model was evaluated first by using confirmatory factor analysis, and then the structural model was analyzed to test the hypotheses and to perform a simultaneous test that determined whether the combined model (consisting of a measurement model and a structural model), as a whole, provided an acceptable fit to the data [Hatcher, 1994].

Prior to testing for our hypotheses, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis for POS, organizational commitment, loyalty, service delivery, and participation. Table 1 presents the results of the confirmatory factor analysis.

**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>CFI</th>
<th>IFI</th>
<th>NFI</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One-factor model a</td>
<td>3,390.65</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three-factor model b</td>
<td>2,367.51</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesized five-factor model</td>
<td>1,173.54</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a All five constructs are combined
b The three service-oriented OCB dimensions are combined.

The chi-square difference test indicated that the hypothesized five-factor model (POS, organizational commitment, loyalty, service delivery, and participation) provided a better fit for the data than did the one-factor model ($\Delta \chi^2 = 2217.11$, df = 10, $p < 0.01$), and the three-factor model ($\Delta \chi^2 = 1193.97$, df = 7, $p < 0.01$).

These results suggest that the present study’s constructs were distinct. Furthermore, although the fit of the hypothesized five-factor model was not quite satisfactory [$\chi^2 = 1173.54$ (df = 395); Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 0.88; Incremental Fit Index (IFI) = 0.88; Normed Fit Index (NFI) = 0.83; and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.08], the construct validity of the measurements has been supported by noting that, based on the
recommendation of Anderson and Gerbing [1988], the relationships between each indicator variable and its corresponding construct was significant ($t$-values all $> 2.58$, $p < 0.01$). This finding verified the convergent validity, and all pairs of constructs were significantly distinct [the chi-square difference statistics were all greater than the critical value of $\chi^2 (1, 0.05/10) = 7.88$, using the Bonferroni method and under the experiment-wise error rate of 0.05], demonstrating the discriminant validity.

Means, standard deviations, and correlations of all variables are shown in Table 2. As expected, POS correlated positively with organizational commitment ($r = 0.67$, $p < 0.01$) and three types of serviced-oriented OCBs ($r = 0.54$, 0.40, and 0.40, all $p < 0.01$).

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations Among Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. POS</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. OC</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.67**</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Loyalty</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.54**</td>
<td>0.66**</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Service delivery</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.40**</td>
<td>0.44**</td>
<td>0.51**</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Participation</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.40**</td>
<td>0.46**</td>
<td>0.53**</td>
<td>0.49**</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a$N = 255$. POS = perceived organizational support; OC = organizational commitment. Cronbach’s alphas appear on the diagonal in parentheses
* $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$

As shown in Figure 1, POS was strongly related to three types of serviced-oriented OCBs – loyalty, service delivery, and participation ($\beta = 0.61$, 0.45, and 0.47, all $p < 0.01$). The global fit indexes are acceptable: $\chi^2 = 804.92$ ($df = 227$); CFI = 0.88; IFI = 0.88; NFI = 0.84; RMSEA = 0.10. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was supported.
The hypothesized structural model shown in Figure 2 fits the data well ($\chi^2 = 1247.96$ ($df = 401$); CFI = 0.87; IFI = 0.87; NFI = 0.82; RMSEA = 0.09).

**Figure 1. Standardized Path Coefficients for the Effect of Perceived Organizational Support on Service-Oriented OCBs**

**Figure 2. Standardized Path Coefficients for the Hypothesized Model**
Since one model fitting the data does not necessarily mean that the model is the correct one, Hayduk [1987] suggested testing alternative models that are theoretically or conceptually compelling. Because we made no prediction as to whether the relationships in the model are partial or full mediation, we tested whether the proposed mediating variable could fully account for the relationships between POS and serviced-oriented OCBs. As a result, we estimated an alternative model that included direct links between POS and the three types of serviced-oriented OCBs. We added these paths because it is possible that the proposed mediating variable may not fully account for the relationships between POS and serviced-oriented OCBs.

Results show that the fit of the alternative model [$\chi^2 = 1243.01 (df = 398)$; CFI = 0.87; IFI = 0.87; NFI = 0.82; RMSEA = 0.09] was not significantly better than that in the hypothesized model [$\Delta \chi^2 (3) = 4.95, p > 0.05$]. Moreover, the direct links between POS and the three types of serviced-oriented OCBs (loyalty, service delivery, and participation) were not statistically significant ($\beta = 0.13, 0.12, 0.15$, all $p > 0.05$). Therefore, we retained the hypothesized model as the final model and used it to examine our hypotheses. All standardized path coefficients, shown in earlier in Figure 2, were statistically significant (at the $p < 0.01$ level) and in the predicted directions.

Furthermore, we tested the significance of each hypothesized indirect relationship with the Sobel test [Baron and Kenny, 1986]. Results show that POS has a significant indirect association via organizational commitment with loyalty, service delivery, and participation ($Z = 5.72, 3.77, 3.68$, all $p < 0.01$), offering support for Hypothesis 2.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This section presents our conclusions and discusses theoretical and practical implications, along with limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

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5.1. Theoretical and Practical Implications

Call center customer service representatives need to display courtesy and patience when dealing with various customer demands [Huang et al., 2010]. Some not only comply with the job description, but also engage in service-oriented OCBs to promote service quality and organizational performance. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationships among POS, organizational commitment, and service-oriented OCBs among call center customer service representatives.

The analytical results indicate that POS is positively related to service-oriented OCBs. Moreover, organizational commitment fully mediates the relationships between POS and service-oriented OCBs for the customer service representatives included in the study.

This study suggests several contributions with theoretical and practical implications. With respect to theoretical implications, few studies have examined the influence of POS on service context OCB. None of the studies focused on the relationships among POS, organizational commitment, and service-oriented OCBs. This study is the first to examine the mediating effect of organizational commitment on the relationships between POS and the three types of service-oriented OCBs. The results of this study demonstrate that POS has an indirectly positive effect on service-oriented OCBs.

Consistent with the findings of previous studies, the results of the current study reveal that employees with higher POS exhibit greater commitment to their companies [Leveson et al., 2009; Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002; Rhoades et al., 2001], and that organizational commitment has a positive influence on OCB [Bolon, 1997; Meyer et al., 2002; Organ and Ryan, 1995]. This finding shows the importance of organizational commitment in mediating the relationships between POS and discretionary service behaviors, including loyalty, service delivery, and participation, in the context of call centers. Moreover, our results indicate that POS is positively associated with felt obligation to aid the organization and care about its well-being (i.e., affective commitment). Felt obligation and affective
commitment, in turn, are positively related to service-oriented OCBs. This result favors organizational support theory’s emphasis on felt obligation in POS – outcome relationships [Eisenberger et al., 2001].

In the literature, the potential relationships among POS, organizational commitment, and service-oriented OCBs are plausible. This study clarifies these relationships and verifies that organizational commitment significantly mediates the impact of POS on loyalty, service delivery, and participation OCB. It is indicated that, if the employees who perceive a high level of organizational support exhibit increased commitment to their organization, they would perform service-oriented OCBs. In other words, organizational commitment is helpful to link POS to service-oriented OCBs. Therefore, this study extends the knowledge of the connection between POS and service-oriented OCBs and confirms the theoretical framework of social exchange by providing evidence on how POS relates to service-oriented OCBs via organizational commitment within the call center context.

With respect to practical implications, the results of this study could assist call center managers in comprehending the relationships among POS, organizational commitment, and service-oriented OCBs, as well as the mechanism for improving service-oriented OCBs among customer service representatives. Obviously, POS acts as a major antecedent within these relationships. The managers need to recognize that call center customer service representatives with higher POS are more likely to commit to their company, and, in turn, tend to perform service-oriented OCBs.

In addition, organizational commitment is a critical avenue for the influence of POS on service-oriented OCBs. If managers want to improve and increase service-oriented OCBs performed by customer service representatives, they should recognize that organizational commitment plays a key role. This study suggests, therefore, that call center managers should focus their management
efforts on reinforcing policies and actions that are perceived to display concern and support for customer service representatives. In particular, the managers should emphasize the perception of organizational support for customer service representatives, which may cause their higher commitment toward the company, and higher organizational commitment significantly mediates the influence of POS on service-oriented OCBs.

Furthermore, several human resource management practices can be adopted to strengthen the pioneering role of organizational support in increasing organizational commitment, such as increasing job autonomy, enhancing freedom of decision making during service encounters, expanding job skills [Wayne et al., 1997], clarifying job roles and organizational goals [Dessler, 1999], guaranteeing procedure justice [Shore and Shore, 1995], and facilitating two-way communication [Russel, 2008].

4.2. Limitations and Future Research

Some limitations of this study should be noted. In our study, service-oriented OCBs, such as loyalty, service delivery, and participation, were measured primarily via self-report. Respondents may “fake good” under the influence of social desirability. Although the accuracy of the OCBs measures might be enhanced by asking supervisors or peers to report on the behavior of respondents, these types of assessments have their own limitations. Organ and Konovsky [1989] noted that the assessment of OCBs by the manager may involve errors, as the manager may not have the chance to observe fully the employee’s behaviors, especially those behaviors that take place outside the employee’s work-related tasks. Furthermore, it may well be that the behaviors expressed by employees are intended to produce a good impression on the manager [Bolino, 1999]. Thus, we argue that self-reported data from the employees would better capture their service-oriented OCBs.

Next, all of our measurements were collected from a single source. It is possible that relations among the constructs may have been inflated by common
method variance. Although common method variance is inevitable for typical organizational behavior research in general, this study endeavors to minimize the possibility of method variance by following the ways suggested by Podsakoff and Organ [1986] and Podsakoff et al. [2003]. First, all items within the survey questionnaire were carefully constructed by defining ambiguous terms, avoiding indistinct concepts, and keeping all questions simple, specific, and concise. Second, this study designed several reversed questions to prevent participants from answering carelessly. Finally, we adopted Harman’s one-factor test [Podsakoff and Organ, 1986] to examine the problem of common method variance. If there was sizable inflation caused by same-source bias, then a single-factor solution would explain a substantial amount of the total variance of the variables. Our analysis found that a single-factor solution explained only 40% of the total variance. Thus, common method variance was not a serious problem in this study.

Based on several limitations mentioned above, we offer two suggestions for future research. First, this study examines only a single mediating effect in the relationships between POS and service-oriented OCBs. Further research may incorporate various mediating variables, such as job satisfaction, job involvement, and trust, which might provide a better understanding of the path regarding the impact of POS on service-oriented OCBs. Second, even though several ways were used to reduce the effect of common method variance in this study, we cannot rule out completely the possibility of its influence. Hence, future research could diminish this risk by collecting data from multiple sources or by using different measurement techniques.

In conclusion, this study carefully examines the relationships among POS, organizational commitment, and three types of service-oriented OCBs among call center customer service representatives in Taiwan. The results indicate that POS has a positive effect on loyalty, service delivery, and participation. Furthermore,
these relationships were mediated by organizational commitment. This study not only contributes to the literature, but also provides a useful avenue for improving service-oriented OCBs displayed by customer service representatives. It is expected that the results of this study will encourage additional research to further explore undiscovered variables within the current relationships.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Chao-Chan Wu is an assistant professor in the Department of Cooperative Economics at Feng Chia University in Taiwan. He received a Ph.D. degree in management in 2008 from National Chiao Tung University, Taiwan. His research interests focus on organizational behavior, human resource management, nonprofit organization management, and technology management.

Na-Ting Liu is an assistant professor in the Department of Business Administration at Ming Chuan University in Taiwan. She received a Ph.D. degree in management in 2007 from National Chiao Tung University, Taiwan. Her research interests include organizational behavior, human resource management, business ethics, and personnel recruitment and selection. Na-Ting Liu is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: nating.liu@gmail.com