

The Relationship between Perceived Human Resource Management Practices and Organizational Citizenship Behavior: A Mediating Role of Employee Engagement in Five Star Hotels in Thailand

ความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างการจัดการทรัพยากรมนุษย์และพฤติกรรมความเป็นสมาชิกที่ดีขององค์กร : บทบาทการส่งอิทธิพลผ่านความทุ่มเทมีใจของพนักงานต่อองค์กรในโรงแรมห้าดาว ในประเทศไทย

◆ Pornpimol Chaisanit

Graduate School of Tourism Management (GSTM), National Institute Development Administration, E-mail: kik_chaisanit@hotmail.com

พรพิมล ไชยสนิท

นักศึกษาปริญญาเอก คณะการจัดการการท่องเที่ยว สถาบันบัณฑิตพัฒนบริหารศาสตร์

◆ Sangkae Punyasiri

Dr., Graduate School of Tourism Management (GSTM), National Institute Development Administration, E-mail: sangkae@gmail.com

แสงแข บุญศิริ

อาจารย์ ดร. ประจำคณะการจัดการการท่องเที่ยว สถาบันบัณฑิตพัฒนบริหารศาสตร์

Abstract

The objectives of this study were as follows: (1) to examine the relationship between perceived human resources management (HRM) practices, employee engagement and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), and (2) to investigate the mediating role of employee engagement (EE) in the relationship between perceived HRM practices and OCB. The data was collected from 325 non-managerial level employees in five star hotels in Thailand. A quantitative method (n = 325) was used to examine the relationship between perceived HRM practices, employee engagement and OCB. To achieve these objectives data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, confirmatory factor analysis, and structural equation modeling. The results revealed that perceived HRM practices were positively related to OCB, and employee engagement played a partial mediating role in the relationship between perceived HRM practices and OCB.

Keywords: Perceived HRM Practices, Employee Engagement, Organisational Citizenship Behavior

บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษา (1) ความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างการจัดการทรัพยากรมนุษย์ ความทุ่มเทใจของพนักงานต่อองค์กร และพฤติกรรมการเป็นสมาชิกที่ดีต่อองค์กร และ (2) บทบาทของความทุ่มเทใจของพนักงานต่อองค์กรในการส่งอิทธิพลผ่านความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างการจัดการทรัพยากรมนุษย์กับพฤติกรรมการเป็นสมาชิกที่ดีต่อองค์กร โดยได้ทำการเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูลกับพนักงานระดับปฏิบัติการจำนวน 325 คนในโรงแรมระดับห้าดาวประเทศไทย การวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลเชิงปริมาณ ($n = 325$) ในการตรวจสอบความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างการจัดการทรัพยากรมนุษย์ ความทุ่มเทใจของพนักงานต่อองค์กร และพฤติกรรมการเป็นสมาชิกที่ดีต่อองค์กร วิเคราะห์ข้อมูลโดยใช้สถิติเชิงพรรณนา การวิเคราะห์องค์ประกอบเชิงยืนยันและการสร้างโมเดลสมการโครงสร้าง ผลการวิจัยพบว่าการจัดการทรัพยากรมนุษย์มีความสัมพันธ์เชิงบวกกับพฤติกรรมการเป็นสมาชิกที่ดีต่อองค์กร และพบว่าความทุ่มเทใจของพนักงานต่อองค์กร เป็นตัวแปรส่งผ่านบางส่วน (Partial Mediator) ระหว่างการจัดการทรัพยากรมนุษย์และพฤติกรรมการเป็นสมาชิกที่ดีต่อองค์กร

คำสำคัญ : การจัดการทรัพยากรมนุษย์ ความทุ่มเทใจของพนักงานต่อองค์กร พฤติกรรมการเป็นสมาชิกที่ดีต่อองค์กร

Introduction

Today, the hotel industry is one of the important businesses in Thailand, yielding high incomes, supported 244,318 jobs and serving an expansive customer group from all over the world. (National Statistical Office, 2014). Even though, the hotel industry has widened its growth constantly, the industry face many challenges such as shortage of labor and high turnover rate. According to a report by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015), the turnover rate in the economy's hotel segment increased from 66.7% in 2014 to 72.1% in 2015. They further described that the costs of losing employees is approximately US\$ 1 million for every 10 managerial employees who left the organization. Moreover, the cost of recruiting new employees is approximately 50 to 60 % of first year's salary of one employee in hotel industry. In Thailand, the turnover rate of hotels increased from 25.02 % in 2006 to 44.5% in 2012 (Ministry of Labor, 2013).The hotel industry is also facing difficulties in retaining their employees especially five star hotels. These hotels seek out all possible tactics to nurture and retain capable service staff so that they can resolve the issues mentioned above. The

hotels with a high turnover rate not only affect the financial dimensions but also employee performance and service quality. As five star hotels pay a great attention to employee performance in order to deliver superior service to customers (Suan & Mohd Nasuridin, 2014), therefore, human resource management has played a vital role in five star hotels because each employee is a key person to the success of this business (Browning, 2006). Although a wide range of studies have examined how single HRM practices such as career development, training or performance management do influence employee's behaviours (Wright & Boswell, 2002, Boselie., et al, 2005) however, many scholars have claimed that HRM practices and strategies need to be considered holistically rather than as individual practices to evaluate their impact on employee outcomes (Alfes et al., 2013; Snape & Redman, 2010). If employees believe that the organizations are treating them fairly, they are more likely to comply with the workplace policies, show extra conscientiousness, and behave altruistically towards colleagues (Owor, 2016). These behaviors are known as organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), which is defined as a type of individual behavior that performs more than their job descriptions or extra-role behavior (Podsakoff et al., 2009).

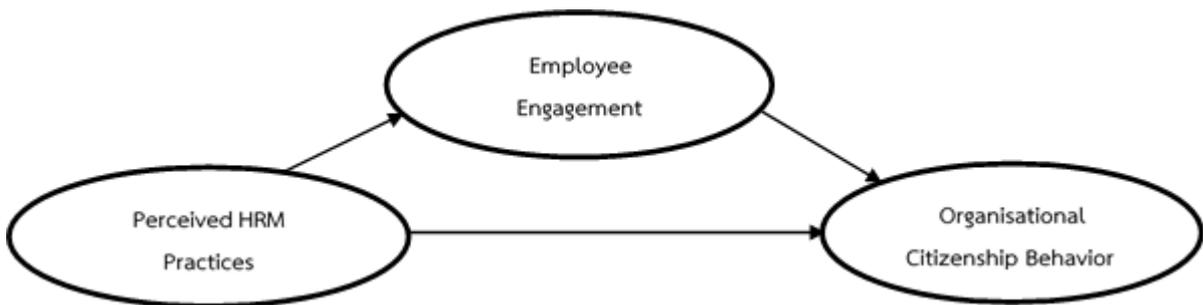
According to many studies by Owor, (2016); Alfes et al, (2013) and Babaei et al., (2012) have investigated the relationship between perceived HRM practices and OCB and have found the direct effect of perceived HRM practices on OCB. However, there is some evidence in the literature that employee engagement mediates the relationship between perceived HRM practices and OCB (Alfes et al, 2013; Babaei et., 2012). Hence, the objectives of this study aims to explore the mediating mechanism that links perceived HRM practices to OCB. Employee engagement is the psychological contract between employees and their organization that can be altered to achieve extra-roles or citizenship behavior (Alfes et al, 2013; Babaei et al., 2012). Drawing on social exchange framework, the model of this study posit that the effect of perceived of HRM practices on OCB is mediated by employee engagement in five star hotels in Thailand.

Next, introduction, literature review, conceptual framework, and methodology, results, discussion, and recommendations for future research will be discussed.

Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between perceived HRM practices, employee engagement and organisational citizenship behavior in five star hotels, Thailand.
2. To examine the mediating role of employee engagement between perceived HRM practices and organisational citizenship behavior.

Conceptual Framework



Literature Review

Human Resource Management Practices (HRM practices)

HRM practices have been defined as “a set of distinct but interrelated activities, functions, and processes aimed at attracting, developing, and maintaining a firm’s human resources” (Lado & Wilson, 1994). In the social exchange perspective, good HRM practices will probably increase the positive attitude among employees, and in turn exhibits higher job performance and go beyond their job responsibilities (Shaw et al., 2009). The literature in the human resource management denotes that there is a positive relationship between perceived HRM practices and OCB. For example, Alfes et al., (2013) found a positive relationship between perceived HRM and with all dimensions of OCB. Similar results are found in the service sector. For example, Suan & Mohd Nasursin (2014) discovered a significant and positive effect between perceived HRM practices and OCB of hotels in Malaysia. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 1: Perceived HRM practices are positively related to OCB.

Employee Engagement

Schaufeli & Bakker (2004) & Schaufeli et al., (2002, p.74) defined employee engagement as “a positive, fulfilling, work related state of mind of employee that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption”. Vigor refers to the feeling of physical energy, emotional strength, willingness to invest efforts in one’s work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Dedication is “a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge” (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p. 74). Finally, absorption is described as the state of being so completely concentrated and highly immersed in work that an employee feels time passes quickly and has difficulties detaching from work (Schaufeli et al., 2002). For the service sectors, employee engagement is personified by the passion and energy employees exude to serve the customer and contribute to the success of the organization.

Based on the social exchange theory (SET), it can be explained that when employees perceive fairness from their organization, they can develop trust which leads to the development of engagement (Rurkkhum & Bartlett, 2012). A basic principle of SET is that relationships grow over time into trusting, loyal, and shared commitments as long as the parties abide by certain “rules” of exchange (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

Previous research has found the relationship between perceived HRM practices and employee engagement. Good HRM practices will likely increase employee’s perceived obligation to the employer and elicit engagement (Shaw et al., 2009). According to Owor (2016), a positively significant relationship between HRM practices and employee engagement is found and HRM practices can motivate employees to be engaged with their job roles. Similarly, Sattar et al., (2015) found a positively significant relationship between perceived HRM practices and employee engagement in Pakistan organizations. In this regard, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 2: Perceived HRM practices are positively related to employee engagement

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) is explained as those characteristics of voluntary or discretionary performance related behavior shown by employees in an effort to improve organizational outcomes (Koys, 2001). These behaviors are described as extra role efforts that go beyond the scope of job requirements (Organ, 1997).

OCB is composed of five dimensions: 1) Altruism, 2) Courtesy, 3) Sportsmanship, 4) Conscientiousness, and 5) Civic Virtue. *Altruism* is employees' behaviors that help other co-workers to resolve their problems. *Courtesy* is employees in the organization treating each other with respect, they would be comfortable working with each other. *Sportsmanship* is employee's behavior that is willing to tolerate inconvenient situations in the organization without complaint and sacrificing one's own personal interest. *Conscientiousness* is behavior showing that employees agree and comply with the organizational regulations and policies when no one is watching, and *Civic Virtue* is behavior showing that employees willingly attend meetings and other activities organized by his/her organization. By involving these activities, the employees would be shared idea and speaking up about issues related to an organization (Organ, 1997).

Many studies have revealed that employee engagement affects employee performance, especially OCB (Saks, 2006; Yeh, 2013). For instance, Rurkkhum & Bartlett (2012) said that employee engagement has a positive relationship to OCB in Thailand. Moreover, Ariani (2013) found that there is a positive relationship between employee engagement and OCB in the service sectors in Indonesia. Thus, a third hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 3: Employee engagement is positively related to OCB

The mediating Influence of employee engagement on the relationship between perceived HRM practices and OCB

Employees perceive HRM practices both in terms of financial and non-financial benefits as a key factor that enhances extra-role behavior (Alfes et al., 2013; Owor, 2016; Rurkkhum & Bartlett, 2012). Thus, it is confirmed that there is a positive relationship between perceived HRM practices and OCB (Alfes et al., 2013). The mediating variable in the social exchange framework defined in this study is employee engagement which refers to a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind of employees that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004 & Schaufeli et al., 2002). For individuals to repay their organization is through their level of engagement. That is, employees will choose to engage themselves to varying degrees and in response to the resources they receive from their organizations. Employees' positive attitudes and behaviors toward the organization are enhanced, leading to OCB (Danish et al., 2015; Saks, 2006). Thus, employee engagement is

the mediate roles in relationship between perceived HRM practices and OCB (Karatepe, 2013; Yeh, 2013). Therefore, the following hypothesis is now developed:

Hypothesis 4: Employee engagement mediates the relationship between perceived HRM practices and OCB.

Methodology

Sample and Procedure

For the purpose of this study, the population is employees in five star hotels in Thailand. These employees come from four main provinces in each region, which has the highest number of five star hotels and customers; Bangkok (Central), Chiang Mai (Northern), Phuket (Southern), Nakhon Ratchasima (Northeastern). There are thirty-five for five star hotels based on the list of Thai Hotel Association (2016). This study has employed structural equation modeling for data analysis. According to Schumacher & Lomax (2010), the sample size should be at least 20 times the observed variables. In this study, observation variables in the model has 16 variables. Therefore, the minimum size is $20 \times 16 = 320$.

This survey used questionnaire, it was thought that about 40% of the returns might contain missing data and thus be usable (Schumacher & Lomax, 2010). As such, the researcher decided to distribute questionnaires $320 \times 1.4 = 448$. Using cluster and convenience sampling, researcher contacted the HR managers of each hotel. After agreement was obtained, a total of 448 sets of questionnaires were distributed to HR managers. 112 questionnaire were sent to each regions, 360 questionnaires were returned, constituting a response rate of 80%. Deletion of missing values resulted in a usable sample of 325 employees.

Measures

Perceived HRM practices: The study measured perceived HRM practices developed by Saks (2006); Lee et al., (2010); Mone & London (2010); Saks & Gruman (2011). The items in this questionnaire include “My hotel places great importance on selecting the right persons for the right job.” Participants indicated their response on a five-point Likert-type scale with anchors from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”). Internal consistency was 0.96.

Employee Engagement: The study measured employee engagement developed by Schaufeli et al., (2002). The response scale ranged from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”).

agree”). The sample items include “When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.” Internal consistency was 0.92.

OCB: The study measured OCB developed by Organ et al., (2006); Podsakoff et al., (2000). The response scale ranged from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”). The items sample include “I am willing to help my co-workers to resolve their problems.” Internal consistency was 0.94.

Data Analysis and Statistics

This study used two-step approach which comprises of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM) (Hair et al., 2010). Firstly, CFA was conducted to examine the relationship between the observed variables underlying each construct. Secondly, the overall measurement model was subject to structural model testing, as well as the hypothesized correlation among latent constructs. AMOS version 22.0 was used to perform these analyses. Hair et al., (2010) indicated that an acceptable sample size should be between 200 and 400 participants to conduct structural equation modeling. Thus, the number of participants (n = 325) in this study is suitable for the use of SEM.

Demographic Profile

In terms of the sample’s demographic profile, 63.4% were female while 36.6 % were male. Participants were aged between 31 and 40 years old. Most (36%) participants had worked in their hotel one to five years. The participants were working in several departments such as food and beverage (32.2%), human resource department (14.2%), front office department (23.58%), sale and marketing (17.12%) and housekeeping (12.9 %). In terms of education, with more than half (62.7%) holding a bachelor’s degree.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The overall fit of a measurement model was determined by confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). CFA was also employed to check the validity and reliability of measurement model. The results for the testing model are as follows;

The values of the TLI (0.928), NFI (0.914), CFI (0.939) and χ^2/df (3.155) were either above their respective recommended cut-off points or within the suggested range. For the values of GFI (0.879) and AGFI (0.837), the estimates missed the recommended thresholds by 0.021 and 0.063 respectively. For the RMSEA value (0.082), it was 0.002 over the upper bound

value. The results indicated a good degree of statistical fit between the observed data and the measurement model.

The construct reliability of measurement model was tested by Cronbach's alpha (≥ 0.7), squared multiple correlations (SMC, the value is ranged between 0 and 1), and composite reliability (CR ≥ 0.6) (Hair et al., 2010). In this model, the Cronbach's alpha of perceived HRM was 0.96; employee engagement was 0.92 and OCB was 0.94. The SMC values of the indicators for perceived HRM practices, employee engagement and OCB were 0.69, 0.74 and 0.77 respectively. Furthermore, the CR of perceived HRM practices were 0.96; the CR of employee engagement was 0.92 and the CR of OCB was 0.94. As these values were all over 0.60, a relatively strong construct reliability of the model was evident.

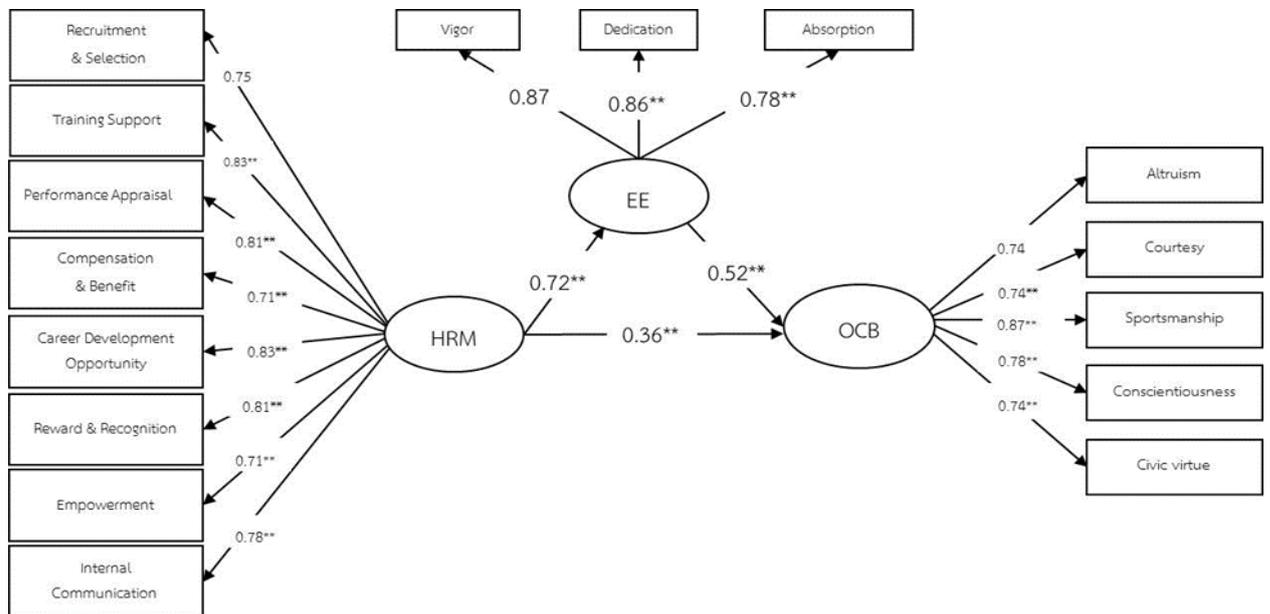
Next, the validity of the measurement model is tested on its convergent validity and discriminant validity. The convergent validity of the measurement model was also assessed through the average variance extracted (AVE). According to Hair et al., (2010), AVE value greater than 0.50 or higher indicates that the validity of both a latent construct and the variables are high. The AVE of perceived HRM practices was 0.61; the AVE of employee engagement was 0.70 and the AVE of OCB was 0.61. The results show a high construct reliability, meaning that the measurement model possess convergent validity. Meanwhile, discriminant validity is the degree to which measures of different constructs are distinct, they are not highly corrected (Hair et al., 2010; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). All AVE values were greater than their associated squared correlation values. Thus, validating the distinctiveness of the variables included in the model.

To sum up, the results show that this model was reliable and valid, and present a good degree of statistical fit between the observed data and the measurement model. Thus, perceived HRM practices, employee engagement and OCB were appropriate for analyzing data by the structural equation modeling.

Structural Equation Modeling

After the measurement model was confirmed, the structural model was then examined and was used to test all hypotheses. The model fit indices were as follows: $\chi^2 = 117.540$, $df = 84$, $\chi^2/df = 1.399$, $P = 0.009$, $RMSEA = 0.035$, $GFI = 0.957$, $AGFI = 0.931$, $CFI = 0.991$, $NFI = 0.968$. Based on the minimum criteria of model fit indices, the structural model appear to be

a good fit. CFI, GFI, TLI, and RMSEA values indicated that the structural model fits well to the sample data. The results for the revised structural model are shown in figure 1.



Note: * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Figure. 1: Structural Model Testing

Hypothesis Testing

Each hypothesis were tested, the results show all paths were significant both direct and indirect effects. The findings of the hypotheses testing are represented in table 1.

Table 1 Path Results for the Structural Model (Hypotheses Testing) (n=325)

Hypotheses/Path	Std. coefficient	(t-value)	Results
H1 HRM → OCB	0.36	5.38***	Supported
H2 HRM → EE	0.72	11.05***	Supported
H3 EE → OCB	0.52	7.16***	Supported
H4 Mediating effect of EE between HRM and OCB	0.37	6.02***	Partially Supported

***Parameter estimates significant at $p < 0.001$

Research Results

1. As shown in table 1, the results shows that perceived HRM practices significantly and positively related to OCB. The hypothesis 1 was tested by examining the path coefficient

between perceived HRM practices and OCB. The path coefficient from perceived HRM practices to OCB was 0.36, supporting hypothesis 1. Next, perceived HRM practices significantly affect employee engagement. The path coefficient from perceived HRM practices to employee engagement was 0.72. This suggested that hypothesis 2 was supported. In addition, employee engagement significantly affects OCB. The path coefficient from employee engagement to OCB was 0.52, thus, hypothesis 3 was supported.

2. Employee engagement sets as mediating variable in the link between HRM practices and OCB. The result shows that there is a significant positive indirect relationship and the path coefficient of indirect effect was 0.37. So, hypothesis 4 was supported. Therefore, employee engagement has a partial mediation effect in the relationship between perceived HRM practices and OCB.

Discussion

The HRM practices can become a key source of competitive advantage to a firm and employees are the key of its success. Thus, researcher is interested in managing employees and focusing on human resource practices as instrumental in helping achieve company objectives and enhancing productivity. In fact that employees' behaviors and HRM practices are considerably linked to firm performance (Alfes et al., 2013), therefore, human resource practitioners need to design appropriate practices for managing human resource.

The findings of this study, using data from 325 non-managerial employees in the five star hotels in Thailand support the model. The present study sheds light on the nature of the relationship between perceived HRM practices (Recruitment & Selection, Training Support, Performance Appraisal, Compensation & Benefits, Career Development Opportunities, Internal Communication, Rewards and Recognition, and Empowerment) and employee behavior. This study shows that where employees' perceptions of HRM practices are positive, OCB is enhanced (Babaei et al., 2012 and Suan & Mohd Nasursin, 2014). Significantly, the results also showed that there is a considerably positive indirect relationship between HRM practices and OCB. This finding explains employee engagement as a mechanism in which accounts for the relationship between HRM practices and OCB. The indirect effect linking HRM practices to OCB demonstrated that employees who have a positive perceptions of HRM practices in their organization are more likely to be engaged with their job and therefore lead to a

higher propensity to enact OCB. Therefore, employee engagement is partially mediated the relationship between perceived HRM practices and OCB (Ariani, 2013; Karatepe, 2013).

According to the social exchange perspective, the findings show that employees' attitudes are a significant factor that explains why perceived HRM practices enhance OCB. It might be implied that perceived HRM practices can affect both employees' attitudes and behaviors that there are benefits to the organization and coworkers. Thus, an appropriate HRM practices help to create a holistic and consistent people management approach that transcends the role of the HRM department alone to encompass the behavioral interventions of all line and senior managers in the hotel industry of Thailand.

Recommendations

It is clear from the findings that employee engagement has a partial mediation effect in the relationship between perceived HRM practices and OCB; hence, HRM practices and employee engagement are the useful factors to enhance employee behaviors. Hotel companies should focus both HRM practices and employee engagement that can change employee behavior to go beyond job requirement (Alfes et al 2013; Saks, 2006). Thus, to encourage a higher level of extra-role behaviors, hotel managers must first persuade employees to feel engaged and create a positive working environment and favorable benefits for employees through HRM practice (Alfes et al.,2013 and Babaei et al.,2012). For example, hotels need to promote a climate of reciprocity will likely stimulate positive attitudinal and behavioral outcomes from employees. In the social exchange theory, employees can increase their level of engagement depending on their estimate of what is fair in the exchange between an employee and their organisation. If hotels take a good care of their employees, they feel obligated to the organization, leading to the willingness of employees to help co-workers.

Future Research Suggestions

This study used a cross-sectional study design as opposed to a longitudinal study design. Longitudinal methods are required to provide more definitive answers about the causal effects of employee engagement and the extent to which social exchange explains these relationships. Future research on OCB, employee engagement and HRM practices should include qualitative analyses. Qualitative research studies help to understand the theoretical

explanation of the phenomenon under study. Future researchers should expand the sample to include the airline and food & beverage industry. Furthermore, this study still does not confirm to other behavioral reactions which mediate the relationship of perceived HRM practices and OCB. Future studies may therefore further investigate a variety of behavioral mediators such as job satisfaction and employee loyalty.

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Pornpimol Chaisanit holds her Master of Science in International Hospitality and Tourism Management, and Currently is Ph.D. Candidate Integrated Tourism in the Graduate School of Tourism Management, National Institute of Development Administration.



Dr. Sangkae Punyasiri holds her Doctor of Business Administration in Management, and Currently is a Lecturer, Graduate School of Tourism Management, National Institute of Development Administration.