



Antecedents and outcome of job embeddedness: Evidence from four and five-star hotels



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ABSTRACT

The present study explores the antecedents and outcome of job embeddedness. The antecedents are: level of control over work hours and felt obligation. The outcome is proactive customer service performance. Using self-administered questionnaires, 163 paired responses were gathered from frontline employees and their supervisors/managers in 16 hotels/resorts with a rating of four and five stars in Malaysia. Frontline employees responded to the questions on level of control over work hours, felt obligation and job embeddedness (on-the-job and off-the-job). Supervisors/managers responded to the questions on their employees' proactive customer service performance. The salient findings are: (1) Level of control over work hours and felt obligation have significant relationships with on-the-job embeddedness; (2) On-the-job embeddedness has a significant relationship with proactive customer service performance; (3) On-the-job embeddedness mediates the relationship between felt obligation and proactive customer service performance; and (4) Off-the-job embeddedness has a significant relationship with on-the-job embeddedness.

1. Introduction

With today's more affordable airfare, expanding international flight connectivity and increasing consumer purchasing power, the hospitality industry is riding a broad wave of growth globally. Over the past two decades, the figure of international travel departures across the globe have doubled from about 600 million in the year 1996 to about 1.3 billion in 2016 (Langford and Weissenberg, 2018). In Malaysia, the phenomenon is evident with the soaring number of hotels ranging from budget to luxury, independent to chain, local to international brands. From 4072 units in 2014, the number of hotels has surged to 4961 units (an increase of 22%) in 2016 (Tourism Malaysia, 2018). Together with the food and beverage industry, the contribution of the hospitality industry to the gross domestic product (GDP) of the service sector rose from RM27.6 billion (or USD6.65 billion)¹ in year 2014 to approximately RM31.5 billion (or USD7.58 billion) in year 2016 (Ministry of Finance Malaysia, 2018). The healthy statistics are probably attributed to the yearly rollout of tourism initiatives by the government, alongside the Malaysian Economic Transformation Programme which highlights

tourism as one of the national key economic areas (Public Service Department Malaysia, 2017). For years to come, the hotel industry is anticipated to continue to flourish.

The favourable prospect of the industry has attracted many new entrants to the industry and has intensified business competition within the industry. Because product offerings can be largely homogenous among rivals (e.g., beautiful rooms, state-of-the-art recreational facilities, and wide-ranging dining options), the differentiating factor is essentially the quality of service experienced by the customers. Therefore, it is important that frontline employees proactively commit themselves to always go the extra mile needed to exceed customer expectations and hit the highest levels of customer satisfaction. In theory, such a performance is known as proactive customer service performance (PCSP) (Rank et al., 2007). PCSP typifies self-started, long-term-oriented and persistent service behaviour that goes beyond explicitly prescribed performance requirements. This may sound synonymous to ordinary extra-role performance which is usually situation-triggered and ad hoc (Bienstock et al., 2003; Raub and Liao, 2012). PCSP is set apart with the keywords "self-started", "long-term oriented"

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¹ The exchange rate is US\$1 = RM4.154 (<https://www.bloomberg.com/quote/USDMYR:CUR>) as at 28 December 2018.

and “persistent” and represent voluntary service actions that constantly anticipate customers’ needs and expectations without a prompting agent such as a request, a complaint, or a fortuitous happening. Thus, this performance outcome epitomizes a higher echelon of service behaviours desired by customers in four and five-star hotels for the premium rates paid (Kucukusta et al., 2013). Given the competitive hotel business environment and the ever-rising customer expectations, continuous research on employees’ PCSP and factors leading to such superior performance in the hotel industry are warranted. A factor that is potentially influential of PCSP is the job embeddedness (JE) of employees, which refers to the extent to which an individual is enmeshed in the job (Harris et al., 2011; Mitchell et al., 2001). The basic question that is addressed in this research is: What are the significant antecedents and outcome of JE? While PCSP is predicted to be the outcome of JE, the likely antecedents of JE are the level of control over work hours (LCWH) and felt obligation (FO). This is due to hotel’s operating hours that require frontline employees to work long hours, work in variable shift duties, and work on public holidays and weekends, which can deplete employees’ embeddedness in the work and/or non-work life and in turn affect their PCSP.

The contributions of this study are fourfold. First, existing JE-performance scholarship centres around employee-directed and organization-directed behaviours with little focus on customer-directed behaviours such as PCSP (e.g., Afsar and Badir, 2016). This study specifically analyses the impact of JE on PCSP in the hotel industry. Second, lack of studies evaluating the antecedents of JE is a major concern. Most researchers have echoed the construct in the form of a global JE without segregating the two dimensions (Crossley et al., 2007), or only the on-the-job embeddedness (ON-JE) (Harris et al., 2011; Lee et al., 2004). The impact of off-the-job embeddedness (OFF-JE), unfortunately, remains unexplored thus far. Despite receiving heavier scrutiny, the antecedents of ON-JE converge at the situational level. At the individual level, antecedents appear somewhat ignored. Third, there is a dearth of studies examining the mediating role of JE (Karatepe and Ngeche, 2012). Studies have shown that JE can be affected by a myriad of individual and situational factors and JE can lead to positive employee performance. Therefore, a logical extension of these studies is the analysis of the mediating role of JE. Finally, as Mitchell et al. (2001) conceptualized, and Ng and Feldman (2012) asserted, OFF-JE and ON-JE are not independent of each other but share a close relationship and are likely to mutually reinforce. Up to now, far little attention has been paid to determining this relationship (Ng and Feldman, 2013). This study particularly investigates the relationship between OFF-JE and ON-JE. The research framework is depicted in Fig. 1.

2. Literature review and hypotheses development

2.1. Job embeddedness

Introduced by Mitchell et al. (2001), JE involves non-attitudinal work and non-work factors that can be classified under three dimensions, namely links, fit, and sacrifice. These factors collectively bind employees to the organization. ON-JE, or sometimes known as organizational embeddedness (Harris et al., 2011), captures the extent to

which an individual is enmeshed in the organization. This construct basically relates to factors at the workplace. On-the-job links comprise the formal or informal connections with other people in the organization, such as superiors, subordinates and fellow colleagues. The more links an individual forms at the workplace, the greater he/she is bound to the job and organization. On-the-job fit reflects the perceived compatibility or comfort with the organization. Fit occurs when an employee’s personal values, career goals or plans are in line with the organization’s culture or prospects, or when job knowledge, skill set, or talents meet job demands. On-the-job sacrifice encompasses the perceived cost of material or psychological benefits that may be forfeited by leaving the organization, such as interesting projects, attractive healthcare or pension plans, and a comfortable personal office.

OFF-JE, on the other hand, represents one of the principal notions of JE that takes non-work factors into account. Sometimes used interchangeably with community embeddedness (Ng and Feldman, 2013), it is defined as the extent to which an individual is enmeshed in the non-work spaces where he/she has a deep psychological and emotional relationship, such as relationships with family/friends, involvements in hobbies or social activities, and any other important aspects in the non-work spaces (Feldman et al., 2012; Zhang et al., 2012). Identically, off-the-job links refer to the formal or informal connections with other people in the non-work spaces, for instance, family, friends or significant others. An employee who has many links would have lower tendency to sever current employment because switching would entail disruptions to the links. Off-the-job fit is regarded as the perceived compatibility or comfort with the non-work spaces. The diverse aspects may range from activity of personal interest to the environment at large, and changing job may, in one way or another, affect the employee’s usual pattern in these aspects. Off-the-job sacrifice indicates the perceived cost of material or psychological benefits that may be forfeited by leaving the non-work spaces, such as a membership in an association and involvement in outdoor activities that the employee likes.

Mitchell et al. (2001) put forward the notion that one dimension of embeddedness can influence the other. Building on the spill-over theory (Edwards and Rothbard, 2000), facilitating non-work commitments promote employees’ positive states of mind and well-being, which are likely to spill over to the work domain and spur beneficial consequences on-the-job links and fit. For example, an employee being invigorated by his/her non-work life may exhibit good emotions to interact with fellow colleagues and/or have more energy to participate in activities at workplace (for example, trainings, seminars, etc). On the contrary, an employee who struggles with obligations in private life may be emotionally distressed which can endanger interactions with co-workers and/or involvements in workplace activities. Against this backdrop, it is hypothesized that:

H1. OFF-JE has a positive relationship with ON-JE.

2.2. Antecedents of job embeddedness

Level of control over work hours (LCWH) denotes the degree of control or flexibility in the timing of work (McNamara et al., 2011), and

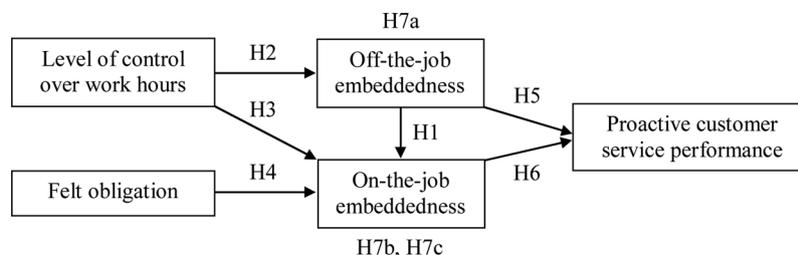


Fig. 1. Research framework.

it is a likely situational antecedent of both OFF-JE and ON-JE. Employees especially in the hotel industry are often required to work long and irregular hours even during public holidays (Wong and Ko, 2009). The lack of flexibility in work hours engenders difficulty in balancing their work and non-work roles (Valcour, 2007). Consequently, it jeopardizes employees' relationship with family or friends (low links) or diminishes their fit to the non-work space. On the contrary, having higher LCWH, that is, more flexible or less fluctuating work schedule, would allow employees to plan and partake in activities in their non-work life. Involvement in those activities would establish more social connections and create a sense of fit to the non-work environment (Moen et al., 2008). Applying the person-environment fit theory (Caplan and Van Harrison, 1993), Richman et al. (2008) have asserted that workplace flexibility improves employees' fit in the non-work domain. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H2. LCWH has a positive relationship with OFF-JE.

Due to lower level of control in the timing of work, hotel employees experience greater emotional exhaustion (Chiang et al., 2010). Emotional exhaustion, a psychological response to stressors on the job, erodes the relationships with co-workers if not handled well (Diefendorff et al., 2008), and sway employees' perception of fit to the organization if managers perpetuate the unfavourable work conditions (Cole and Bedeian, 2007). Conversely, giving higher LCWH prevents employees from emotional exhaustion (Karatepe, 2013), hence preserving on-the-job links and fit. Higher LCWH has also been shown to strengthen employees' attachment to the organization (Lyness et al., 2012). Given these arguments, it is hypothesized that:

H3. LCWH has a positive relationship with ON-JE.

At the individual level, one of the likely antecedents of ON-JE is felt obligation (FO), which indicates the extent to which employees believe that they should care about the organization's well-being and should help in achieving the organizational goals (Eisenberger et al., 2001). Employees who receive positive treatments from the organization experience higher levels of FO to the organization and have an upward tendency to act in the best interests of the organization (Eisenberger et al., 2001). From the theoretical lens of self-regulation, obligated employees adjust and engage in attitudes or behaviours that are beneficial to the organization (Bolino et al., 2012). These attitudes or behaviours may include improving interaction with co-workers (links) or performing extra-role tasks (fit) which increases the embeddedness of employees. In addition, FO instils affective and normative commitment in employees to reciprocate with favourable work attitudes and behaviours (Lew, 2009; Meyer and Parfyonova, 2010). These outcomes not only enhance employees' fit to the organization but also intensify their strong attachment to the organization. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H4. FO has a positive relationship with ON-JE.

2.3. Performance outcome of job embeddedness

The positive relationship of OFF-JE with job performance is evidenced in the study by Wheeler et al.'s (2012). Employees who are embedded off-the-job typically possess healthy relationships with family and friends, as well as exhibit fair compatibility to hobbies and social activities (Mitchell et al., 2001). Drawing upon the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), the bidirectional exchange process as a response to the benefits received generate motivation effects that encourage the benefit-receiving party to respond in kind to the benefit-supplying party (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). Thus, desirable work outcome such as proactive customer service performance (PCSP) can result from the reciprocation of employees towards organizational support to their non-work life. Simply put, when an employee has a vibrant private life, he/she would be thankful to the organization and

perform proactively during service delivery which in turn, can benefit the organization. Based on the above arguments, it is hypothesized that:

H5. OFF-JE has a positive relationship with PCSP.

The relationship between ON-JE and PCSP can be explained with social exchange theory. As posited in the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), employees are motivated to expend effort in their work in reciprocation to the organization's goodwill. Therefore, embedded frontline employees who work well with colleagues are comfortable with the work environment, and enjoy the benefits offered by the organization and have a greater desire to contribute back to the organization with PCSP (Gouldner, 1960; Kristof Brown et al., 2005). The application of social exchange theory is prevalent in employee outcome-related studies (e.g., Harris et al., 2011; Karatepe and Ngeche, 2012). Accordingly, it is hypothesized that:

H6. ON-JE has a positive relationship with PCSP.

2.4. Mediating effects of job embeddedness

Deriving from the foregoing theoretical expressions and empirical evidence that point to the direct relationships among LCWH, FO, OFF-JE, ON-JE and PCSP, it gives reason to expect that OFF-JE and/or ON-JE would mediate the relationships between the antecedents (LCWH and FO) and outcome (PCSP), although the direct relationships between the antecedents and outcome are not hypothesized (Rungtusanatham et al., 2014). Higher LCWH and FO are believed to enmesh employees in the work and non-work spaces. In turn, embedded employees are likely to repay the organization with better performance. The plausible mediating mechanisms entail the following hypotheses:

H7a. OFF-JE mediates the relationship between LCWH and PCSP.

H7b. ON-JE mediates the relationship between LCWH and PCSP.

H7c. ON-JE mediates the relationship between FO and PCSP.

3. Methodology

3.1. Sample

The sample for this study was drawn from 248 hotel/resort establishments in Malaysia that were rated by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture Malaysia as four and five-star. Human resource managers of these establishments were approached to seek cooperation. At the end, 16 establishments agreed to participate in the survey. To minimize the risks of common method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003), data were collected from two sources i.e. the frontline employees and their superiors. Employees assessed their LCWH, FO, OFF-JE and ON-JE whereas supervisors/managers appraised the PCSP of employees under their supervision. Departments that were germane to this study were front office, food and beverage, and recreational facilities (e.g., spa, gymnasium, swimming pool, etc).

Data collection was executed using three approaches: face-to-face distribution, drop-and-collect method, and email survey. The researcher first went through each section of the questionnaire with human resource managers or coordinating executives to make clear of the definition of terms and meaning of each statement. With an identification number assigned to each questionnaire, the requirement of paired responses was emphasized. A total of 385 questionnaires were distributed to these 16 establishments with an average of 24 questionnaires per establishment. At the end of the survey period, 201 questionnaires were returned. After data entry, data cleaning was conducted to detect erroneous responses including incomplete pairs, missing values, and straight-lining. Incomplete demographic information was viewed acceptable as it was not the focus of investigation of this study, and hence such questionnaires were retained. Elimination of 38 questionnaires left

a final usable sample of 163, exceeding the minimum number of 114 obtained through the a priori power analysis which computes the necessary sample size before the actual study to ensure adequate statistical power (Faul et al., 2007). The response rate was 42.3%.

As one superior could rate the performance of a few subordinates, the number of frontline employee respondents and supervisor/manager respondents differed. Manual tallying and counting finalized a sample count of 163 frontline employees and 51 supervisors/managers (excluding responses with missing demographic information), yielding a superior-subordinate ratio of approximately 1:3. The demographic profile of frontline employee respondents (the sums may vary due to missing data) showed that the respondents aged between 18–49 years, with an average age of 27.27 years (SD = 6.41). Male respondents (n = 76) and female respondents (n = 85) shared a rather even proportion. The sample was made up of primarily Malay (51.5%), followed by others from various indigenous ethnic groups (25.2%), Chinese (19.6%), and Indian (2.5%). Out of them, 71.2% were single, 25.8% were married, and 1.8% were divorced. Pertaining to education level, more than half of the respondents possessed at least a Diploma. The mean organizational tenure was 43.05 months (SD = 42.96). For supervisors/managers, ages ranged between 21 and 51 years, with an average age of 33.82 years (SD = 6.56). Female respondents (n = 29) slightly exceeded male respondents (n = 22). In terms of race, 41.2% of the respondents were Malay, 33.3% were Chinese, 13.7% were others from various indigenous ethnic groups, and 11.8% were Indian. Majority of the respondents were single (58.8%) and 37.3% and 3.9% of the respondents were married and divorced, respectively. Based on education, 75% of the respondents were Diploma and Degree holders. The mean organizational tenure was 67.07 months (SD = 50.95).

3.2. Measures

3.2.1. Level of control over work hours (LCWH)

In line with McNamara et al. (2011), this construct was evaluated with a reflective scale of three items developed by Bohle et al. (2001). Basically, respondents marked how often they experienced unpredictable hours from week to week, shift changes with short notice, and not getting time-off when requested. Response options ranged from (1) “never” to (7) “always”. Because the statements were worded in a negative direction, scorings of items were reversed.

3.2.2. Felt obligation (FO)

To assess FO, a scale developed by Eisenberger et al. (2001) was adopted. The scale comprised of seven items and one of which was reverse-coded: “I feel that the only obligation I have to the company is to fulfil the minimum requirements of my job”. For assessment of convergent validity through the redundancy analysis, a single-item global measure was added to the scale which is typically formative to obtain a gestalt rating of the construct: “I care about the organization’s well-being and should help in achieving the organizational goals” (Sarstedt et al., 2014). The items were presented with a response scale ranging from (1) “strongly disagree” to (7) “strongly agree”.

3.2.3. Off-the-job embeddedness (OFF-JE)

Since it was not of particular interest in this study to probe into the individual dimensions of JE (links, fit and sacrifice), a global measure of OFF-JE was deemed more effective because it could include the weightings of other aspects in the non-work space that an individual valued. Therefore, a 6-item reflective scale created by Ng and Feldman (2013) was employed. Bearing in mind that the term “community” might be confounding, its definition was deliberately stated ahead of the items. “I feel attached to the community” was an exemplary item. Responses were scored on a continuum that ranged from (1) “strongly disagree” to (7) “strongly agree”.

3.2.4. On-the-job embeddedness (ON-JE)

Similar to OFF-JE, ON-JE was assessed globally instead of formatively. Parallel to the work of Ng and Feldman (2013), the current study operationalized ON-JE with seven reflective items from Crossley et al. (2007). A representative item read: “It would be difficult for me to leave this organization”. The item, “It would be easy for me to leave this organization” was reverse-coded. Participants referred their level of agreement with each statement using a scale of (1) “strongly disagree” to (7) “strongly agree”.

3.2.5. Proactive customer service performance (PCSP)

Initiated by Rank et al. (2007), this construct was measured with a formative scale of seven items empirically designed for manager’s rating. Responses to items such as, “This staff member anticipates issues or needs customers might have and proactively develops solutions” and “This staff member actively creates partnerships with other service representatives to better serve customers” were elicited on a scale anchored at (1) “strongly disagree” and (7) “strongly agree”. “This staff member shows PCSP” was a global item attached to the scale for convergent validity test.

4. Data analysis and results

4.1. Data analysis method

For hypotheses testing, partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM), a variance-based SEM focusing on maximising the explained variance of the dependent latent variables through a series of ordinary least squares regressions, was chosen following the guidelines of Hair et al. (2011). First, PLS-SEM is suitable for a study with prediction-oriented objectives. Second, it is flexible with models having both formative and reflective measures. Third, it could efficiently handle the current research model that has high complexity (5 variables and 30 items), and has no restriction on the minimum number of items used per variable (Ringle et al., 2012). Fourth, it does not impose a rigid distributional assumption. Fifth, it tackles indeterminacy problem and yields more precise estimates of factor scores.

4.2. Assessment of the reflective measurement models

The reflective measurement models were analyzed with respect to their reliability and validity (Hair et al., 2014). For reliability, construct reliability and indicator reliability were involved. Construct reliability reflects the internal consistency of a construct, and it was estimated via the composite reliability. As illustrated in Table 1, the composite reliability of the constructs, ranged from 0.824 to 0.915, were well over the recommended threshold value of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2011), in support of the internal consistency of the constructs.

Indicator reliability denotes the internal consistency of an indicator, and it was observed through the outer loading (Hair et al., 2011). While it is preferable that the indicator reliability value reaches above 0.70, indicators with values between 0.40 and 0.70 are still acceptable for their contribution to content validity, unless removal of the indicators boosts the composite reliability past the threshold value. Indicators with loadings lower than 0.40 should be deleted from the scale (Hair et al., 2011). Since the composite reliability of LCWH and OFF-JE were already satisfactory, indicators R_LV3 (outer loading = 0.615) and OFF1 (outer loading = 0.541) were conserved. The loading of indicator R_ON6 was low at 0.125 and was therefore, deleted.

For validity, convergent validity and discriminant validity were assessed. Convergent validity refers to the extent to which an indicator correlates positively with other indicators of the same construct (Hair et al., 2014), and it was measured using the average variance extracted (AVE). To conclude that the convergent validity is adequate, the construct should explain at least half of the variance, which, would be translated by an AVE value of equal to or above 0.50 (Hair et al., 2011).

Table 1
Reliability and validity of reflective measurement models.

Construct	CR	AVE	Indicator	Loading
LCWH	0.824	0.616	R_LVC1	0.779
			R_LVC2	0.928
			R_LVC3	0.615
OFF-JE	0.915	0.647	OFF1	0.541
			OFF2	0.804
			OFF3	0.892
			OFF4	0.810
			OFF5	0.896
			OFF6	0.828
ON-JE	0.892	0.569	ON1	0.776
			ON2	0.866
			ON3	0.785
			ON4	0.788
			ON5	0.826
			ON7	0.834
			R_ON6	0.125

Note: Indicator R_ON6 was deleted due to low loading; CR: Composite reliability; AVE: Average variance extracted.

Hence, the convergent validity (Table 1) of LCWH, OFF-JE and ON-JE met the requirements.

Discriminant validity defines the extent to which a construct is distinct from other constructs (Hair et al., 2014), and it was evidenced by the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The Fornell-Larcker criterion posits that a construct with sufficient discriminant validity should share greater variance with its indicators than with other constructs in the model. In other words, the square root of the construct's AVE should be larger than the values of its correlations with other constructs (Hair et al., 2011). From Table 2, clearly the square root values were higher than the other values in their respective rows and columns, meeting the requirements of discriminant validity of the constructs.

4.3. Assessment of the formative measurement models

The formative measurement models were scrutinized for their convergent validity, multicollinearity as well as indicators' significance and relevance (Hair et al., 2014). For convergent validity evaluation, an analysis of redundancy where the formative construct (as the independent variable) and the global measure (as the dependent variable) were correlated was performed (Chin, 1998). A path coefficient of 0.70 suggests a sufficient degree of convergent validity (Hair et al., 2014). Therefore, the values of 0.797 and 0.767 justified the convergent validity of FO and PCSP.

Multicollinearity occurs when correlations among indicators are high, and it could be diagnosed via variance inflation factor (VIF) of which values of 5.0 or above would imply high levels of multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2011). Referring to Table 3, all the VIF values were below the cutoff except for indicator MH. Based on the recommendation (Hair et al., 2011), this indicator was excluded.

To gauge the significance and relevance of the indicators, the

Table 2
Fornell-Larcker criterion for discriminant validity.

Construct	FO	LCWH	OFF-JE	ON-JE	PCSP
FO	Formative				
LCWH	0.052	0.785			
OFF-JE	0.188	-0.103	0.804		
ON-JE	0.614	0.118	0.265	0.754	
PCSP	0.178	-0.141	-0.040	0.318	Formative

Note: Diagonals represent the square roots of AVE for reflective constructs whereas off-diagonals represent the correlation values among constructs.

Table 3
Measurement properties of formative constructs.

Construct	CV	Indicator	OW	VIF	t-value	p-value
FO	0.797	O1	-0.185	2.112	1.097	0.137
		O2	0.406	2.013	2.761	0.003
		O3	0.568	2.866	3.595	0.000
		O4	0.201	2.400	1.299	0.097
		O5	0.297	1.264	2.249	0.012
		O6	-0.108	2.264	0.764	0.223
		R_O7	-0.442	1.254	3.321	0.000
PCSP	0.767	MB	0.093	4.873	0.163	0.435
		MC	0.331	3.668	0.674	0.250
		MD	0.039	4.373	0.076	0.471
		ME	1.119	3.597	2.441	0.008
		MF	-0.555	3.826	0.898	0.185
		MG	0.427	3.591	1.039	0.150
		MH	-0.518	5.058	1.039	0.150

Note: Indicator MH was deleted due to high multicollinearity (VIF > 5.0); CV: Convergent validity; OW: Outer weight; VIF: Variance inflation factor.

bootstrap resampling procedure was run. As per the guidelines (Hair et al., 2011), an indicator can be retained if the weight is statistically significant (i.e. t-value ≥ 1.645), or if the weight is not significant but the loading is higher than 0.50 depending on expert judgement. If both the weight and loading are not significant, the indicator can be dropped from the measurement model. From Table 4, despite the non-significance, the indicators O1, O4, O6, MB, MC, MD, MF, and MG were still retained on the grounds that their loadings were above 0.50, as well as that previous research had demonstrated the relevance of these indicators for capturing the constructs (Eisenberger et al., 2001; Rank et al., 2007).

4.4. Assessment of the structural model

The quality of the structural model lies in five criteria: lateral collinearity, path coefficients, coefficient of determination, effect size, and predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2014). Lateral collinearity arises when the predictor and criterion variables measure the same underlying construct (Kock and Lynn, 2012). Likewise, VIF was employed to detect potential collinearity problem, and constructs with a VIF value of 5.0 or higher would need to be removed, combined into one, or have a higher-order latent variable developed (Hair et al., 2011). From Table 4, no violation of collinearity was noticed as all the values were below 5.0.

Path coefficients illustrate the hypothesized relationships between the constructs, and they are standardized with values between -1 to +1. Values closer to -1 denote strong negative relationships whereas values closer to +1 signify strong positive relationships (Sarstedt et al., 2014). Whether a path coefficient is significant or not is determined by its t-value acquired through the bootstrapping procedure (Sarstedt et al., 2014). A t-value equal to or exceeding 1.645 suggests significance of the path coefficient at the 0.05 significance level (Hair et al., 2014). Based on the results in Table 5, Hypotheses 1, 3, 4 and 6 were supported.

Coefficient of determination (R²) is a measure of predictive accuracy of the model which represents the amount of variance in each of

Table 4
Collinearity assessment of the structural model.

Construct	OFF-JE	ON-JE	PCSP
FO		1.042	
LCWH	1.000	1.016	
OFF-JE		1.051	1.076
ON-JE			1.076

Note: Rows represent exogenous constructs whereas columns represent endogenous construct.

Table 5
Assessment of path coefficients.

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	SE	t-value	p-value	Result
H1	OFF-JE -> ON-JE	0.167	0.076	2.204	0.014**	Significant
H2	LCWH -> OFF-JE	-0.080	0.157	-0.657	0.256	Insignificant
H3	LCWH -> ON-JE	0.106	0.095	1.626	0.052***	Significant
H4	FO -> ON-JE	0.593	0.066	8.711	0.000*	Significant
H5	OFF-JE -> PCSP	-0.136	0.179	-0.742	0.229	Insignificant
H6	ON-JE -> PCSP	0.366	0.135	2.621	0.004*	Significant

Note: *: p-value < 0.01; **: p-value < 0.05; ***: p-value < 0.1; SE: Standard error.

the endogenous constructs that can be explained by all the exogenous constructs connecting to it (Hair et al., 2014). The R^2 values range from 0 to 1 with larger values implying higher levels of predictive accuracy (Sarstedt et al., 2014). A general rule of thumb sets forth that R^2 values of 0.26, 0.13 and 0.02 may be viewed as substantial, moderate and weak degrees of predictive accuracy (Cohen, 1988). Hence, the predictive accuracy of OFF-JE ($R^2 = 0.011$), ON-JE ($R^2 = 0.412$) and PCSP ($R^2 = 0.117$) were trivial, substantial and weak, respectively.

The subsequent step involved reviewing the effect size (f^2), which is a measure of relative impact of a particular exogenous construct on an endogenous construct (Cohen, 1988). It is calculated via the difference between the total R^2 value and the R^2 value without the particular exogenous construct, and so higher the scores, the more substantive the contribution to the endogenous construct. Cohen (1988) refers large, medium and small effect sizes to f^2 scores of 0.35, 0.15 and 0.02, respectively. As displayed in Table 6, majority of the effect sizes were small, nonetheless, it was not uncommon due to model complexity, research discipline and study context (Cohen, 1988).

Besides the R^2 values, the predictive relevance of the structural model can be examined using the Stone-Geisser's Q^2 value captured from the blindfolding procedure (Geisser, 1975; Stone, 1974). In principle, when the Q^2 value of an endogenous construct is above zero, the construct is considered to have predictive relevance, which means, the exogenous constructs have certain predictive power on the endogenous constructs (Hair et al., 2011). However, the blindfolding procedure is only applicable to endogenous constructs that build on a reflective measurement model (Hair et al., 2011). Excluding PCSP that had a formative measurement model, the Q^2 values of OFF-JE ($Q^2 = 0.005$) and ON-JE ($Q^2 = 0.202$) satisfied the above-zero condition.

4.5. Assessment of mediation effects

To test the mediation effects, the Preacher and Hayes's (2008) approach was applied whereby the sampling distribution was bootstrapped for estimation of the indirect effects. An indirect effect that informs a statistically significant mediation yields a t-value of at least 1.96 (Hair et al., 2014). In addition, the confidence interval for the indirect effects must not straddle a zero in between (Preacher and Hayes, 2008). From the bootstrapping analysis (Table 7), the indirect effects for Hypotheses 7a and 7b did not pass the yardstick of 1.96, and hence were not supported. For Hypothesis 7c, the indirect effect was significant with a t-value of 2.400. Moreover, the 95% bootstrapped

Table 6
Effect size (f^2) of each exogenous construct.

Construct	OFF-JE	ON-JE	PCSP
LCWH	0.011	0.019	
FO		0.544	
OFF-JE		0.045	0.019
ON-JE			0.131

Note: Rows represent exogenous constructs whereas columns represent endogenous construct; $f^2 \geq 0.35$: Large; $f^2 \geq 0.15$: Medium; $f^2 \geq 0.02$: Small; $f^2 < 0.02$: Trivial.

confidence interval did not straddle a 0 between the lower interval and the upper interval (Table 8). These results lent support to the mediating role of ON-JE between FO and PCSP. Though it was not hypothesized, the mediating role of ON-JE between OFF-JE and PCSP was tested. It was observed that the mediating effect was significant ($\beta = 0.058$, t-value = 2.152, p-value = 0.027, lower interval = 0.013 and upper interval = 0.136 with no zero in between). Fig. 2 depicts the final framework with significant relationships.

5. Discussion and managerial implications

The foregoing findings provide answers to the theoretical question posed in this study which is: What are the significant antecedents and outcome of JE? The significant positive relationship between OFF-JE and ON-JE echoes the spill-over theory which explains the shift of resources from non-work domain to work domain (Edwards and Rothbard, 2000). Such a finding harmonizes with the assertion of Mitchell et al. (2001) that the two embeddedness dimensions are not independent of each other but share a close relationship.

LCWH does not significantly relate to OFF-JE and the relationship is negative. This result converges with the anecdotal findings of Hammer et al. (2005) that indicate that having more access to non-work lives can somehow expand employees' personal responsibilities and commitments rather than just sustaining the status quo, and so the likelihood of experiencing work-life conflicts heighten. In the long run, their off-the-job links and fit attenuate.

Pertaining to ON-JE, LCWH is shown to have a predictive effect. In accordance with the hypothesis, employees with tolerable controls over work hours are less susceptible to emotional exhaustion, and they will interact effectively with colleagues and be comfortable with the work environment (Cole and Bedeian, 2007; Diefendorff et al., 2008), thus intensifying ON-JE. While employees do prefer to have a control over their work hours, it is, nevertheless, suspected that the line management does not really encourage giving higher LCWH to employees and therefore, employees are hesitant to take advantage of these benefits worrying that doing so may enable their supervisors/managers to judge them as not committed to work and probably put their career in jeopardy (Allen, 2001).

The relationship of FO with ON-JE matches the prediction and is interesting. Compared to LCWH which is a situational antecedent, FO is an individual antecedent and has been found to have a stronger effect size on ON-JE. These results manifest the powerful impact of FO on JE. Notwithstanding the fact that situational antecedents pinpoint specific contextual factors that organizations can exploit, individual antecedents such as personality traits, demographic characteristics, and attitudinal and behavioural factors also directly or indirectly, play a part in fostering employees' links, fit and sacrifice at the workplace (Herscovits et al., 2007).

Between the two embeddedness dimensions, ON-JE alone has been found to have a significant positive association with PCSP. OFF-JE, however, not only has an insignificant relationship but a negative one. These results appear to fall in line with the paradox of the conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 2011). The theory suggests that employees are motivated to invest resources in order to retain, protect and build

Table 7
Results of each indirect effect.

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	SE	t-value	p-value	Result
H7a	LCWH -> OFF-JE -> PCSP	0.007	0.034	0.404	0.686	Insignificant
H7b	LCWH -> ON-JE -> PCSP	0.034	0.032	0.178	0.239	Insignificant
H7c	FO -> ON-JE -> PCSP	0.219	0.085	2.400	0.016*	Significant

Note: *: p-value < 0.05; SE: Standard error,

Table 8
Confidence interval for each indirect effect.

Hypothesis	Relationship	Bootstrapped Confidence Interval (BCI)	
		95% Lower Interval	95% Upper Interval
H7a	LCWH -> OFF-JE -> PCSP	-0.047	0.091
H7b	LCWH -> ON-JE -> PCSP	-0.022	0.103
H7c	FO -> ON-JE -> PCSP	0.063	0.304

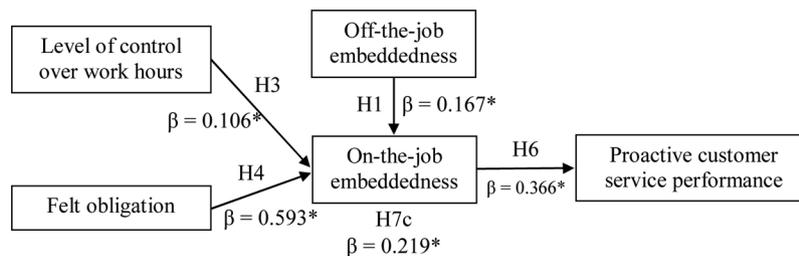


Fig. 2. Final framework with significant relationships.
Note: *: p-value < 0.05.

the resources they value, such as job position, relationships, money or energy. As such, when employees have good bonds with colleagues and friends, a positive fit to work and non-work spaces, and a high reluctance to relinquish organizational and community privileges, they are more likely to continuously expend efforts in their job to maintain or enhance the existing resources (Campbell et al., 2013). On the other hand, high enmeshment in the non-work space possibly requires employees to allocate more resources such as time and energy to meet the increasing non-work involvements. Over time, the depletion of resources undermines their performance at the workplace (Ng and Feldman, 2013). Although not significant, this proposition seems true for the result that indicates employees with greater OFF-JE tend to have poorer PCSP.

While the conservation of resources theory provides a plausible explanation to the positive association between ON-JE and PCSP, the reservation remains that performing extra-role tasks proactively may not necessarily help employees in acquiring more resources in the organization because those activities are not written in job descriptions and hence less visible (Van Dyne and LePine, 1998). The fact is: PCSP is initiated by employees themselves instead of being triggered by any conspicuous circumstance and the visibility of those behaviours is even lower. That being said, PCSP can purely be a reciprocation of employees to the organization with no ulterior motives of gaining additional resources, as hypothesized in this study using the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960).

Outcomes for the mediating roles of JE can be interpreted quite straightforwardly. For OFF-JE, there is no ground to stand upon mediation since its direct relationships with LCWH and PCSP are not significant (Rungtusanatham et al., 2014). Regarding ON-JE, although its direct relationship with PCSP is significant, its direct relationship with LCWH is weakly significant (t-value = 1.626, p = 0.052) and hence the indirect effect is not significant. Given ON-JE's significant direct relationships with FO and PCSP, its mediating role between FO and PCSP is significant. Obligated frontline employees are dedicated to

performing proactive customer service because the sense of indebtedness to the organization regulates their attitudes and behaviours at work and fosters their workplace relationships and compatibility (Bolino et al., 2012), and thus they have a profound desire to contribute back to the organization with better performance (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960).

In summary, the findings of this study indicate several implications to management practice. First, the results provide clear indication that organizations have the means to motivate employees' PCSP through ON-JE. Organizations may consider organizing monthly or quarterly, formal or informal, social events to strengthen the ties among employees. In addition, organizations may periodically have dialogues with employees to follow up on their personal or career development plans so that any misfits can be rectified immediately. In supplementing perceived costs of leaving, organizations may review employees' utilization of fringe benefits to determine whether the benefits are useful for them (Casper and Harris, 2008).

Furthermore, human resource managers may mull over the viability of granting employees greater control over work hours to intensify their ON-JE. This may sound like a cliché, but hotel frontline employees have truly been pestered by the countercyclical work hours which can bring about a string of negative consequences such as interpersonal conflicts and violent behaviours at workplace (McNamara et al., 2011). A practical way to avoid complications in scheduling can be to establish consensus with employees that any request for shift change must be notified at least, say, two weeks prior so that the management can make necessary manpower arrangement without disturbing other employees. The work timing may be standardized throughout a week, a fortnight or even a month so that employees are prepared for the scheduled shift without being apprehensive about the fluctuating weekly shift patterns. Since it is hard to permit too many employees to take time-off on public holidays or special occasions, human resource managers can investigate designing the optimum composition of gender, age and ethnic groups for the workforce that will at least enable specific groups of employees

have their day off for their respective activities.

Another alternative to boost employees' ON-JE is by uplifting their level of FO to the organization. To this end, organizational support is imperative, and studies have demonstrated that it as an immediate correlate of FO (Arshadi, 2011; Wikhamn and Hall, 2012). Managers may actively show concern for their employees' well-being and provide assistance when a favour is needed. Moreover, employees' goals, values and contributions should be appreciated or rewarded as the feeling of obligation increases when employees find themselves useful and meaningful at work (Albrecht and Su, 2012). Involving employees in decision making can be helpful in instilling a sense of obligation (Bal et al., 2010).

Finally, organizations may leverage on employees' OFF-JE in embedding employees on-the-job. To fuel non-work relationships, organizations may involve employees' family and friends in the formal or informal events (Crossley et al., 2007). Further, employees' off-the-job fit may grow when organizations thoughtfully facilitate their involvements in the non-work space such as part-time study, religious events and hobbies. Without doubt, provision of off-the-job benefits like membership in a reputable affiliated association, dependent care assistance as well as spouse's privileges at a particular fitness centre or clubhouse can elevate the perceived cost of leaving the non-work space.

6. Limitations and recommendations for future research

As any research work, this study is not without limitations. First, the sampling was confined to 4-star and 5-star hotels/resorts in Malaysia. Hence, the findings may not be generalizable to other cultural contexts and service settings. Second, only local frontline employees were recruited for the study. This exclusive sample may hamper the applicability of the findings to employees of other nationals in the hotel workforce. Third, the final usable sample size of 163 may be relatively small. However, given that the number had met the adequate sample size determined through power analysis (i.e. $n = 114$) coupled with the capability of PLS-SEM in handling small sample sizes with robust statistical power (Sarstedt et al., 2014), this was not a significant issue.

This study opens the door for a slew of research, some of which can be derived from the limitations. Given that JE perception may differ across cultures (Jiang et al., 2012; Zhang et al., 2012), scholars may propagate this research stream in other regions or countries with unique cultural contexts. Besides, other service settings namely restaurants and retails may be explored too. Another promising avenue for future pursuit is inspired by the weak relationship of LCWH with ON-JE, which points to the possibility of a lack of managerial support in LCWH. Certainly, future studies should continue to research on the antecedents and outcomes of JE. The research model of this study that incorporated OFF-JE and ON-JE separately, as well as their antecedents and outcome, was attested for its theoretical merits as to not just the association between the two embeddedness dimensions but also their differential importance relative to the antecedents and outcome. Replication and extension of studies could mirror this useful framework foundation.

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