

Job Satisfaction and Customer-Oriented Behavior of the Malaysian Nurses

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between job satisfaction and customer-oriented behavior of the Malaysian nurses. Total 361 nurses were participated in the questionnaire survey. Descriptive analysis, independent t-test, One-way ANOVA and regression analysis were employed to analyze the data. The findings of this study show that the respondents registered a high level of job satisfaction and customer-oriented behavior. The t-test results for customer-oriented behavior show significant differences between the female and male nurses. Female nurses were having higher level of customer-oriented behavior compare with the males. On the hand, One-way ANOVA results indicate that only the age group of 18-25 has significant differences in relation to customer-oriented behavior with the age group of 26-35. However, there are no significant differences for job satisfaction in association with the profile of the respondents. The regression analysis shows that there is a significant relationship between job satisfaction and customer-oriented behavior among the Malaysian nurses. The outcome of this paper explains the current state of nurses' job satisfaction and customer-oriented behavior and suggests that job satisfaction is able to influence customer-oriented behavior of the Malaysian nurses.

Key words: Customer-oriented, behavior, job satisfaction, nurses, Malaysia

INTRODUCTION

In today's competitive business environment, organizations have recognized that customers are the core factor for the success of their business. This is because the success of a business is greatly depends on the effectiveness in managing its relationships with current and potential customers (Narver and Slater, 1990; Berry and Bendapudi, 2001; Desmarais, 2007; Yoon *et al.*, 2007). According to the researchers, one of the important approaches by the organization in order to effectively manage the relationship with its customers is to inculcate customer-oriented behavior concept in their frontline employees (Narver and Slater, 1990; Peccei and Rosenthal, 2001). Therefore, in recent years, many companies have started to emphasize customer-oriented behavior among their employees (Chih *et al.*, 2009). Additionally, customer-oriented behavior is imperative in delivering quality service and satisfying customers (Narver and Slater, 1990; Brown *et al.*, 2002; Lanjananda and Patterson, 2009; Chen and Chen, 2010; Johari and Hee, 2013). Owing to the above reasons, researchers had since started to focus on the study of customer-oriented behavior as well as the antecedents of customer-oriented behavior.

Scholarly research in organizational psychology had suggested that job satisfaction is one of the factors that can influence human behavior and affect the performance

of individuals (Liao and Chuang, 2004). This is owing to the reason that satisfied employees have better understanding on customers' needs and take more initiatives to satisfy their customers (Singh and Das, 2013). Higher level of job satisfaction makes the employees enjoy their work and exhibit better interaction with the customers. It is likely to make them display more customer-oriented behaviour. In addition, higher level of job satisfaction is beneficial to the organization in terms of performance and productivity (Hoffman and Ingram, 1992). Hence, it is the intention of this study to examine the level and relationship between job satisfaction and customer-oriented behaviour of nurses in the Malaysian context. The findings of this study are expected to contribute towards the importance of customer-oriented behaviour in the healthcare industry and provide relevant information about job satisfaction as the predicting variable. In order to address the research gaps, three research questions were raised as follows:

- RQ1: What is the level of job satisfaction and customer-oriented behavior among the Malaysian nurses?
- RQ2: Is there any significant difference in the level of job satisfaction and customer-oriented behavior among the Malaysian nurses?
- RQ3: Is there any significant relationship between job satisfaction and customer-oriented behavior?

Literature review

Customer-oriented behavior: Customer orientation concept was introduced in the early 1950s and was developed from the studies related to market orientation which was identified as a subset of market orientation (Kohli *et al.*, 1993). In marketing management, customer orientation is defined as the action taken in order to support sales and create continues profitable business for the long term. The actions taken consist of anticipated customer requirements, resolution towards solving customer problems and meeting the needs of the marketplace (Kohli *et al.*, 1993). Thus, customer orientation is perceived as customer-oriented behavior exhibited by the frontline employee in servicing customers' interest, discovering the needs of customers, developing appropriate solution and providing services without imposing pressure on the customers.

Scholarly researches had explored the customer-oriented behavior concept in various industries such as hotel (Hartline and Ferrell, 1996; Hartline *et al.*, 2000), food (Brown *et al.*, 2002; Liao and Chuang, 2004), banking (Chang and Lin, 2008; Chen and Chen, 2010), supermarket and retailing (Peccei and Rosenthal, 2001), insurance agency (Mohd Noor and Muhamad, 2005), logistic (Periatt *et al.*, 2007) and call centres (Rafaeli *et al.*, 2008). In summary, customer-oriented behavior plays an important role in various service industries. Few researchers however, focused on the study of customer-oriented behavior in the healthcare sector specifically on nurses (Chien *et al.*, 2008; Lanjananda and Patterson, 2009; Mechinda and Patterson, 2011; Johari and Hee, 2013). This is owing to the fact that researchers believed nurses often work in a critical work environment and their role in the hospital is obviously very important. In addition, nurses' job performance is able to influence patients' evaluation towards the hospitals. Thus, customer-oriented behavior becomes an important element of nurse-patient interaction which helps nurses to meet their patients' expectation.

Job satisfaction: Job satisfaction has been defined in many different ways. Some researchers believed job satisfaction is a single globe concept on individuals' overall satisfaction (Lee and Ahmad, 2009) and some perceived job satisfaction as a multiple dimensional concepts that relate to the psychological or sociological factors (Kalliath and Beck, 2001; Rad *et al.*, 2010; Hashim, 2010). Generally, job satisfaction is defined as affective reaction of individuals towards their jobs and the source of satisfaction that comes from intrinsic and extrinsic factors in relation to the job contents.

Job satisfaction at work has wide implications on individuals and organizations. Evident shows that job satisfaction is vital to customer-oriented behavior in ensuring customer satisfaction (Hoffman and Ingram, 1992; Saura *et al.*, 2005; Mechinda and Patterson, 2011). This is because satisfied employees tend to be more productive, creative and committed to their organization. On top of that, it was also noted that several literatures focused on the relationship between job satisfaction and customer-oriented behaviour (Hoffman and Ingram, 1992; Saura *et al.*, 2005; Yoon *et al.*, 2007). The relationship between job satisfaction and customer-oriented behaviour can be explained through two distinct conceptual foundations. First of all, the conceptual foundation derived from affect theory of social exchange in which an individual will engage in reciprocal behavior that supports the organization goals. Secondly, the concept derived from a series of psychological studies examining the effects of individual's mood on subsequent behavior.

The affect theory of social exchange: The affect theory of social exchange is the expansion of the exchange theory. The concept of social exchange is a joint activity of two or more actors or individuals that are valuables (Lawler, 2001). The exchange is either in the form of implicit or explicit task to generate benefits for individuals where they cannot achieve by themselves. The affect theory of social exchange focuses on the understanding and the development of commitment on exchange relations among the individuals and the effect reaction from the exchange process. The affect theory of social exchange can be applied in a wide range of contexts such as support among co-workers, trading among nations, relationship between organization and customer and compliments from their acquaintances. In relation to the service industries, job satisfaction will affect the social relations where successful service of the frontline employees will positively impact customers' view and customer satisfaction. In contrast, unsuccessful service of the frontline employees will negatively impact customers' view and customer satisfaction. Hence, referring to the above rationale, it is apparent that job satisfaction is an important element to improve customer satisfaction in the service industries (Chen and Chen, 2010).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study: This study intends to determine the level of job satisfaction and customer-oriented behavior among the nurses in Malaysia. In addition, this study also attempts to examine whether there are any significant differences in the level of job satisfaction and customer-oriented behavior among the respondents'

profiles such as gender, years of experience and age. On top of that, this study seeks to examine the relationship between job satisfaction and customer-oriented behavior. The relevant unit of analysis in this study is nurses in the Malaysian public hospitals. A quantitative cross sectional survey method was employed in this study.

Sample, method and instrument: Survey questionnaires were used to collect data for analysis. A total of 361 responses were obtained from 650 questionnaires sent. The response rate of this study was 55.54%. The samples were generated through stratified random sampling technique. The measures of customer-oriented behavior were adapted from Selling Orientation Customer Orientation Scale (SOCO Scale) developed by Saxe and Weitz (1982). On the other hand, measures for job satisfaction were adapted from the study by Warr *et al.* (1979). Likert scale was used to measure the level of agreement for job satisfaction and customer-oriented behavior. The scale was anchored by (Strongly disagree), (Disagree), (Neither agree nor disagree), (Agree) and (Strongly agree).

Data analysis: Data analysis in the present study was conducted by using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Respondent's profile was established based on gender, age and years of experience. Descriptive analysis such as mean and standard deviation were used to determine the level of the job satisfaction and customer-oriented behavior. Test of significant differences (t-test and one-way ANOVA) was employed to determine whether the variables of job satisfaction and customer-oriented behavior differ significantly among gender, age and year of work experience. In addition, regression analysis was performed to examine the relationship between job satisfaction and customer oriented behavior.

RESULTS

Profile of respondents: Data collected from the respondents profile was tabulated in Table 1 with frequency and percentage. Based on Table 1, it was discovered that 267 (74%) of the respondents were females and 94 (26%) were males. The higher number of female respondents shows that females are still dominating the nursing profession (Stone *et al.*, 2004). Among the respondents, majority of the respondents were in the age of 18-25 years old where it constituted 65.1% or 235 respondents. In terms of years of experience, most of the respondents have worked for 1-2 year (47.6%).

Table 1: Demographic profile of respondents

Item	Frequencies	Percentage
Gender		
Male	94	26.0
Female	267	74.0
Age (years)		
18-25	235	65.1
26-35	78	21.6
36-45	39	10.8
>45	9	2.5
Years of experience (years)		
1-2	172	47.6
3-5	142	39.3
6-10	34	9.4
>10	13	3.6

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of the study variables

Variables	N	Mean	SD
Job satisfaction	361	3.90	0.502
Customer-Oriented behavior	361	4.23	0.467

Descriptive analysis: Mean and standard deviation were employed to analyze the level of job satisfaction and customer-oriented behavior in accordance with the questionnaire. Table 2% presents the mean and standard deviation of all the study variables. Data collected from the respondents were interpreted based on three categories. The scores of <2.33 are low; 2.33-3.66 are moderate and above 3.67 are high. As indicated in Table 2, the mean score for customer-oriented behavior (M = 4.23, SD = 0.467) was higher than the mean score of job satisfaction (M = 3.90, SD = 0.502). Based on the results, both variables' mean were higher than 3.67. Thus, the study variables were categorized as high in the mean score. The standard deviations for all the study variables were small where it shows that the distribution of the data is not far from the mean value. Among the 12 measures of job satisfaction, the respondents appeared to be highly concerned about item no.3 "I feel satisfied to work with my fellow workers" (M = 4.04, SD = 0.698) with 82.9% of the respondents rated agreed and strongly agreed. Only 0.6% of the respondents rated disagreed and strongly disagreed and 16.6% of the respondents rated neither agreed nor disagreed. As for the customer-oriented behaviour scale, item No. 3 "I try to have the patient's best interest in mind" was ranked the highest mean (M = 4.34, SD = 0.588) with 93.9% of the respondents rated agreed and strongly agreed.

Test of significant differences: Independent t-test and one-way ANOVA were selected to examine whether there are any significant group differences in the mean scores of job satisfaction and customer-oriented behavior in association with the profile of the respondents. Table 3 denotes the t-test results of the analysis. The results indicate that there is a significant difference in the mean scores between the males (M = 4.09, SD = 0.461) and the

Table 3: Independent t-test for gender and study variables

Variables	Gender	N	M	SD	Levene's test		t-test	
					F-value	p-value	t-value	p-value
Customer-oriented behavior	Female	267	4.28	0.461	1.334	0.249	3.319	0.001*
	Male	94	4.09	0.461				
Job satisfaction	Female	267	3.91	0.5152	0.970	0.325	0.496	0.62
	Male	94	3.88	0.4631				

*p<0.05

Table 4: One-way ANOVA: age and study variables

Variables	Age group (years)	N	Mean	SD	SE	F-value	Sig.
Customer-oriented behavior	18-25	235	4.290	0.4230	0.0280	3.949	0.009*
	26-35	78	4.080	0.4850	0.0550		
	36-45	39	4.190	0.5760	0.0920		
	>45	9	4.240	0.6770	0.2260		
Job satisfaction	18-25	235	3.915	0.4857	0.0317	2.153	0.093
	26-35	78	3.868	0.5030	0.0570		
	36-45	39	3.782	0.5293	0.0848		
	>45	9	4.222	0.6770	0.2257		

*p<0.05

Table 5: Tukey HSD analysis for customer-oriented behavior and age

(I) Age	(J) Age	Mean difference (I-J)	SE	Sig.	95% confidence interval	
					Lower bound	Upper bound
18-25	26-35	0.20519*	0.06035	0.004*	0.0494	0.3610
	36-45	0.09237	0.07985	0.654	-0.1137	0.2985
	46-55	0.04024	0.15686	0.994	-0.3647	0.4451
26-35	18-25	-0.20519*	0.06035	0.004*	-0.3610	-0.0494
	36-45	-0.011282	0.09057	0.598	-0.3466	0.1210
	46-55	-0.16496	0.16258	0.741	-0.5846	0.2547
36-45	18-25	-0.09237	0.07985	0.654	-0.2985	0.1137
	26-35	0.11282	0.09057	0.598	-0.1210	0.3466
	46-55	-0.05214	0.17078	0.990	-0.4930	0.3887
46-55	18-25	-0.04024	0.15686	0.994	-0.4451	0.3647
	26-35	0.16496	0.16258	0.741	-0.2547	0.5846
	36-45	0.05214	0.17078	0.990	-0.3887	0.4930

*p<0.05

females (M = 4.28, SD = 0.461) for customer-oriented behavior. The computed t value was at 3.319 and was significant at the 0.05 level (p = 0.001). Therefore, it can be concluded that female respondents exhibit higher level of customer-oriented behavior compared with the male respondents. However, the results indicate that there was no significant difference in the mean scores of job satisfaction between the males (M = 3.88, SD = 0.4631) and the females (M = 3.91, SD = 0.5152). The computed t value was at 0.496 and was not significant at the 0.05 level (p = 0.62).

Table 4 shows the one-way ANOVA results for demographic profiles of age for customer-oriented behavior and job satisfaction. The overall results of the test indicated that there is a significant difference among the age groups for customer-oriented behavior with the F value of 3.949 and it is statistically significant at the 0.05 level (p = 0.009). Further test with Tukey HSD analysis (Table 5) revealed that the mean score of customer oriented behavior for age group of 18-25 (M = 4.29, SD = 0.423), is significantly different from the age group of 26-35 (M = 4.08, SD = 0.485). Therefore, those respondents categorized in the age group of 18-25 have a

greater tendency to exhibit customer-oriented behavior. Other groups of age did not show any significant differences among them. The one-way ANOVA results for job satisfaction indicate that there was no significant difference in the mean scores among the age groups. The F value of 2.153 is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level (p = 0.093).

Table 6 shows the one-way ANOVA results for years of experience in relation to customer-oriented behavior and job satisfaction. The overall result of the test indicates that there were no significant differences among the groups for both customer-oriented behavior and job satisfaction. Both F values were not statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Regression analysis: Regression analysis was employed to test the relationship between job satisfaction and customer-oriented behavior. The overall model was significant at the 0.001 level (p<0.001). It reveals that there is a relationship between job satisfaction and customer-oriented behavior. The R-square was at 0.168. It indicates that the effect of the independent variable (job satisfaction) is able to explain 16.8% of the variance in the

Table 6: One-way ANOVA: Years of experience and study variables

Variables	Year of experiences	N	Mean	SD	SE	F-value	Sig.
Customer-oriented behavior	1-2	172	4.24	0.4090	0.0312	0.474	0.70
	3-5	142	4.24	0.4929	0.0414		
	6-10	34	4.17	0.5632	0.0966		
	11-15	13	4.12	0.6479	0.1797		
Job satisfaction	1-2	172	3.952	0.4942	0.0377	1.587	0.192
	3-5	142	3.851	0.4784	0.0412		
	6-10	34	3.799	0.5964	0.1023		
	11-15	13	3.955	0.5503	0.1526		

*p<0.05

Table 7: Regression analysis independent and dependent variables

Dependent variables	Independent variable	R ²	F-value	Sig.	β	t-value	Sig.
Customer-oriented behavior		0.168	72.671	0.000***			
	Job satisfaction				0.410	8.525	0.000***

***, **Significant at the level of 0.05, 0.01, 0.001

customer-oriented behavior. Further inspection on the regression analysis results indicates that there is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and customer-oriented behavior (p = 0.410, p<0.001). The analysis results were shown in Table 7.

DISCUSSION

Based on the descriptive analysis results, it was discovered that the overall mean score for customer-oriented behavior was 4.23 with the standard deviation of 0.467. Since the mean score was above 3.67, the level of customer-oriented behavior among nurses in the Malaysia public hospital was classified as high. It shows that nurses were aware of the importance of customer-oriented behavior in meeting the patients' need. Further investigation on the mean score of the customer-oriented behavior reveals that item COB3 "I try to have the patient's best interest in mind" was ranked the highest. This indicates that nurses were deeply concerned about their responsibility by putting patient's best interest in their mind. This is consistent with the past studies conducted by researchers such as Saxe and Weitz (1982), Lanjananda and Patterson (2009), Chen and Chen (2010) and Johari and Hee (2013). Findings of the past studies indicate that understanding customers' interest and fulfilling customer needs are imperative in the concept of customer-oriented behavior. In addition, Hasin *et al.* (2001) also claimed that nurses who exhibit customer-oriented behavior will ultimately improve the patient satisfaction level.

The overall mean score for job satisfaction was 3.90 with standard deviation of 0.502. It is obvious that the level of job satisfaction among the nurses was high. This shows that nurses in the public hospitals in Malaysia were satisfied with their current job. The mean score of job satisfaction revealed that item JS3 "I feel satisfied to work with my fellow workers" was ranked the highest at

4.04. This result shows that nurses were feeling satisfied to work with their co-workers in the hospital. This is congruent with past studies which explained that teamwork and relationships with co-workers were important factors contributing towards nurses' job satisfaction (Cortese, 2007; Alefi *et al.*, 2014).

The t-test result shows that there is a significant difference in the mean score of customer-oriented behavior between the male and female respondents. The female respondents exhibit higher level of customer-oriented behavior (M = 4.28) compared with the male respondents (M = 4.09). This finding supports past studies conducted by Mackintosh (1997), Sullivan and Deane (1994) and O'Connor (2015) where they stated that female nurses are more caring compared with male nurses in the nursing profession. This is agreed upon the basis that caring behaviors were generally formed by feminine ethical system especially in the nursing profession (Watson, 1989).

On the other hand, regression analysis results indicate that there is a significant relationship between job satisfaction and customer-oriented behavior. This finding is consistent with the affect theory of social exchange where it emphasized that the level of job satisfaction will positively impact the nurses in exhibiting customer-oriented behavior. Furthermore, the findings also support the studies conducted by Hoffman and Ingram (1992), Chih *et al.* (2009) and Chih and Li (2010). They explained that when nurses are satisfied with their job, the tendency of exhibiting customer-oriented behaviour will be higher.

CONCLUSION

This study has successfully provided empirical evident on the relationship between job satisfaction and customer-oriented behavior among the Malaysian nurses. The research findings revealed that there is a positive

significant relationship between job satisfaction and customer-oriented behavior. This positive relationship provides explanation of the affect theory of social exchange in such a way that when the degree of social exchange increases, the perception of responsibility will increase and subsequently establish work behaviour that is favourable to the organization. The outcome of this paper has added to the literature of job satisfaction which is rarely being tested as a predictor of customer-oriented behaviour in the healthcare context.

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