



Customer evaluations of service-oriented organizational citizenship behaviors: Agentic and communal differences



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ABSTRACT

Research shows that service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) influences customer attitudes. In a series of two experiments, the interaction between customer gender and the type of service-oriented OCB (communal or agentic) performed by a female (Study 1) or male (Study 2) service employee was examined using a sample of hospitality recruiters. Study 1 showed that both male and female customers rated the female employee performing the agentic OCB equally, but female customers rated the female employee performing the communal OCB higher than male customers. The results from Study 1 did not emerge for the male employee in Study 2. These results suggest that the interaction effect between the service-oriented OCB type and customer gender only influences customer reactions for female employees, but not for male employees. The results show that the evaluation of service-oriented OCB is particularly susceptible to the influence of gender-role stereotypes.

1. Introduction

Employee service quality continues to be recognized as a vital source for a hospitality organization's competitive advantage. Establishing a strong competitive advantage through service can help distinguish one hospitality organization over its competitors. As such, there is a growing body of literature examining how service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) influences customer perceptions of service quality and satisfaction (e.g. Bettencourt and Brown, 1997; Bettencourt et al., 2005; Podsakoff et al., 2009; Yen and Niehoff, 2004). Service-oriented OCB refers to “discretionary behaviors of contact employees in serving customers that extend beyond formal role requirements” (Bettencourt and Brown, 1997, p. 41), and often include service encounters in which service employees go above and beyond their formal duties to provide exceptional service.

The literature on service-oriented OCB from the customer's perspective has mainly focused on the link between service-oriented OCB and customer reactions (e.g., Hong et al., 2013; Koys, 2001; Podsakoff et al., 2014; Schneider et al., 2000; Schneider et al., 2005). While it is evident that service-oriented OCB does indeed lead to more positive customer reactions, there is a lack of research focusing on how demographic characteristics of the customer, such as customer gender, can interact with the type of service-oriented OCB performed by service employees. This is a particularly important gap in understanding how service-oriented OCB affects customer reactions because outside of the service context, extant research shows that female employees benefit

less from performing OCB than male employees, particularly when the type of OCB matches the gender roles (e.g., Allen, 2006; Heilman and Chen, 2005; Kacmar et al., 2011; Kark and Waismel-Manor, 2005), suggesting that customer reactions to service-oriented OCB might depend on customer and service employee gender. A clearer theoretical understanding of how customers react to service-oriented OCB will help service firms better manage service-oriented OCB within an increasingly diversified workforce. For example, in a case study of customer satisfaction from hotels rated in TripAdvisor.com, Magnini et al. (2011) found that the most important source of customer satisfaction was service-oriented OCB (e.g., being friendly, helpful, pleasant, and accommodating); more than various characteristics of the hotels (e.g., cleanliness, décor, location, and amenities).

The current study draws from social role theory (Eagly and Wood, 2011) to examine the interaction between customer gender and the type of service-oriented OCB performed by female (Study 1) or male (Study 2) service employees on customer reactions. Social role theory states that because men and women have historically filled different roles in the division of labor, societal generalizations for men and women lead to different perceptions and expectations for men and women in the workplace. Specifically, men are perceived and expected to be agentic and women are perceived and expected to be communal.

We argue that the effect of service-oriented OCB on customer reactions might depend on what type of service-oriented OCB is performed and on the customer's gender. Thus, the purpose of the current study is to examine how the effect of service-oriented OCB tied to

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gender roles (communal versus agentic) interacts with customer gender to influence customer reactions. In regard to customer reactions, the current research focuses on positive behavioral intentions as a customer response to a service-oriented OCB context. Positive behavioral intentions include praise and positive word-of-mouth intentions (Zeithaml et al., 1996). The reason for focusing on positive behavioral intentions is that it is a commonly measured customer reaction to service (e.g., Barroso Castro et al., 2004; Chen and Kao, 2010; Payne and Webber, 2006), which allows us to relate the current results with past research.

2. Theoretical background and hypotheses

2.1. Social role theory

According to social role theory, what individuals perceive as gender-appropriate behavior arises from the differential social roles inhabited by women and men (Eagly and Wood, 2011). Women were more likely to engage in communal tasks, such as homemaking and childrearing, whereas men were more likely to be the breadwinners and work in physically demanding roles. Because of this historical division of labor, perceived gender roles led to the expectation that men are agentic while women are communal. Gender roles are socially modeled, learned, and reinforced beliefs about the attributes of men and women. Although not all men behave in agentic behavioral patterns and not all women behave in communal behavioral patterns, on average, men are described in agentic patterns, whereas women are described in communal patterns.

Agentic behavioral patterns, usually attributed to or expected from men, include being aggressive, assertive, independent, and confident, and in the workplace, agency includes speaking assertively, being competitive, influencing others, and initiating tasks. Communal behavioral patterns, usually attributed to or expected from women, include being nurturing, kind, empathic, and sensitive, and in the workplace, communal characteristics include helping others, being cooperative and friendly, and nurturing relationships (Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). These agentic and communal gender roles are both descriptive and prescriptive (Rudman and Glick, 2001), such that these gender roles suggest not only how men and women are perceived (i.e., descriptive), but also how men and women are expected to behave (i.e., prescriptive).

These gender roles, placed on women, not only ascribe what women should do, but also what they should not do. Ample research shows that women who are agentic, but not communal, often receive lower evaluations than women who do not violate socially implemented gender roles (for a review see Caleo and Heilman, 2013). This effect is found to be less likely to occur to men; in other words, men who are communal, but not agentic, do not receive the negative evaluations and penalties that women who violate gender roles do. As a result, women are expected to engage in a feminine gender role that reflects communal qualities at work, whereas men can benefit from being communal and agentic at work (Caleo and Heilman, 2013; Wood and Eagly, 2002).

2.2. Gender roles and service-oriented OCB

Employee service quality, particularly service-oriented OCB, is a vital source for a hospitality organization's competitive advantage (Lu et al., 2016; Tang et al., 2016; Özduran and Tanova, 2017; Youn et al., 2017). Service-oriented OCB focuses on being extra friendly, empathic, concerned for the welfare of customers (i.e., communal characteristics), and also solving problems, taking initiative when helping a customer, and being conscientious (i.e., agentic characteristics) (Bettencourt and Brown, 1997; Magnini et al., 2011; Nasurdin et al., 2015). In a qualitative study of hotel employee service-oriented OCB, examples included providing a suit to a customer whose luggage was lost at the airport, cleaning the ice off the windows of a customer's car, cleaning a food stain off a wedding dress, providing shoes to a customer who lost her

shoes, and arranging a schedule for a return customer to stay in the same room on multiple occasions (Torres et al., 2014). Service-oriented OCB also includes anticipating and addressing “customer needs and wants, even before the customer identifies such a need” (Lu et al., 2016, p. 9).

While many service-oriented OCB can be akin to communal behaviors, such as showing extra care and empathy, there are also service-oriented OCB that can be agentic, such as carrying luggage for a customer or cleaning ice off a car. Thus, we argue service-oriented OCB can be communal or agentic. Many agentic characteristics—such as charisma, problem solving, professionalism, and using technical skills to solve problems—have also been recognized as service-oriented OCB (Torres et al., 2014). Likewise, many communal characteristics—such as friendliness, empathy, caring, and showing concern for others—have also been recognized as service-oriented OCB (Bettencourt and Brown, 1997; Bettencourt et al., 2005). Because many service-oriented OCB can be akin to either communal or agentic characteristics, the evaluation of service-oriented OCB may be particularly susceptible to the influence of gender-role stereotypes.

Gender-role stereotypes lead to the expectation that women should engage in communal behaviors, such as being friendly, empathic, and being concerned for the well-being of others (Eagly and Wood, 2011). The current research extends this body of literature to the service-oriented OCB context. We argue that the type of service-oriented OCB (communal versus agentic) performed might influence customer evaluations of a female hotel employee. However, the influence of the type of service-oriented OCB on customer reactions might not be so straightforward and simple. In addition, we argue that, customer reactions to service-oriented OCB might also depend on the customer's gender.

2.3. Customer gender as a moderator

How customers react to communal versus agentic service-oriented OCB from female employees might depend on the customer's gender. Several related theories suggest that the interaction between service employee and customer demographics can influence customer reactions. Social identity theory suggests that individuals identify with similar others to develop social groups based on similarity and to positively enhance their own sense of self (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). In organizations, salient social identities are often based on demographic characteristics, such as gender (Hogg and Terry, 2000). Research on workplace relational demography theory also suggests that demographic characteristics of organizational members, such as gender composition, help individuals form meaning to their identity group memberships at work. This in turn, leads to an individual's preference for interactions with people of one's own group in the workplace (Goldberg et al., 2010).

This line of reasoning has been applied to service encounters, and research shows that the interaction between service employee and customer demographics can influence customer reactions (Leonard et al., 2004; Mattila et al., 2003; Wang and Mattila, 2010). For example, customers often have mixed feelings—in some context positive and in others negative—about intercultural service encounters (Baker et al., 2008; Paswan and Ganesh, 2005; Warden et al., 2003). This research, in addition to social role theory (Eagly and Wood, 2011), suggests that male and female customers will have different reactions to service-oriented OCB from female service employees.

Based on social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1986) and relational demography (Tsui et al., 1989), it was expected that when female employees perform service-oriented OCB, female customers will have higher levels of positive behavioral intentions than male customers for communal service-oriented OCB, but not for agentic service-oriented OCB. This was hypothesized for several reasons. Gender-role stereotypes lead to the expectation that women should engage in communal behaviors (Eagly and Wood, 2011), so when women perform communal

service-oriented OCB, the behaviors may stand out less. However, because women identify more to communal behavior at work than do men (Caleo and Heilman, 2013; Wood and Eagly, 2002), female customers, but not male customers, might recognize the communal service-oriented OCB as extra-role service and not as expected service. Thus, communal service-oriented OCB from a female employee will stand out more for female customers than for male customers, leading to higher levels of positive behavioral intentions with female customers.

For agentic service-oriented OCB, gender-role stereotypes do not lead to the expectation that women should engage in agentic behaviors (Eagly and Wood, 2011), so when female employees perform agentic service-oriented OCB, the behaviors will stand out more leading to higher levels of positive behavioral intentions among customers. In other words, because there is a positive main effect of service-oriented OCB on behavioral intentions (e.g., Barroso Castro et al., 2004; Chen and Kao, 2010; Payne and Webber, 2006), agentic service-oriented OCB from women will stand out to both male and female customers. Thus, for female customers, both communal and agentic service-oriented OCB by a female employee will stand out, leading to higher levels of positive behavioral intentions. For male customers, only the agentic service-oriented OCB by a female employee will stand out, leading to higher levels of positive behavioral intentions, because the communal service-oriented OCB matches female gender roles—making communal service-oriented OCB stand out less than agentic service-oriented OCB.

Hypothesis 1. There will be a two-way interaction between service-oriented OCB type performed by a female employee and customer gender, such that female customers will have higher levels of positive behavioral intentions than male customers for communal service-oriented OCB, but not for agentic service-oriented OCB.

2.4. The mediating effect of customer evaluations of service employee performance

The current study examined customer evaluations of service employees' performance as the mediator of the interaction between service-oriented OCB type and customer gender on positive behavioral intentions. Although past research has demonstrated the main effect of service-oriented OCB on positive behavioral intentions (e.g., Barroso Castro et al., 2004; Chen and Kao, 2010; Payne and Webber, 2006), we argue that positive behavioral intentions is a distal outcome of service-oriented OCB and that customer evaluations of service employee performance are a proximal outcome serving as a mediator. In other words, customers will first evaluate the employee performing the service-oriented OCB, and then they use this employee evaluation to evaluate the hotel. In fact, research shows that service quality and service satisfaction—that is, how customers evaluate the service performance of employees—is a proximal outcome of service-oriented OCB (e.g. Bettencourt and Brown, 1997; Bettencourt et al., 2005; Podsakoff et al., 2009; Yen and Niehoff, 2004). Thus, customer evaluation of service employee performance provides a reason for *why* the interaction between service-oriented OCB type and customer gender influences customer positive behavioral intentions.

Specifically, because women identify more with communal behavior

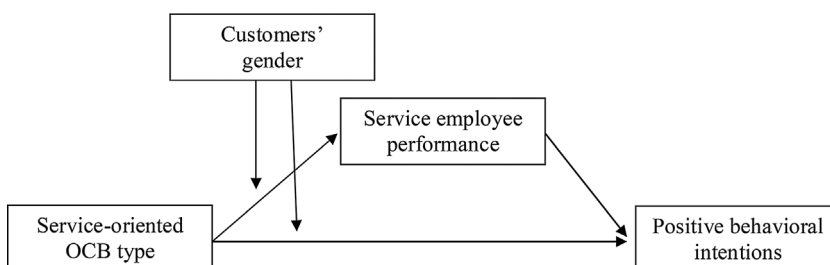


Fig. 1. Conceptual model.

at work than men (Caleo and Heilman, 2013; Wood and Eagly, 2002), female customers will recognize the communal service-oriented OCB and evaluate the performance higher than male customers, which then leads to higher levels of positive behavioral intentions than for male customers. Gender-role stereotypes do not lead to the expectation that women should engage in agentic behaviors (Eagly and Wood, 2011), so when women perform agentic service-oriented OCB, both male and female customers will have high levels of service employee performance evaluations, which then lead to high levels of positive behavioral intentions (see Fig. 1 for the conceptual model).

Hypothesis 2. There will be a two-way interaction between service-oriented OCB type performed by a female employee and customer gender on customer evaluations of service employee performance, such that female customers will have higher levels of employee performance evaluation than male customers for an employee performing communal service-oriented OCB, but not for agentic service-oriented OCB.

Hypothesis 3. The customer evaluations of service employee performance will mediate the two-way interaction between service-oriented OCB type performed by a female employee and customer gender on positive behavioral intentions.

2.5. Employee gender as a boundary condition

Lastly, the current study examined employee gender as a boundary factor for the proposed interaction between service-oriented OCB type and customer gender on customer reactions (i.e., customer positive behavioral intentions and customer evaluations of service employee performance). Specifically, it is proposed that the interaction and mediation effects will not emerge for male employees. In other words, a male employee will benefit from performing both agentic and communal service-oriented OCB by both male and female customers. There are several reasons for expecting that the proposed interaction and mediation effects will not emerge for male employees.

First, outside of the service context, research shows that male employees benefit more than female employees from performing any type of OCB (e.g., Allen, 2006; Heilman and Chen, 2005; Kacmar et al., 2011; Kark and Waismel-Manor, 2005). Second, there is also evidence to suggest that gender of the employee influences customer perceptions of service quality, such that customers react less positively to service by women versus men, particularly when the gender is incongruent with the gender role required by the job (e.g., Hekman et al., 2010; Snipes et al., 2006; Wu et al., 2016). Third, research on gender role theory (for a review, see Eagly and Wood, 2011) suggests that male employees benefit more than female employees from performing both agentic and communal type behaviors. In particular, men can stand out and benefit from engaging in either communal or agentic service-oriented OCB, because men are not penalized for violating gender norms.

Hypothesis 4. The two-way interaction between service-oriented OCB type and customer gender on customer positive behavioral intentions and customer employee performance evaluations will not emerge when the employee performing the service-oriented OCB is male.

2.6. Overview of research

In a series of two experiments, we examined the interaction between customer gender and the type of service-oriented OCB (communal or agentic) performed by a female (Study 1) or male (Study 2) service employees. Study 1 examined a two-way interaction between service-oriented OCB type performed by a female employee and customer gender on customer positive behavioral intentions and examined the customer employee performance evaluation as a mediator. Study 2 investigated whether such effects are limited to female employees and do not extend to male employees.

3. Study 1: method

3.1. Participants

The participants were 110 recruiters (40% men, 60% women) attending a hotel and restaurant industry career fair at a large, American public university. The average age of the participant was 33.93 ($SD = 13.11$) and reported that they travel and stay at a hotel an average of 4.79 ($SD = 1.42$) times per year. Regarding racial and ethnic identity, 47.2% of the participants identified as Caucasian/White, 17.6% identified as Latino(a)/Hispanic, 10.2% as African American/Black, 7.4% as Southeast Asian, 8.3% as Asian, and 9.3% reported as “other.” The majority reported staying at hotels catering to business travelers (48.1%), followed by economy (27.8%), and luxury (15.7%) as their typical hotel when they travel.

3.2. Design and stimuli

The current study used a 3(service-oriented OCB type: agentic or communal or control) \times 2(participants' gender: male or female) between-subjects factorial design. The participants' professional emails were collected during the day of the career fair and were asked if they could complete an online survey that had the experimental stimuli. They were informed that they were going to assume the role of a customer at a hotel and read about a service experience. The participants were randomly assigned to one of the three experimental conditions (service-oriented OCB type: agentic or communal or control) in which they read about the service they received when checking into a luxury hotel. Following procedures used in similar, prior experiments examining reactions to hotel service (e.g., Harris et al., 2006; Smith and Bolton, 1998; Wu et al., 2016), the participants read a general description of the hotel (e.g., the services offered and about the facility) and then read about the service-oriented OCB performed by a front desk employee during the check-in. In all of the conditions, the participants read “Upon arrival you are greeted by a Guest Service Manager at the front desk. She checks you in without any problems.”

The participants in the control condition moved on to the next section. In the agentic condition, the participants read that they “have two heavy bags with you and want help with your luggage from the concierge, however no one in the concierge department seems to be available,” and that the “Guest Service Manager offered to carry your luggage to your room, despite the fact that you did not ask for her assistance.” In the communal condition, the participants read “as you are waiting for your luggage, you noticed your coat has a loose button and it's hanging,” and that the “Guest Service Manager offered to sew the loose button at their desk as you wait for your luggage, despite the fact that you did not ask for her assistance.” After reading the scenario, the participants completed a survey measuring the dependent variables, demographic questions, and manipulation checks.

The two scenarios were based on a pilot study with 30 undergraduate hospitality students who were working at a hotel (24% male, 76% female; average age = 23.45 [$SD = 3.94$]). They were (1) provided with the definitions of agentic and communal characteristics, (2) then they read each scenario, and (3) then they rated the extent to

which the service-oriented OCB in each scenario was agentic and communal using a 5-point likert-type scale from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. A repeated-measures ANOVA showed that the service-oriented OCB in the agentic scenario was rated as more agentic ($M = 4.03$, $SD = 0.73$) than communal ($M = 2.48$, $SD = 1.05$); $F(1, 28) = 49.91$, $p < 0.05$). The results also showed that the service-oriented OCB in the communal scenario was rated as more communal ($M = 4.14$, $SD = 0.95$) than agentic ($M = 2.28$, $SD = 1.28$); $F(1, 28) = 38.33$, $p < 0.05$).

3.3. Measures

3.3.1. Customer evaluations of service employee performance

The employee's performance was evaluated using the three-item measure developed by Heilman and Chen (2005). The first item (“Overall, how would rate this employee's performance?”) used a 7-point likert-type scale from (1) poor to (7) excellent. The second and third items (“In your opinion, how likely is it that this employee will advance in the company?” and “Give your assessment of the individual's likelihood of career success?”) used a 7-point likert-type scale from (1) very unlikely to (7) very likely. The alpha reliability was 0.81.

3.3.2. Positive behavioral intention

Positive behavioral intentions were measured with the five-item measure from Zeithaml et al. (1996) using a 7-point likert-type scale from (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree. Example items include “I would say positive things about this hotel,” “I would encourage others to do business with this hotel,” and “I would recommend this hotel to others.” The alpha reliability was 0.96.

3.3.3. Manipulation and realism checks

The participants were asked to recall if the Guest Service Manager “offered to carry your luggage to your room,” “offered to sew your loose button on your coat,” or “none of the above.” The participants were asked to rate the extent to which they would describe the hotel as a luxury, full-service hotel using a 5-point likert-type scale from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. The participants were also asked to rate the extent to which the scenario was realistic using a 5-point likert-type scale from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. Lastly, the participants were asked to recall the gender of the Guest Service Manager.

4. Study 1: results

Regarding the manipulation checks, all of the participants successfully recalled the correct manipulated service-oriented OCB type. The hotel was perceived to be a luxury, full-service hotel ($M = 6.18$ [on a 7-point scale]; $SD = 0.96$) by the participants, indicating that the hotel was successfully described as a luxury, full-service hotel. The participants also indicated a high perception of realism for the scenario ($M = 5.92$ [on a 7-point scale]; $SD = 0.97$), indicating that the manipulated service-oriented OCB were realistic for a luxury hotel. Lastly, all of the participants successfully recalled the Guest Service Manager as a female employee, indicating that they carefully read the scenarios and attended to the fact that the Guest Service Manager was a woman.

A 3(service-oriented OCB type: agentic or communal or control) \times 2(participants' gender: male or female) between-subjects multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to test the Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2. The overall MANOVA indicated significant multivariate main effect of the service-oriented OCB type, customer gender, and for the two-way interaction, as indicated by Wilks' criterion. These significant results were followed by the two-way 2(service-oriented OCB type: agentic or communal) \times 2(participants' gender: male or female) ANOVAs for each dependent variable to examine each specific hypothesis; see Table 1 for the descriptive statistics and Table 2 for a summary of the results.

Table 1
Descriptive statistics by experimental condition for Study 1.

Dependent variable	Service-oriented OCB	Customer gender	Mean	SD	Total	SD
Performance evaluation	Agentic	Male	6.37	0.66		
		Female	6.18	0.95	6.26	0.85
	Communal	Male	5.94	0.83		
		Female	6.56	0.47	6.36	0.66
	Control	Male	6.24	0.56		
		Female	5.12	0.98	5.68	0.97
	Total	Male	6.22	0.68		
		Female	6.09	0.97	6.14	0.87
	Positive behavioral intentions	Agentic	Male	6.22	0.81	
Female			6.17	0.73	6.19	0.76
Communal		Male	5.47	1.09		
		Female	6.54	0.51	6.20	0.89
Control		Male	5.27	1.09		
		Female	4.71	0.78	4.99	0.97
Total		Male	5.72	1.06		
		Female	5.98	0.97	5.88	1.01

Note. The scale for both measures was rated from 1 to 7.

4.1. Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis predicted that there would be a two-way interaction between service-oriented OCB type performed by a female employee and customer gender, such that female customers will have higher levels of positive behavioral intentions than male customers for communal service-oriented OCB, but not for agentic service-oriented OCB. The ANOVA for the two-way 2(service-oriented OCB type: agentic or communal) × 2(participants' gender: male or female) interaction showed a significant interaction effect on the positive behavioral intentions; $F(1, 75) = 9.63, p < 0.05, \eta^2 = 0.11$. The hypothesized follow-up simple main effect tests indicate that under the communal service-oriented OCB, the female customers had higher levels of positive behavioral intentions ($M = 6.53, SD = 0.51$) than male customers ($M = 5.47, SD = 1.09$); $F(1, 32) = 15.27, p < 0.05$. In contrast, under the agentic service-oriented OCB condition, no customer gender differences emerged between female ($M = 6.17, SD = 0.73$) and male customers ($M = 6.22, SD = 0.81$); $F(1, 43) = 0.45, p > 0.05$. Thus, the results confirm Hypothesis 1.

4.2. Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis predicted that there would be a two-way

Table 2
MANOVA and ANOVA results for Study 1.

Independent Variable	3 × 2 MANOVA between-subjects design				Univariate results				
	F	df	p	η ²	Dependent variable	F	df	p	η ²
Service-oriented OCB	9.41	4, 200	0.01	0.01	Performance evaluation	5.99	2, 101	0.01	0.11
					Positive BI	20.11	2, 101	0.01	0.29
					Performance evaluation	2.12	1, 101	0.15	0.02
Customer gender	4.19	2, 100	0.02	0.02	Positive BI	0.88	1, 101	0.35	0.01
					Performance evaluation	9.37	2, 101	0.01	0.16
Service-oriented OCB × customer gender	5.37	4, 200	0.01	0.01	Positive BI	7.73	2, 101	0.01	0.13
					Performance evaluation	0.02	1, 75	0.89	0.01
Service-oriented OCB					Positive BI	1.12	1, 75	0.29	0.02
					Performance evaluation	1.50	1, 75	0.23	0.02
Customer gender					Positive BI	7.93	1, 75	0.01	0.10
					Performance evaluation	5.08	1, 75	0.03	0.06
Service-oriented OCB × customer gender					Positive BI	9.63	1, 75	0.01	0.11
					Performance evaluation	9.63	1, 75	0.01	0.11

Note. N = 107 for the 3 × 2 between-subjects design; N = 79 for the 2 × 2 between-subjects design. BI = behavioral intentions.

interaction between service-oriented OCB type performed by a female employee and customer gender, such that female customers will have higher levels of customer evaluations of service employee performance than male customers for an employee performing communal service-oriented OCB, but not for agentic service-oriented OCB. The ANOVA for the two-way 2(service-oriented OCB type: agentic or communal) × 2(participants' gender: male or female) interaction showed a significant interaction effect on the customer evaluations of service employee performance; $F(1, 75) = 5.08, p < 0.05, \eta^2 = 0.06$. The hypothesized follow-up simple main effect tests indicate that under the communal service-oriented OCB, the female customers had higher levels of employee performance evaluation ($M = 6.56, SD = 0.46$) than male customers ($M = 5.94, SD = 0.83$); $F(1, 32) = 8.03, p < 0.05$. In contrast, under the agentic service-oriented OCB condition, no customer gender differences emerged between female ($M = 6.1, SD = 0.95$) and male customers ($M = 6.37, SD = 0.66$); $F(1, 43) = 0.51, p > 0.05$.

4.3. Hypothesis 3

The third hypothesis stated that the customer evaluations of service employee performance would mediate the two-way interaction between service-oriented OCB type and customer gender on positive behavioral intentions. Hypothesis testing was conducted using the 2(service-oriented OCB type: agentic or communal) × 2(participants' gender: male or female) model with employee performance evaluations as the mediator, and positive behavioral intentions as the dependent variable using the Preacher et al. (2007) bootstrapping procedure with confidence intervals that provide evidence of significant indirect effects when they exclude zero (Shrout and Bolger, 2002) using PROCESS version 2.13 for SPSS (Hayes, 2013). The index of moderated-mediation provides a formal test for moderated-mediation and indicates that the two conditional indirect effects of the moderator are statistically different (Hayes, 2015).

As shown in Table 3, the index of moderated-mediation was significant (index = 0.23, CI₉₅ = 0.05, 0.54), indicating that the customer evaluation of service employee performance was a significant mediator of the 2(service-oriented OCB type: agentic or communal) × 2(participants' gender: male or female) interaction effect on positive behavioral intentions. The results showed that conditional indirect effect for the female participants (effect = 0.11, CI₉₅ = 0.02, 0.26) was statistically different and stronger than for the male participants (effect = -0.12, CI₉₅ = -0.36, 0.03), supporting Hypothesis 3.

Table 3
Moderated-mediation estimates in Study 1.

Direct effects	Coefficient	SE	t	p	Model R ²
Performance evaluations as DV					
Service-oriented OCB	0.03	0.09	0.31	0.75	0.08
Customer gender	0.09	0.09	0.96	0.34	
Interaction	0.23	0.10	2.25	0.03	
Positive behavioral intentions as DV					
Performance evaluation	0.50	0.08	6.29	0.01	0.45*
Service-oriented OCB	0.05	0.07	0.80	0.42	
Customer gender	0.16	0.07	2.32	0.02	
Interaction	0.15	0.07	2.11	0.04	
Conditional Indirect effect	Effect	Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI	
Women	0.10	0.06	0.17	0.26	
Men	-0.12	0.10	-0.36	0.03	
Index of moderated mediation	Index	Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI	
	0.23	0.12	0.05	0.54	

N = 79. *p < 0.01.

4.4. Exploratory analysis

The test of hypotheses did not include the control condition, therefore, we examined unplanned or post-hoc contrasts between the three service-oriented OCB types (agentic or communal or control). Specifically, we examined six post-hoc contrasts with the corresponding Bonferroni correction to preserve Type 1 error at 5% (i.e., $p \leq \alpha/6 = 0.008$). The first set of contrast examined differences between the three service-oriented OCB types on the customer evaluations of service employee performance. First, the employee was rated higher on the customer performance evaluation for both the agentic and communal conditions than for the control condition: $t(107) = 3.64, p < 0.008$. Second, the employee was rated higher on the customer performance evaluation for the agentic condition than for the control condition: $t(107) = 3.17, p < 0.008$. Third, the employee was rated higher on the customer performance evaluation for the communal condition than for the control condition: $t(107) = 3.27, p < 0.008$.

The second set of contrast examined differences between the three service-oriented OCB types on the positive behavioral intentions. First, the hotel was rated higher on positive behavioral intentions for both the agentic and communal conditions than for the control condition: $t(107) = 6.48, p < 0.008$. Second, the hotel was rated higher on positive behavioral intentions for the agentic condition than for the control condition: $t(107) = 6.05, p < 0.008$. Third and last, the hotel was rated higher on the positive behavioral intentions for the communal condition than for the control condition: $t(107) = 5.45, p < 0.008$. Thus, the results showed that the manipulations of agentic and communal service-oriented OCB led to higher ratings than the control condition, indicating that the participants indeed rated these two manipulations as service-oriented OCB.

5. Study 1: discussion

Focusing on female employee performance of service-oriented OCB, the results from Study 1 indicate that when compared against the no service-oriented OCB condition, customers report higher behavioral intentions and customer evaluations of service employee performance. This finding supports existing literature that service-oriented OCB influence behavioral intentions and how customers rate service and hotel

quality. However, the new finding from Study 1 is that the type of service-oriented OCB interacts with the customer's gender. Although both male and female customers rated the employee performing the agentic OCB equally, female customers were found to significantly rate the employee performing the communal OCB higher than male customers. Male customers did not report higher behavioral intentions for communal OCB being performed by a female employee. These findings support previous research on gender roles and customer gender influencing the perception of service quality. Study 2 investigated whether the effects found in Study 1 extend to male employees.

6. Study 2: method

6.1. Participants

The participants were 74 recruiters (50% men, 47% women) who were attending the same hotel and restaurant industry career fair as Study 1 during the next semester and did not participate in Study 1. The average age of the participant was 33.29 (SD = 11.91) and reported that they travel and stay at a hotel an average of 4.73 (SD = 1.39) times per year. Regarding racial and ethnic identity, 42.5% of the participants identified as Caucasian/White, 19.2% identified as Latino(a)/Hispanic, 9.6% as African American/Black, 6.8% as Southeast Asian, 12.3% as Asian, and 7.8% reported as "other." The majority reported staying at hotels catering to business travelers (47.9%), followed by economy (35.6%), and luxury (13.7%) as their typical hotel when they travel.

6.2. Design and stimuli

The current study used the same 3(service-oriented OCB type: agentic or communal or control) \times 2(participants' gender: male or female) between-subjects factorial design used in Study 1. The participants' professional emails were collected during the day of the career fair and were asked if they could complete an online survey that had the experimental stimuli. Recruiters who participated in Study 1 were asked to forward the email link to a colleague with the same job. The same experimental instructions, manipulations, and materials used from Study 1 were used. The only difference in Study 2 was that the employee was described as a male employee.

6.3. Measures

The same customer evaluation of service employee performance measure from Study 1 was used. The alpha reliability was 0.81 in Study 2. The same positive behavioral intentions measure from Study 1 was used. The alpha reliability was 0.96 in Study 2. The same manipulation checks and realism checks from Study 1 were used in Study 2.

7. Study 2: results

In regard to the manipulation checks, all of the participants successfully recalled the correct manipulated service-oriented OCB type. The hotel was perceived to be a luxury, full-service hotel (M = 6.03 [on a 7-point scale]; SD = 1.02) by the participants, indicating that the hotel was successfully described as a luxury, full-service hotel. The participants also indicated a high perception of realism for the scenario (M = 5.84 [on a 7-point scale]; SD = 0.91), indicating that the manipulated service-oriented OCB were realistic for a luxury hotel. Lastly, all of the participants successfully recalled the Guest Service Manager as a male employee, indicating that they carefully read the scenarios and attended to the fact that the Guest Service Manager was a man.

A 3(service-oriented OCB type: agentic or communal or control) \times 2(participants' gender: male or female) between-subjects multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to replicate Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 from Study 1. The overall MANOVA did show a significant multivariate main effect of the service-oriented OCB

Table 4
MANOVA and ANOVA results for Study 2.

3 × 2 MANOVA between-subjects design								
Independent Variable	Multivariate results			Dependent variable	Univariate results			
	F	df	p		F	df	p	η^2_p
Service-oriented OCB	6.77	4, 132	0.01	Performance evaluation	15.54	2, 66	0.01	0.32
				Positive BI	8.49	2, 66	0.01	0.20
Customer gender	0.44	2, 65	0.64	Performance evaluation	0.88	1, 66	0.35	0.01
				Positive BI	0.35	1, 66	0.55	0.01
Service-oriented OCB × customer gender	1.29	4, 132	0.28	Performance evaluation	1.40	2, 66	0.25	0.04
				Positive BI	2.42	2, 66	0.10	0.06
2 × 2 MANOVA between-subjects design								
Service-oriented OCB				Performance evaluation	0.03	1, 44	0.85	0.01
				Positive BI	0.01	1, 44	0.94	0.01
Customer gender				Performance evaluation	0.10	1, 44	0.74	0.01
				Positive BI	0.98	1, 44	0.33	0.02
Service-oriented OCB x customer gender				Performance evaluation	0.07	1, 44	0.78	0.01
				Positive BI	0.51	1, 44	0.48	0.01

Note. N = 107 for the 3 × 2 between-subjects design; N = 79 for the 2 × 2 between-subjects design. BI = behavioral intentions.

type, as indicated by Wilks' criterion. However, the results did not show a significant multivariate main effect of the customer gender or for the two-way interaction. To replicate the results from Study 1, the two-way 2(service-oriented OCB type: agentic or communal) × 2(participants' gender: male or female) ANOVAs for each dependent variable were tested (see Table 4). As shown in Table 4, no significant results emerged from the two-way ANOVAs. Thus, Hypothesis 1–3 were not replicated when the employee was described as a man.

7.1. Exploratory analysis

The same post-hoc contrasts between the three service-oriented OCB type (agentic or communal or control) were examined using the Bonferroni correction to preserve Type 1 error at 5% (i.e., $p \leq \alpha/6 = 0.008$). The first set of contrast examined differences between the three service-oriented OCB types on the performance evaluation. First, the employee was rated higher on the customer performance evaluation for both the agentic and communal conditions than for the control condition: $t(71) = 5.18, p < 0.008$. Second, the employee was rated higher on the customer performance evaluation for the agentic condition than for the control condition: $t(71) = 4.08, p < 0.008$. Third, the employee was rated higher on the customer performance evaluation for the communal condition than for the control condition: $t(71) = 4.87, p < 0.008$.

The second set of contrasts examined differences between the three service-oriented OCB types on the positive behavioral intentions. First, the hotel was rated higher on the positive behavioral intentions for both the agentic and communal conditions than for the control condition: $t(71) = 3.71, p < 0.008$. Second, the hotel was rated higher on the positive behavioral intentions for the agentic condition than for the control condition: $t(71) = 2.79, p < 0.008$. Third and last, the hotel was rated higher on the positive behavioral intentions for the communal condition than for the control condition: $t(71) = 3.608, p < 0.008$. Thus, the results replicate Study 1 in that the manipulations of agentic and communal service-oriented OCB led to higher ratings than the control condition, indicating that the participants indeed rated these two manipulations as service-oriented OCB.

8. Study 2: discussion

The results from Study 2 showed that employee gender is a boundary condition for the interaction effect between service-oriented OCB type and customer gender on customer reactions (i.e., positive behavioral intentions and customer evaluations of service employee

performance). In particular, the results from Study 1 did not emerge for the male employee in Study 2. These results are consistent with the general OCB literature that shows that male employees benefit more than female employees from performing any type of OCB. In Study 2, both male and female customers had higher and equal evaluations for the male employee performing both service-oriented OCB types. In contrast, in Study 1, male and female customers had higher and equal evaluations for the female employee performing only the agentic service-oriented OCB. For the communal service-oriented OCB, female customers had higher evaluations than their male counterparts. This pattern did not emerge in Study 2, suggesting that the service-oriented OCB type matters more for female employees than for male employees.

9. General discussion

9.1. Theoretical implications

Although OCB is often conceptually grounded within social exchange theory (Bettencourt et al., 2005; Nielsen et al., 2009) to understand why employees engage in OCB, the current study draws from social role theory (Eagly and Wood, 2011) to help clarify how customers react to service-oriented OCB tied to gender-roles stereotypes. Specifically, the current study argued that the effect of service-oriented OCB on customer reactions might depend on what type of service-oriented OCB is performed and on the customer's gender. Study 1 showed that the type of service-oriented OCB performed by a female employee interacts with the customer's gender. Although both male and female customers recognized the agentic OCB, female customers were found to significantly rate the communal OCB higher (i.e., positive behavioral intentions and customer evaluations of service employee performance) than male customers. In Study 2, the male and female customers had equal evaluations for the male employee performing both service-oriented OCB. Taken together, Study 1 and 2 showed that the interaction effect between the service-oriented OCB type (communal versus agentic) and customer gender only influences customer reactions for female employees, but not for male employees.

The current study builds on the gender and OCB literature. Outside of the service context, extant research shows that OCB matters less for female employees than for male employees, particularly when the OCB matches the gender roles (e.g., Allen, 2006; Heilman and Chen, 2005; Kacmar et al., 2011; Kark and Waismel-Manor, 2005). The current studies show that because many service-oriented OCB can be akin to either communal or agentic characteristics, the evaluation of service-oriented OCB is particularly susceptible to the influence of gender-role

stereotypes. The current studies extend this body of literature to the service-oriented OCB context by showing that the customer outcomes of service-oriented OCB (i.e., positive behavioral intentions and customer evaluations of service employee performance) depends on the type of service-oriented OCB (communal versus agentic), the customer's gender, and whether it is performed by a female or male employee.

In regard to gender roles and customer gender, the results from both Study 1 and Study 2 illustrate that customers, both male and female, are more receptive and mindful of agentic service-oriented OCB, regardless of the employee gender. However, for communal service-oriented OCB, female customers responded with higher evaluations than male customers with female employees performing communal service-oriented OCB. Thus, gender-role stereotypes have the potential to influence how customers react to service-oriented OCB.

The post-hoc contrasts analyses with the control condition in both Study 1 and Study 2 showed that the manipulations of communal and agentic service-oriented OCB did work because the participants rated the employee and hotel higher for these behaviors than the control condition (i.e., no service-oriented OCB). These results suggest that social desirability did not influence the results; otherwise, the control condition would have led to equally high evaluations for the communal and agentic service-oriented OCB conditions. The post-hoc contrasts analyses results are also consistent with the main effect of service-oriented OCB on behavioral intentions found in past research (e.g., Barroso Castro et al., 2004; Chen and Kao, 2010; Payne and Webber, 2006). Thus, these results suggest that all else being equal, hospitality organizations can use service-oriented OCB to elicit positive customer behavioral intentions.

Lastly, the current study examined and found that customer evaluations of service employee performance served as the mediator of the interaction between service-oriented OCB type and customer gender on positive behavioral intentions. This mediation result is consistent with the research that shows that customer evaluations of the service performance of employees is a proximal outcome of service-oriented OCB (e.g. Bettencourt and Brown, 1997; Bettencourt et al., 2005; Podsakoff et al., 2009; Yen and Niehoff, 2004). Thus, the results suggest that the customers first evaluate the employee performing the service-oriented OCB, and then they use this employee evaluation to evaluate the hotel. The customer evaluation of service employee performance provides a reason for why the interaction between service-oriented OCB type and customer gender influences customer positive behavioral intentions.

9.2. Practical implications

The current study has significant implications for practitioners, specifically three implications are discussed: matching customers with employees for gender-related service situations, changing how service employees are evaluated by customers to adjust potential gender biases, and training employees how to deliver service-oriented OCB. First, the findings of this study suggest matching customers with employees in service situations may increase performance evaluations, positive behavioral intentions, and service quality perceptions in hospitality organizations. Both male and female customers reported higher reactions (i.e., positive behavioral intentions and customer evaluations of service employee performance) for the female employee performing agentic service-oriented OCB. However, female customers responded stronger to female employees performing communal service-oriented OCB, which suggests that a match between customers and service employees can lead to better outcomes for both the employee and hotel. For example, corresponding female customers with communal service-oriented OCB performed by female employees could benefit employee service quality for hospitality organizations. This in turn can influence customers' perceptions of service quality and satisfaction.

Second, this study found that customer evaluations can be biased by gender role stereotypes, suggesting that customer evaluations should be developed and scored in a way that controls for potential gender biases,

such as using standardized items, having customers justify and explain their evaluations, and including non-customer evaluations criteria to evaluate service employees. Previous research suggests customer satisfaction surveys are relied on heavily for employee performance evaluations (Hagan et al., 2006). The findings of this study demonstrate how customer evaluations can be influenced by customer gender. Therefore, implementing multiple criteria for employee performance evaluations will not only better assess employee performance, but will also provide a more objective evaluation of employee performance. Additionally, adjusting customer satisfaction surveys to include justifications can help minimize and eliminate subjective evaluations. Incorporating bias elaboration checks prevents customers from relying on stereotypes based on gender roles when evaluating employee service performance (Schmitt and Kunze, 2002). Therefore, employee performance appraisals should combine customer's subjective evaluations with objective measures in order to account for potential biases in the customer evaluations.

Third, the results also showed the main effect of service-oriented OCB on customer behavioral intentions and customer evaluations of service employee performance, suggesting that employees should be trained on delivering specific service-oriented OCB. Therefore, hospitality organizations should use service-oriented OCB to manage customer behavioral intentions. To take advantage of the behavioral influence service-oriented OCB have on customers, hospitality organizations should develop training that shows employees how to use service-oriented OCB. In addition, an organizational culture that promotes service-oriented OCB can enable and encourage employees to implement this finding and increase customer behavioral intentions and customer evaluations of service employee performance, ultimately become a competitive advantage.

9.3. Limitations and future research

This study also has several implications for future research based on the potential limitations; specifically, four future research implications are discussed: using critical incidents, measuring other mediators (e.g., perceived comfort), examining other types of communal and agentic service-oriented OCB, and exploring possible cultural differences. First, the study utilized an experiment that was scenario method, so future research might consider methods that use real evaluations in real settings. The main disadvantage of this method is that participants in the role of the customers may have responses that may be different from their actual reactions in a real-life service situation such that positive behavioral intentions are influenced by overall experiences, not by single episodes of service-oriented OCB. While manipulating service-oriented OCB is not possible in a real service setting, there are other research avenues that future research can implement. For example, using a critical incident technique, future research might examine how actual customers recall the service-oriented OCB from male and female employees and examine whether women recall more communal type OCB than men for female employees.

Second, there are other possible variables that can serve as mediators linking the interaction of gender and service-oriented OCB to outcomes. Specifically, although social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1986) and relational demography theory (Tsui et al., 1989) explain the findings from the current study, there might be other unexplored variables explaining why female customers are more receptive to communal service-oriented OCB than male customers, when the service-oriented OCB is a female employee. For example, perhaps male customers might feel less comfortable than female customers having a female employee engage in communal service-oriented OCB. Future research might measure the level of comfort a customer can feel during different service-oriented OCB interactions.

Third, another limitation is that only one type of communal and agentic service-oriented OCB was examined in the current study, suggesting an area for future research. Although the post-hoc contrasts

analyses showed that the manipulation of the service-oriented OCB did increase customer behavioral intentions and customer evaluations of service employee performance, future research might explore other types of communal and agentic service-oriented OCB. In addition, future research might explore the typology of how customers perceive service-oriented OCB along a continuum of communal and agentic qualities. For example, some service-oriented OCB might fall in the middle of both a continuum of communal and agentic qualities, suggesting that gender roles might not bias the evaluation of service-oriented OCB that are neither communal nor agentic.

An additional limitation and area for further research is that the participants were from one country and did not explore possible cultural differences. Hospitality is a global industry, therefore future research might examine how customers from other cultures perceive agentic and communal service-oriented OCB. Social role theory was developed and mostly examined using American samples (Eagly and Wood, 2011). The traditional and stereotypical gender expectations from American customers influenced the perception of the male and female employees performing a service-oriented OCB, which might not hold true in different cultures.

Despite these limitations, the current study offers novel findings for the service-oriented OCB literature. Specifically, the current study examined and found that service-oriented OCB tied to gender roles (communal versus agentic) interacts with customer gender to influence customer reactions. The two studies showed that the interaction effect between the service-oriented OCB type (communal versus agentic) and customer gender only influences customer reactions for female employees, but not for male employees. Male employees benefited from performing both communal and agentic service-oriented OCBs. Therefore, it is not only important to foster an organizational culture that promotes and supports service-oriented OCB, but it is also equally important to understand the impact of communal and agent service-oriented OCB as well as the role of customer and employee gender.

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