HELPING THE FIRST-LINE EMPLOYEES UNDERSTAND THEIR WORK CONTRIBUTION: TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP, PERCEIVED PROSOCIAL IMPACT, AND TASK PERFORMANCE IN THE HOTEL WORKPLACE

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Abstract - The present research explored the mediating and moderating processes in the relationship between transformational leadership behaviors and task performance. We noted that transformational leaders influenced employee task performance through the mediating role of perceived prosocial impact. We noted that transformational leadership behaviors can foster employees' perceived prosocial impact, and, thus motivate them exhibit higher degree of task performance. While few prior studies have examined the causal relationship between leadership style and employee psychological mechanism, this study may provide a direction and demonstration to understanding their causal relationship among transformational leadership, perceived prosocial impact, and employee performance. Implication for research results and suggestions were discussed.

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism literature has noted that supervisor's support is the vital factor for motivating the first-line employees' effectiveness (Chen and Wu, 2017). Due to lack of adequate leadership behavior and skills to motivate individuals in tourism organizations, the first line employees often lack enough motivation to exhibit adequate work effectiveness and even increase their willingness to leave an organization (Wu and Chen, 2015). While exhibiting adequate skills and motivating the first-line employees to exhibit better effectiveness become the primary task for top executives in hospitality organization, tourism organization managers should understand how their leadership behaviors might affect first line employees' effectiveness and help them understand the meaning of their work in organization. Perceived prosocial impact has been regard as the important factor to help first-line employees understand their work meaning and contribution of their work in organization (Grant, 2008). While individuals understand their work contributions to other individuals in organization, they tend to pay more their effort toward work. In term of hospitality organization context, the first-line employees often lack enough understanding and knowledge regarding their work might influence other coworkers among organization, and thus influence the organizations' effectiveness (Chen and Wu, 2017, Grant, 2008)). Thus, how to help the first line employees understand their works' importance in the hotel workplace, becoming the key challenge issue for top executives of hospitality organization in hospitality context. The main objective of this study is to explore the underlying mechanism that transformational leadership behaviors influence employee performance. In this study, we noted that transformational leadership behaviors may affect followers' perceived prosocial impact and thus lead to higher degree of task performance. Based on the theory and literature of transformational leadership behaviors, perceived prosocial impact, and employee performance, we proposed an integrated model relating transformational leadership behaviors, perceived prosocial impact, and employee task performance. We argued that perceived prosocial impact mediate the relationship between transformational leadership behaviors and task performance. Hence, in this study, we explicated the relationships of transformational leadership behaviors (TFL), perceived prosocial impact, and task performance. In sum, the main findings of this study contribute to the understanding of underlying processes of transformational leadership behaviors (TFL) that may influence beneficial employee outcomes by exploring the mediating roles of perceived prosocial impact.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Transformational leadership behaviors and perceived prosocial impact

Transformational leadership behaviors were the major leadership style that had been mentioned valuable in the field of leadership theory (Chen and Wu, 2017; Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Shin, Chiang, and Chen, 2012; Kovjanic, Schuh, Jonas, Quaquebeke, and Dick, 2012; Yukl, 1999). Leadership scholars noted that transformational leader can build the shared vision and goal, communicate the meaningful value, and motivate followers perform better outcome

(Zhang and Bartol, 2010; Gong, Huang, and Farh, 2009; Liao, and Chuang, 2007). In this study, we proposed that transformational leadership behaviors are positively related to perceived prosocial impact. While a transformational leader play a modeling role via internalizing a shared values and beliefs, building a future-orientation goal, encouraging a different perspectives' thinking, and coaching as a consulter to followers (Gong et al., 2009), employees tend to have more understanding of their future contribution to work, and thus exhibit higher prosocial impact perception. Therefore, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 1: Transformational leadership behaviors are positively related to perceived prosocial impact.

2.2 Perceived prosocial impact and employee task performance

Prosocial impact has been found to be likely to appeal to employees' core value (Grant, 2012). Previous study has noted that benefiting other coworkers and making a social contribution may be important for employees' outcomes (Grant, 2008). Perceived prosocial impact refer to the extent of which individuals feel that their actions can benefit other individuals (Grant, 2007). Perceived social impact describes the extext to which individuals feel that their own actions improve the welfare of others. Research has pointed that individuals tend to exhibit higher degree of work outcomes while they can recognize their actions and behaviors that can benefit others, such as task performance, job satisfaction, and effectiveness (Grant, 2012). Perceived prosocial impact helps individuals to have psychological link between their actions and potential positive outcomes for future (Grant, 2008). While individuals can understand that their actions and behaviors may be helpful and useful to organization effectives, they would exhibit higher work effectiveness, and thus enhancing work outcomes (Grant, 2007; 2012). Therefore, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 2: Perceived prosocial impact is positively related to task performance.

2.3 Perceived prosocial impact mediates the relationship between transformational leadership behaviors and employee task performance.

Extending form above discussion, we propose that transformational leadership behaviors (TFL) influence individuals' outcomes through their influence on perceived prosocial impact. While the positive relationship between transformational leadership behaviors and employee outcomes has been demonstrated by prior literature, the role of perceived prosocial impact is still unclear and research has yet to examine the relationship among transformational leadership, perceived prosocial contact and task performance. We argued that, when transformational leaders exhibit a series of leaders such as inspirational motivation, individuals tend to be able to identify with the organizational vision (Wang, Law, Hackett, Wang, and Chen, 2005; Kovjanic, Schuh, Jonas, Quaquebeke, and Dick, 2012). perceived prosocial impact enable employees to see that their work contributions to other members in the organization. Since transformational leader's vision tend to be likely to have a meaningful prosocial impact on their work. Thus, while transformational leader can exhibit effective leader behaviors to assist individuals to see the meaningful and prosocial impacts of their works, employees tend to exhibit higher degree of perceived prosocial impact. In this study, we propose that while transformational leaders can exhibit a series of transformational leadership behaviors to followers, individuals tend to exhibit higher perceived prosocial impact to their work, and thus increase their task performance. In other word, while individuals have a higher degree of understanding of their actions and behaviors that benefit organizational effectiveness, they thus tend to pay more effort and resource to their work, and thus increase higher task performance. Following above argument, hypothesize:

Hypothesis 3: Perceived prosocial impact mediates the relationship between transformational leadership behaviors and task performance.

III. METHODS

3.1 Sample

Data was administrated to 118 dyads of employees and supervisors who work in Taiwan's hospitality organization. Separate questionnaires were designed in order to weaken the influence of common method variances. Employees rated transformational leadership behaviors and perceived prosocial impact scales while superviso rated task performance. Employees were largely female (63.1%); 78.6% were less than 30 years old; and 63.3% had completed college education while supervisor were mainly male (67.7%), 63.4% were over 39 years, and 72.8% had the college education degree.

3.2 Measure

Multifactor Questionnaire (Bass & Avolio, 2000) was used to assess the four dimensions of transformational leadership behaviors. Example of items used include: "The leader in this company articulates a compelling vision of the future" (inspirational motivation). Perceived prosocial impact was measured with a three items scale adapt from Grant (2008). This measure has shown adequate levels of reliability and construct validity in previous research (α= .90; Grant ,2008). Example of items used include: "I am very conscious of the positive impact that my work has on others"; "I am very aware of the ways in which my work is benefiting

others. Task performance was assessed with seven items developed from Tsui, Pearce, Porter, and Tripoli (1997). Example of items used include "The employee's efficiency is much higher than average"; "The employee strives for bigger quality work than required". The reliability and construct validity of the scales shown acceptance levels in this study.

IV. RESULTS

4.1 Descriptive analysis

Pearson correlation analysis result noted that all constructs in the study were interrelated. Transformational leadership behaviors (TFL) significantly related to perceive prosocial impact (γ=.53, p<.001) and task performance (γ=.51, p<.01) Finally, perceive prosocial impact significantly related to task performance (γ=.45, p<.01).

4.2 Hypotheses test

Regression analysis was used to examine our study. According to the results of regression analysis, transformational leadership behaviors were positively related to perceived prosocial impact (γ=.52, p<.001), thus supporting Hypothesis 1. Perceived prosocial impact was positively related to task performance (γ=.45, p<.001), thus supporting Hypothesis 2. Hypothesis 3 predicted that perceived prosocial impact mediate the relationship between transformational leadership behaviors and task performance. Adopting the analysis principle of Baron and Kenny (1986), we found that the direct impact of transformational leadership behaviors on task performance was 0.51 (p<.001). However, while adding perceived prosocial impact as the mediator, we found that the direct impact of transformational leadership behaviors on task performance was reduced from 0.51 to 0.38 (p<.01), thus supporting Hypothesis 3 (partially mediation).

CONCLUSION

Employees' understanding regarding their work contribution and value is important to a hospitality organization. While the first-line employee of hospitality organization lack understanding regarding their work importance to other workers among organization, these hospiltality organization employees may weaken their willingness and motivation to exhibit better work outcomes in the hotel workplace, such as providing better service performance to customers or fast responses to the demands of clients. Few studies in the tourism literature have examined how hotel leaders' behaviors affect the first line employees' perceived prosocial impact and following outcome. Data from 118 first line employees in hospitality organization, we examined the causal relationships among transformational leadership, perceived prosocial impact, and task performance. Existing tourism literature lacks enough knowledge and suggestion to help managers of hospitality organization to effectively increase their front-line employees' perceived prosocial impact. While the first-line employee lacks enough understanding to their work importance, they might pay less effort to their work and service task. More importantly, they can't communicate with their coworkers and effectively cooperate to finish organizational goal. The present study contributes in following ways. While prior tourism literature lack empirical knowledge to explain how leadership style might influence first-line employees' perceive prosocial impact, the present study proposed that the hospitality organizational leaders who can exhibit transformational leadership skills and abilities might help first-line employees understand the importance of their works. In this respect, this may contribute to tourism literature by exploring how hospitality's leadership behaviors influence employees' motivation. Secondly, we proposed an integrated model to explain the causal relationship among transformational leadership, perceived prosocial impact, and task performance. We noted that perceived prosocial impact plays a mediator that link transformational leadership and task performance. In other words, transformational leadership behaviors influence employee performance through the mediating effect of perceived prosocial impact. In this respect, we may contribute to leadership theory and perceived prosocial social literature. While the hospitality organization leaders can exhibit a successful leadership style of behaviors to motivate their front-line employees to understand the value and importance of their works, the organization's competitive advantage and effectiveness would thus enhance. Future other studies may pay more attention to explore different moderators that may influence above relationship and examined our research model into a specific industry or country, which would provide further evidence to understand the application and development our research results.

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