

Verification of the Japanese version of the service-oriented organization citizenship behavior scale

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Abstract

This study is a precursor to the study on service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior (SOCB) among the frontline staff of Japanese hospitality companies. It aims to create a Japanese version of the SOCB scale and verify it as a research tool. First, we reviewed previous SOCB studies and organized their definitions of SOCB. Next, we created a Japanese translation of the SOCB scale. We surveyed the frontline staff of Japanese hospitality companies and verified the validity and reliability of the Japanese scale. An exploratory factor analysis was conducted to extract the factors based on the survey data. Subsequently, the confirmatory factor analysis confirmed the validity of the model of factor structure resulting from exploratory factor analysis. We confirmed that the same three-factor model of the original scale establishes the structure of the Japanese SOCB scale. Therefore, quantitative research using the Japanese SOCB scale would help obtain concrete suggestions in hospitality companies' human resources management as much of their value is derived from human factors.

Keywords

service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior, service frontline staff, hospitality industry, Japanese hospitality, factor analysis

1. Introduction

Asia is emerging as the new global center of hospitality and tourism, and this “Asian Wave” is expected to grow in the following years [Chon et al., 2020; Chon, 2021]. The Asian region is now a leader in the global hospitality service industry due to its unique service approaches and practices [Sucker et al., 2013]. One of the reasons for the popularity of Asian tourism is the high-touch, high-contact nature of Asian hospitality with high quality service.

The unique “heartware” of Asian hospitality has been emphasized by many leading Asian hotel brands [Tan et al, 2014]. For example, Asian hospitality, the core of the Shangri-La brand, is based on the values of respect, courtesy, integrity, kindness, and humility [Heffernan and Droulers, 2008]. Furthermore, it is widely known that Aman Resorts, a Swiss-headquartered multinational hospitality company, initially thoroughly studied Japanese ryokan culture and absorbed its essence to create its own world [Nagamiya, 2008]. Inherently, Japan is renowned for its excellent service and friendliness [Blanchy, 2010]. Many foreign tourists approve of the politeness and helpfulness of the frontline staff in hotels and other Japanese hospitality and tourism companies [Sato, 2010].

Characterized by a sincere and polite attitude and demeanor [Kondo, 2004], Japanese hospitality is not limited to Asia, and as Inui and Matsukasa [2015] point out, there are special “Japanese-style” hospitality values. Normann [1984] shows that Japanese hospitality service should be called the philosophy of service systems based on innovation in human relations, a form of thinking, and comes from the life-experience philosophy. The strength of Japanese hospitality companies is that

they pay attention to the “details” that other companies do not, and have established a system that makes this possible [Wada, 2003]. In other words, warmth is a crucial value that Japanese hospitality firms possess, as the thoughtfulness of Japan’s emphasis on person-to-person communication is embedded in the services provided by the staff [Sato, 2010; Kuraesin, 2021]. Malcolm Thompson, former general manager of the Peninsula Hotel, Tokyo, describes Japanese hospitality as “personal service,” the “ultimate form” of service that focuses on the individual customer and provides an optimal experience [Thompson, 2007].

Personal service is especially important in the “moment of truth” service encounters. There, various situations arise that cannot be handled by routine work alone [Kondo, 2004]. In other words, the frontline of service always requires going above and beyond their role assignment. As Ryan and Ployhart [2003] argue, in a service context, behavior beyond the formal role requirements will always be required, but it is difficult to determine if it is a part of the formal work. However, even those services that go beyond the formal job description might be considered normal duties in a service setting [Bettencourt et al., 2001; Payne and Webber, 2006; Wu and Liao, 2016]. Therefore, it is clear that the overall quality of the service depends on how the frontline staff perceives their role and how they act.

Schneider et al. [2005] proposed that employees engage not only in role-prescribed behaviors toward customers but also in behaviors that go above and beyond the call of duty to promote the highest levels of customer satisfaction. As for the difference between routine operations and flexible services, the technologization of services is advancing, and there is growing segregation between routine operations using AI, etc., and services with a human touch (contingency services). In addition, as IoT and AI technologies are used to improve human services [Takechi, 2020], there will be an increasing need for frontline

staff's behaviors on a wide range of atypical tasks that these technologies cannot handle. Frontline personnel need to be creative and diverse beyond their assumptions and roles, as the nature of frontline operations and the circumstances surrounding hospitality companies require various responses, including the importance of nonroutine operations that cannot be covered by AI and other technologies. This means that "Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB): individual behaviors that are discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized in formal reward systems, and that promote the effective functioning of the organization as a whole" [Organ, 1988] is seen as an important key in service encounters.

The concept of OCB has been applied to the service industry and its staff in recent years due to the rapid development of the service industry [Tsai and Su, 2011]. Therefore, this study focuses on "Service-Oriented Organizational Citizenship Behavior, SOCB." SOCB refers to "discretionary behaviors of contact employees in serving customers that extend beyond formal role requirements" [Bettencourt and Brown, 1997], and often include service encounters in which service employees go above and beyond their formal duties to provide exceptional service. Although SOCB relies on the concept of OCB, it is conceptually different from general OCB [Putri et al., 2019; Jiang et al., 2011].

A unique feature of SOCB is that it covers a wide range of behaviors that have not received much attention as behaviors of frontline staff but have an impact both inside and outside the organization. The role of frontline staff includes not only customer service at the service encounters but also actions that indirectly serve customers, such as actions that lead to job efficiency based on communication within the organization [Bettencourt and Brown, 2003]. Furthermore, it plays a vital marketing role in enhancing customer value by promoting the organization's interests and image to humans [Bitner et al., 1990; Moorman and Day, 2016]. SOCB includes those broad actions and covers discretionary and voluntary actions to achieve the personalized customer service that is the strength of hospitality in Asia and Japan. Thus, the SOCB, which comprehensively captures the entire range of duties of frontline staff, would make it possible to assess the actual status of hospitality firms. Especially in today's unpredictable service environment, SOCB is considered an important factor in enhancing customer satisfaction as well as service quality [Tang and Tang, 2012].

SOCB has received widespread attention because it has reportedly improved organizational performance [Tsai and Su, 2011; Jiang et al., 2011], service quality as well as customer satisfaction and competitive advantage, financial performance [Tang and Tsaur, 2016], and ultimately customer retention [Nasurdin et al., 2015]. Therefore, given the social context of the hospitality industry, which is currently strongly influenced by COVID-19, it would be significant to practice and study SOCB that is beneficial to the entire organization [Wu and Liao, 2016]. That is the question posed by this study. Further-

more, we would like to point out that insufficient research on SOCB has been conducted in Japan.

2. Previous studies on SOCB

Research on OCB has been conducted actively mainly in North America and has produced many academic results [Tanaka, 2012]. Meanwhile, since the meaning of OCB can be interpreted differently in various industries, and some types of OCB are more appropriate for certain types of organizations than others [Borman and Motowidlo, 1993], it has been suggested that OCB needs to be further explored in the context of SOCB [Bettencourt et al., 2001; Jiang et al., 2011]. With the boom in the service industry, some scholars believe it is necessary to develop the concept of the customer and SOCB for employees who serve customers [Podsakoff and MacKenzie, 1997]. Thus, following the assertion of the need for OCB that includes the characteristics of service organizations and the role of frontline staff as boundary spanners [Nasurdin et al., 2011], SOCB has been studied in a wide range of countries, including the United States, China, and Taiwan, where it has progressed in the recent years.

Table 1 lists the 30 studies on SOCB available in the electronic journal. Of the 30 studies, 25 are quantitative studies by Bettencourt et al. [2001] using the SOCB scale, indicating a strong interest in the factors affecting SOCB. Many studies on the determinants of SOCB will be described later.

The SOCB scale consists of three main dimensions that include "Loyalty," "Participation" and "Service delivery" [Bettencourt et al., 2001]. Specifically, "Loyalty" is an employee behavior that asserts not only the organization's products but also its external image, "Participation" is employee behavior aimed at improving customer satisfaction needs, and "Service delivery" is conscientious employee behavior aimed at improving service delivery [Sun et al., 2007].

Many previous studies have examined precursor and consequent factors of SOCB using the SOCB scale. The studies that examined SOCB as a dependent variable set organizational-level factors as independent variables, and found that service climate [Schneider et al., 2005; Kloutsiniotis and Mihail, 2020], perceived organizational support; POS [Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2006; Wang 2009], high-performance work practice [Kloutsiniotis and Mihail, 2020], and other organizational factors have been shown to influence SOCB.

Wang [2009] surveyed 1,387 contact employees and 666 supervisors in a large supermarket chain in Taiwan and found that the positive relationship between POS and the role definition of SOCB is reinforced by the service climate. At the individual level, it is shown to be positively related to affective commitment [Payne and Webber, 2006] and volunteerism [Jain et al., 2012]. Factors that have also been suggested to influence SOCB include high-quality leader-member exchange relationships [Cha and Borchgrevink, 2018], and customer-employee exchanges [Chen, 2016], along with various leadership styles, which are indicative of the relationship between employees and

Table 1: List of previous studies on SOCB

Study	Country	Using SOCB scale
Bettencourt et al. [2001]	U.S.A.	•
Schneider et al. [2005]	U.S.A.	•
Coyle-Shapiro et al. [2006]	U.K.	•
Payne and Webber [2006]	U.S.A.	•
Sun et al. [2007]	China	•
Wang [2009]	Taiwan	•
Jiang et al. [2011]	China	•
Nasurdin et al. [2011]	Malaysia	•
Tsai and Su [2011]	Taiwan	•
Jain et al. [2012]	India	•
Tang and Tang [2012]	Taiwan	•
Chou and Lopez-Rodriguez [2013]	U.S.A.	•
Nasurdin et al. [2015]	Malaysia	•
Chen [2016]	Taiwan	•
Lu et al. [2016]	Philippines	•
Nasurdin et al. [2016]	Malaysia	•
Tang and Tsaur [2016]	Taiwan	•
Wu and Liao [2016]	Taiwan	•
Krishnan et al. [2017]	Malaysia	•
Sultana and Johari [2017]	Bangladesh	•
Bharadwaja et al. [2018]	U.S.A.	•
Cha and Borchgrevink [2018]	U.S.A.	•
Kang and Jang [2019]	U.S.A.	•
Li and Chang [2019]	China	•
Putri et al. [2019]	Indonesia	•
Kloutsiniotis and Mihail [2020]	Greece	•
Bouzari et al. [2021]	Iran	•
Harsono et al. [2021]	Surabaya	•
Tuan and Ngan [2021]	Vietnam	•
Tuan et al. [2021]	Vietnam	•

their supervisor. In addition, several factors have been tested that have a negative impact on SOCB.

Bouzari et al. [2021] surveyed 192 Iranian airline flight attendants and 32 of their supervisors and found that when crew members experience social loafing at work due to a high level of hindrance stressors, they tend to be less motivated to perform SOCB. Besides, transactional psychological contract [Lu et al., 2016] and role ambiguity [Kang and Jang, 2019] have also been verified to negatively affect SOCB. It is noteworthy that a study by Nasurdin et al. [2011] showed that employment security negatively affects SOCB participation factors.

In contrast, there are still few models showing the factors that influence SOCB, but several models have been presented, such as the positive impact of SOCB on service quality [Wu and Liao, 2016; Harsono et al., 2021]. Sun et al. [2007] conducted a study in Chinese hotels and showed that SOCB affects

productivity through service quality. Thus, SOCB research is underway in various countries.

One reason SOCB has gained attention is that analyzing SOCB allows hospitality organizations to understand and assess how they can motivate their employees beyond their formal job descriptions to provide high customer satisfaction [Kloutsiniotis and Mihail, 2020]. A major challenge for human services is to guide the behavior of frontline staff, who are required to interact with customers directly and perform resourceful activities, in a direction that is desirable for the organization [Aoki, 2017]. SOCB is considered to be effective in measuring whether staff behavior is being guided in the desired direction.

In Japan, however, SOCB research has not progressed in either the academic or practical fields. Therefore, this study attempts to create a Japanese version of the SOCB scale. Next, we will conduct a survey of frontline staff using the Japanese version of the SOCB scale and test whether it applies to a survey of hospitality companies in Japan.

3. Creation and validation of Japanese version of the SOCB scale

3.1 Creation of Japanese version of the SOCB scale

As mentioned above, even though many SOCB studies have been conducted in many countries considering its benefits [Nasurdin et al., 2016], there are very few SOCB studies on Japan. Considering the differences in cultural backgrounds, environmental factors, and management of hospitality companies between foreign countries and Japan, we believe it is necessary to validate the SOCB in Japan. We have attempted to create and validate a Japanese version of the SOCB for the first time through this study. First, while translating the SOCB scale of Bettencourt et al. [2001] into Japanese, we faithfully tried to translate as close to the original text as possible, considering that this is the first translation. We initially translated the original English version of the SOCB scale into Japanese, then translated it back into English again and conducted a back-translation to compare it with the original version [Birslin, 1980]. The back-translated Japanese version of the scale was slightly modified, some ambiguous expressions and difficult-to-understand words in the items were added and corrected by two hospitality company managers and two current service frontline staff members. In addition, we asked three former flight attendants of a foreign airline company to verify the phrases used in the service field and confirmed that there were no problems with the expressions. For example, in the question "Follows customer service guidelines with extreme care," we added the explanatory note "Regulations and manuals of service practices, etc." to specifically indicate "guidelines." Therefore, additions were made to the question to allow the reader to visualize specific situations in the question. In making the above modifications, we referred to the translation of the OCB Scale by Van Dyne et al. [1994], on which the SOCB scale [Tanaka, 2001; 2002; 2004] is based,

Table 2: Japanese version of the SOCB scale

Factor	Original English Scale	The Japanese Version of SOCB Scale (In Japanese)	
Loyalty ロイヤルティ	Tells outsiders this is a good place to work.	社外の人に、働きやすい職場であることを話す	L1
	Says good things about the organization to others.	社外の人に、会社の良い点を伝える	L2
	Generates favorable goodwill for the company.	会社への良い印象を持ってもらえるように働きかける	L3
	Encourages friends and family to the use firm's products and services.	友人や家族に会社の製品やサービスを勧める	L4
	Actively promotes the firm's products and services.	会社の製品とサービスを積極的に宣伝する	L5
Service delivery サービスデリバリー	Follows customer service guidelines with extreme care.	細心の注意を払って顧客サービスのガイドラインに従う (サービス実践の規定やマニュアルなど)	S1
	Conscientiously follows guidelines for customer promotions.	顧客プロモーションのガイドラインに誠実に従う (経営方針や店舗運営の規定など)	S2
	Follows up in a timely manner to customer requests and problems.	顧客の要望や問題にタイムリーに対応する	S3
	Performs duties with unusually few mistakes.	ほとんどミスなく業務を遂行する	S4
	Always has a positive attitude at work.	仕事では常に前向きな姿勢で臨む	S5
	Regardless of circumstances, exceptionally courteous and respectful to customers.	どのような状況でも、お客様に極めて礼儀正しく、敬意を表す	S6
Participation 参加	Encourages coworkers to contribute ideas and suggestions for service improvement.	同僚にサービス向上のためのアイデアの提案や提供をするよう奨励する	P1
	Contributes many ideas for customer promotions and communications.	顧客へのプロモーションやコミュニケーションのための多くのアイデアを提供する	P2
	Makes constructive suggestions for service improvement.	サービス向上のための建設的な提言を行う	P3
	Frequently presents to others creative solutions to customer problems.	顧客の問題解決のための創造的な解決策を他の人に頻繁に提供する	P4
	Takes home brochures to read up on products and services.	パンフレットなどを家に持ち帰り、商品やサービスについて学ぶ	P5

and carefully discussed with three researchers who had the experience of working in hospitality companies to ensure that the meaning of the original text was not compromised when the study was conducted. Table 2 is the Japanese version of the SOCB scale.

3.2 Survey

Next, we surveyed service frontline staff in Japan to validate the legitimacy and reliability of the Japanese version of the SOCB scale. This survey was conducted to validate the SOCB scale with the premise that the scale will be used for future studies in Japan. Using the Japanese version of the SOCB scale, an internet research survey was conducted by a research firm from December 1, 2021, to December 3, 2021, and 554 valid responses were recorded. For measurement 16 items (5 Loyalty items, 6 Service delivery items, and 5 Participation items) of the Japanese version of the SOCB scale were developed as mentioned in the previous chapter. The questionnaire asked for responses on a 7-point Likert scale for each item, the same survey method used in the Bettencourt et al. [2001] study.

From among hospitality firms, this study focuses on frontline staff in the hotel industry, food service industry, and airlines (flight attendants and ground staff). 222 of the responses (40.1 %) were from the food and beverage industry, 221 (39.9 %) from the lodging industry, and 111 (20.0 %) from the air-

line industry (55 flight attendants and 56 ground staff), with a mean age of 34.8 years ($SD = 9.58$, range 20-59). Gender-based distribution was 289 (52.2 %) females and 265 (47.8 %) males. 32 (5.8 %) had frontline experience of between 6 months and 1 year, 100 (18.1 %) between 1 year and 3 years, 119 (21.5 %) between 3 years and 5 years, 138 (24.9 %) between 5 years, and 10 years, 165 (29.8 %) of the respondents had an experience of over 10 years. 486 (87.7 %) of the respondents were full-time employees and 68 (12.3 %) were employed by other types of companies (including part-time jobs). In addition, the survey asked about personal characteristics, such as marital status, presence of children, and annual income.

3.3 Methodology

The reliability and validity of the original English version of the SOCB scale have already been demonstrated in studies in many countries. However, exploratory factor analysis was conducted to test whether its validity and reliability could be maintained in a survey of frontline staff in Japan.

The maximum likelihood method was used to estimate the initial solution in the factor analysis. The Promax method was used to rotate the factors. The scree plot criterion was used to determine the number of factors. Variables with factor loadings of 0.4 or more after rotation were assigned to a factor, and variables with factor loadings of 0.4 or more were assigned

to the factor with the largest coefficient value if they spanned multiple factors. Variables with a coefficient value of less than 0.4 for any factor were excluded from the analysis and repeated analyses were conducted. The significance level was set at less than 5%. The reliability analysis of the model was validated by the coefficient of Cronbach's alpha. The model presented in the exploratory factor analysis was then validated by confirmatory factor analysis. SPSS ver. 25.0 was used for exploratory factor analysis and reliability analysis, and Amos ver. 28.0 for confirmatory factor analysis.

3.4 Analysis results

The results of the exploratory factor analysis are presented as follows. Table 3 shows descriptive statistics, pattern matrices, and correlations between factors. The element with the highest mean value was "Regardless of circumstances, exceptionally courteous and respectful to customers," (S6) with a mean of 5.12 and a standard deviation of 1.48. The item with the lowest mean was "Actively promotes the firm's products and services," (L5) with a mean of 4.07 and a standard deviation of 1.68. There was no ceiling effect ($\text{mean} + SD > 7$) or floor effect ($\text{mean} - SD < 1$) for all items. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure was 0.946, and Bartlett's sphericity test was $p < 0.05$, assuring the validity of applying factor analysis. As a result, three factors were extracted as shown in Table 3. The first factor consisted of five items, from which L1 to L5 were extracted. Factor 2 consisted of 5 items, and P1 to P5 were extracted.

Factor 3 consisted of 6 items, and S1 to S6 were extracted. The three factors extracted were identical to the structures found in the original Bettencourt et al. [2001] SOCB. Therefore, we name factor (1) as Loyalty, factor (2) as Participation, and factor (3) as Service delivery since they are considered to have the same meaning in the Japanese scale as in the English version of the scale. The cumulative contribution rate was 71.26 %.

In the next step, Cronbach's alpha coefficient for internal consistency was calculated to verify reliability. The calculated alpha values for each factor were $\alpha = .933$ for "Loyalty," $\alpha = .923$ for "Participation," and $\alpha = .922$ for "Service delivery". All of them met the criteria, suggesting internal consistency.

Next, the validity of the model presented in the exploratory factor analysis was tested by confirmatory factor analysis of the higher-order factor model. Figure 1 shows the model results of the confirmatory factor analysis conducted in the standardization (Standardized estimates). We checked the goodness of fit and found $GFI = .852$, $AGFI = .801$, $CFI = .925$, $NFI = .914$, $TLI = .911$, $SRMR = .0482$. The GFI and AGFI were slightly below the criterion of 0.9, but the other indicators met the criterion; thus, the overall conformance was generally good.

4. Discussion

An exploratory factor-part analysis of the Japanese version of the SOCB scale based on the results of a survey of frontline staff of hospitality companies in the Japanese version of the SOCB scale in this study warranted the validity of applying

Table 3: Descriptive statistics, Pattern matrices and Correlations between factors ($n = 544$)

	Variable	Mean value	Standard deviation	Median	Minimum value	Greatest value	Factor loadings			Cronbach's alpha
							I	II	III	
Factor 1 Loyalty	L2	4.14	1.70	4.00	1.00	7.00	0.940	0.007	-0.026	0.933
	L3	4.21	1.66	4.00	1.00	7.00	0.889	0.008	0.012	
	L1	4.14	1.76	4.00	1.00	7.00	0.876	0.033	-0.058	
	L4	4.15	1.69	4.00	1.00	7.00	0.728	-0.008	0.104	
	L5	4.07	1.68	4.00	1.00	7.00	0.713	0.083	0.048	
Factor 2 Participation	P4	4.62	1.49	5.00	1.00	7.00	-0.025	0.926	-0.011	0.923
	P3	4.61	1.49	5.00	1.00	7.00	0.044	0.860	0.019	
	P2	4.61	1.49	5.00	1.00	7.00	0.033	0.820	0.055	
	P1	4.75	1.53	5.00	1.00	7.00	0.004	0.752	0.128	
	P5	4.23	1.63	4.00	1.00	7.00	0.159	0.608	-0.051	
Factor 3 Service delivery	S1	4.78	1.55	5.00	1.00	7.00	0.022	-0.101	0.973	0.922
	S2	4.69	1.57	5.00	1.00	7.00	0.091	-0.084	0.898	
	S3	4.92	1.52	5.00	1.00	7.00	-0.045	0.088	0.812	
	S6	5.12	1.48	5.00	1.00	7.00	-0.120	0.348	0.557	
	S5	4.83	1.51	5.00	1.00	7.00	0.145	0.292	0.473	
	S4	4.75	1.42	5.00	1.00	7.00	0.029	0.244	0.457	
Interfactorial correlation						II	0.673			
						III	0.738	0.569		
						Eigenvalue	9.620	1.624	0.980	
						Contribution rate	58.341	8.396	4.518	

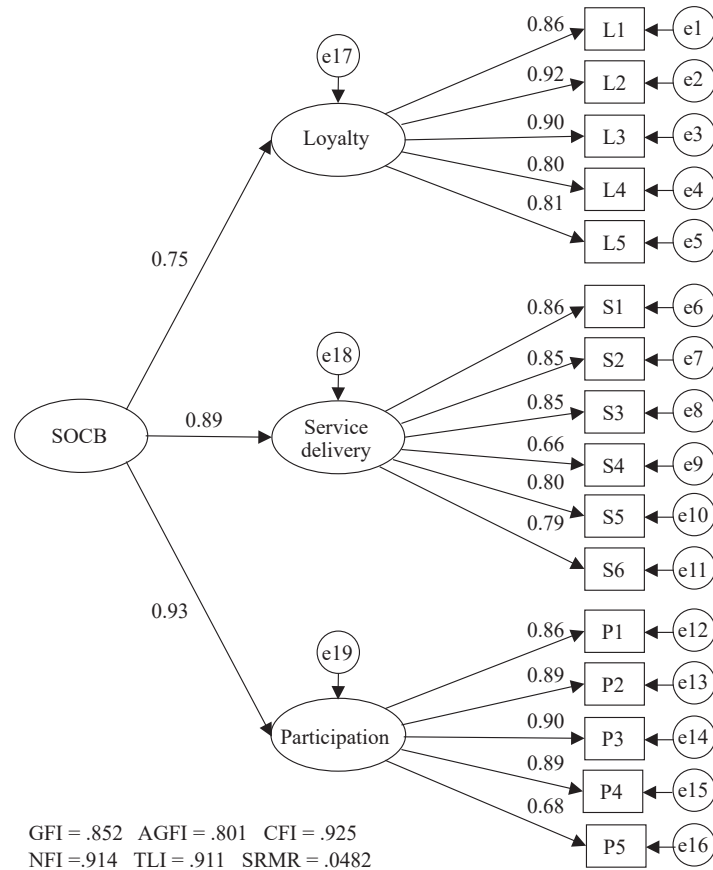


Figure 1: Results of confirmatory factor analysis of the SOCB scale model

factor analysis, and three factors were extracted with the same structure as the English version of the SOCB original. The results of the reliability analysis and confirmatory factor analysis also confirmed that the model could be adapted. In summary, as a result of the investigation and analysis conducted in this study as the first stage of the Japanese SOCB research, it can be said that in this validation, the Japanese version of the SOCB scale showed the possibility of being composed of the same three factors and 16 items structural model as the original version of the scale and that it can be adapted to data from a survey of frontline staff in Japan. Since frontline staff contribute to the organization through customer service behavior, positive impressions, and close communication with other members of the organization, the development of a Japanese SOCB scale should enable the Japanese hospitality industry to use it as an indicator of job behavior, as is the practice in other countries.

Furthermore, two characteristics can be observed from the perspective of management awareness of frontline staff. The first is that mean values for the service delivery items are generally higher and less varied than those for other factors. Among these, “Regardless of circumstances, exceptionally courteous and respectful to customers.” (S6) is the highest, which seems to be a characteristic of the “attentive and discerning culture” [Kondo, 2004], which is the strength of Japanese front desk service. Second, the values for behaviors other

than customer service, such as “Actively promotes the firm’s products and services.” (L5), is lower and varies widely, suggesting that front desk staff focus on customer service skills and know-how over management in general. One factor that may be contributing to this trend, as pointed out by Taylor [2015], is the reliance on field-led on-the-job training for human resource development in Japanese hospitality companies. Alternatively, the problems faced by Japanese hospitality companies that are forced to prioritize on-field operations, may also be responsible [Taylor, 2019]. This would indicate a noteworthy issue in management.

5. Conclusion

Finally, we discuss the limitations and significance of this study. This study has several limitations. The Japanese version of the SOCB scale proposed in this study is the first empirical study in Japan of the SOCB scale by Bettencourt et al. [2001], which has already been validated for over 20 years. The Japanese version of the SOCB scale was applied to a sample data of 544 frontline staff working for Japanese hospitality companies, including hotels, to examine whether the Japanese version of the SOCB scale can be used to construct a model of the SOCB, which has the same structure, reliability, and validity as the original 3 factors and 16 items. The results suggest the possibility that they may be related to the results of the previous study. However, the present study is limited to only one result

from a limited survey of hotels, food services, and airline front line staff. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct further validation of the dimension validity and structure by conducting in-depth studies based on a larger sample of data, and by conducting validation studies on a variety of frontline staff in other occupations in the hospitality industry, retail, and medical settings. Furthermore, based on the idea that “service” is not limited to operations that directly contact customers, we believe it is possible to expand the target job categories and industries for verification and to develop its use in the manufacturing industry and other industries. We believe that it is necessary to enhance the SOCB Japanese version of the scale to match the details of the situation of frontline staff in Japan by repeating those investigations. In addition, there are crucial limitations of this study that must be pointed out. Although the period from December 1, 2021, to December 3, 2021, when the survey was conducted, was a time when the number of COVID-19 cases in Japan had decreased and settled down, the results of this survey of hospitality companies was directly affected by the pandemic to a small extent, and future studies should take this into account. It will be necessary to reexamine the data from the new survey.

Next, we describe the significance of this study. Hospitality companies, such as hotels, restaurants, and airlines, the focus of this study, are in the industries that are directly and most significantly affected by COVID-19 [Im et al., 2021]. Some studies have shown that the impact of the pandemic has highlighted a constant problem for the hospitality industry as a whole [Baum et al., 2020]. In the future, the hospitality industry will have to take strategies and measures to revitalize itself and demonstrate its significance in society, and it is now at a critical juncture. However, even if contactless transactions and digitalization reduce the frequency of face-to-face contact in services, hospitality that is appropriate to the new society is still required under the new normal as it has always been [Noboriyama, 2020]. In other words, due to the nature of human interaction in services, the quality of the “moment of truth” [Normann, 1984] that determines whether a customer will return to the location with limited customer contact will be further questioned in the future. Therefore, the voluntary and discretionary behavior of SOCB [Harsono et al., 2021], an important aspect of service quality, is beneficial not only to customers but also to organizations [Wu and Liao, 2016] and is expected to be applied in the practical domain. Furthermore, in terms of usefulness to the academic field, SOCB research not only reveals research findings specific to the hospitality industry but also has the potential to expand and deepen the theory of OCB in the broader Asian and other global business fields [Ma et al., 2021]. In addition, we believe that our attempt to create and validate the first Japanese version of the SOCB scale in this study will contribute to academic development as a foothold for SOCB research in Japan.

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