



# The effects of emotional intelligence on counterproductive work behaviors and organizational citizen behaviors among food and beverage employees in a deluxe hotel

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to understand the interrelationships among the emotional intelligence of employees in a deluxe hotel, their counterproductive work behaviors, and organizational citizen behaviors. The sample of this study consists of 319 food and beverage (F&B) employees of a five-star hotel in Korea. The results showed that as elements of emotional intelligence, others' emotion appraisal, use of emotion, and self-emotion appraisal significantly affected counterproductive work behaviors, whereas self-emotion appraisal and use of emotion affected organizational citizen behaviors. In addition, moderating effects were evident related to job positions in the causal relationships among emotional intelligence, counterproductive work behaviors, and organizational citizen behaviors. Limitations of this study and future research directions are also discussed.

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## 1. Introduction

Recent research has focused on the importance of emotions in relation to intellectual abilities, particularly in organizations that evaluate employees' abilities in terms of emotions instead of cognition (Brackett et al., 2006). The importance of emotional intelligence is emphasized because human relations in organizations are affected by emotional factors more than by rational factors. Druskat and Wolff (2001) claimed that regarding the influence the factors affecting individual effectiveness, the emotional quotient is as important as the intelligence quotient; indeed, the emotional intelligence of individuals who carry out duties and play essential roles in ensuring organizational outcomes is quite significant. Therefore, successful organizations require employees who can communicate effectively, control their emotions, and demonstrate their technical abilities. Spencer and Spencer (1993) analyzed job competencies and found that employees who showed strong outcomes generally demonstrated excellent emotion-related competencies, thereby indicating that – compared with competencies based on reason – competencies based on emotions were much more accurate. Cooper and Sawaf (1997) revealed close relationships between emotional intelligence and creativity, concluding

that employees with abundant emotional intelligence were more positive and creative. Goleman (1998) suggested that, since competent leaders have high levels of emotional intelligence, it is the most important characteristic in leadership. Dulewicz and Higgs (1998) also noted that, although the most important factor in employment examinations is intellectual ability, adaptation to organizations, promotions, and/or outcomes after entrance were determined by emotional intelligence.

Emotional intelligence has emerged as an interesting subject for research, and many studies have examined how emotional intelligence affects both the organizational effectiveness (Abraham, 1999; Druskat and Wolff, 2001; Nikolaou and Tsaousis, 2002; Wong and Law, 2002; Weinberger, 2003) and the non-task related behaviors of employees (Cote and Miners, 2006; Cartwright and Pappas, 2008). Non-task related behaviors are voluntary behaviors, which can be divided into positive organizational citizen behaviors (OCBs) and negative counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs). In contrast to OCBs, CWBs are forms of organizational misbehavior, dysfunctional behavior, and workplace deviant behavior (Fox et al., 2001), which are destructive behaviors that are potentially harmful to both organizations and employees (Lau et al., 2003; Dalal, 2005; Penny and Spector, 2005). Although the conceptual difference between OCBs and CWBs is easily identified, empirical evidence has shown that it is preferable to consider CWBs as forms of deviance within the organization and OCBs as independent constructs, both with their own specific relationships and outcomes rather than as opposite ends of a single continuum (Sackett et al.,

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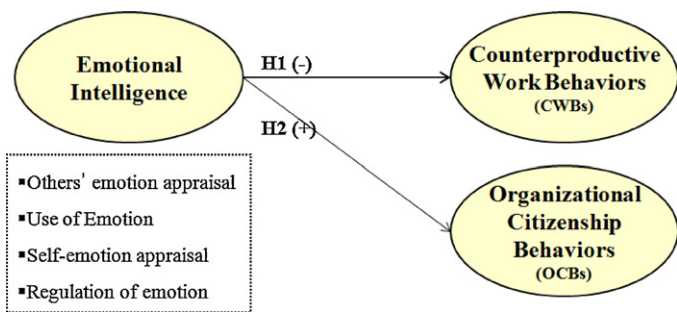


Fig. 1. The proposed model of emotional intelligence and counterproductive work behavior.

2006; Norman et al., 2010). Following this finding and for the purpose of this study, we consider both OCBs and CWBs as independent outcomes.

However, research thus far has focused on the positive aspects of emotional intelligence among the non-task related behaviors of employees. No study has used outcome variables in a negative dimension. In particular, since OCBs and CWBs as voluntary behaviors are non-task related behaviors that appear as employees' emotional intelligence declines, they will be more significant as outcome variables. Furthermore, in service-oriented businesses such as hotels, employees are service providers in direct face-to-face contact with customers; thus, emotional intelligence that plays important roles in controlling emotions is more influential. However, studies of hotel employees in relation to the effectiveness of emotional intelligence are very rare. Consequently, for employees to maintain emotionally healthy conditions in service encounters in hotels and continuously create positive outcomes, their ability to control their emotions should be prioritized. Indeed, emotional intelligence is thus required of employees who must perceive and control their own emotions as well as those of customers in the course of performing their emotional labor (Mayer and Salovey, 1997). Therefore, it can be supposed that the emotional intelligence of employees can also reduce the adverse effects of CWBs among employees. In this respect, this study verifies that employees' emotional intelligence significantly affects both OCBs, which are positive behaviors in organizations, and CWBs, which are negative behaviors, through the results of a case study of the emotional intelligence of hotel food and beverage employees. It also explores the details of the sub-factors of emotional intelligence that significantly affect OCBs and CWBs. Thus, this study identifies the associations among emotional intelligence, CWBs, and OCBs that have not yet been fully explored in the food service literature (Fig. 1).

## 2. Literature review and conceptual model

### 2.1. Emotional intelligence, CWBs, and OCBs

Emotional intelligence (EI) has been defined as "the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth" (Mayer and Salovey, 1997, p. 10). Goleman (1995) noted that emotional intelligence is an important factor in identifying employees who could create excellent work outcomes and for predicting managers' work abilities. Dulewicz and Higgs (1998) considered emotional intelligence to be a process by which one manages one's feelings and emotions, defining it as an ability to perceive one's own emotions and provide motives

while acting according to ethical standards. Bar-On and Orme (2002) suggested that emotional intelligence is one's ability to respond to emotional, social, and environmental requirements. Wong and Law (2002) stated that it is an ability to understand one's own emotions and those of others and to control/utilize emotions in diverse situations. Emotional intelligence consists of four aspects: others' emotional appraisal, use of emotion, self-emotion appraisal, and regulation of emotion (Wong and Law, 2002). In follow-up studies, Weinberger (2003) divided emotional intelligence into the ability to understand the emotions of self and others, the ability to maintain smooth human relations, and the ability to adapt effectively to environmental changes. Cote and Miners (2006) divided emotional intelligence into emotion perception, emotion utilization, emotion understanding, and emotion control.

Counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs) are defined as "voluntary behavior of organizational members that violates significant organizational norms, and in doing so, threatens the well-being of the organization and/or its members" (Bennett and Robinson, 2000, p. 356). Although early studies on CWBs focused on special behaviors such as workplace theft (Henry and Mars, 1978) or rudeness to colleagues (Newman and Baron, 1998), Hollinger (1986) specified them as property-related deviations (e.g., misappropriation of business property) and production-related deviations (e.g., violation of norms in the performance of tasks). Fox and Spector (1999) suggested that CWBs include property-related deviations such as shirking, deliberate lateness and absence, stealing or misappropriation of company property, as well as aggressive or violent behavior toward colleagues. Fox et al. (2001) stated that CWBs are negative behaviors of employees toward organizations and colleagues. Harper (1990) explained that these counterproductive work behaviors seriously damage organizations (Murphy, 1993).

Organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) are "the maintenance and enhancement of the social and psychological context that supports task performance" (Organ, 1997, p. 91). Katz (1964) noted that OCBs were creative and voluntary behaviors to implement roles other than officially given duties. However, Puffer (1987) insisted that OCBs include not only positive behaviors but also negative ones. He divided OCBs into pro-social behaviors that benefit organizations and non-adaptive behaviors that harm them. As employees are able to move away from non-adaptive behaviors, they become more competent. Organ (1988) divided OCBs into five components: altruism, conscientiousness, courtesy, civic virtue, and sportsmanship (MacKenzie et al., 1991, 1993). According to Karambayya (1989), since OCBs show the degrees of interdependency among an organization's employees, they are quite closely related to the life of the organization. Van Dyne et al. (1994) divided OCBs into five factors: obedience in organizations, loyalty in organizations, social participation, inspiring participation, and functional participation. Podsakoff et al. (2000) and Ilies et al. (2007) suggested that, from a long-term viewpoint, OCBs positively affect organizational outcomes.

### 2.2. Relationship between emotional intelligence and CWBs

Most studies on the significance of a human performance model concerning emotional intelligence criticize the theory that an individual's knowledge, abilities, and specific skills determine the performance of an organization (e.g., Campbell, 1990; Campbell et al., 1993). This view sees that the emotions of individual employees have greater significance than their intellectual abilities in determining their long-term performance (Song et al., 2010). Martin et al. (1998) believed that employees' emotional intelligence plays a role in preventing negative behaviors. In addition, Mayer et al. (2000) explained that, if employees' emotional

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