

## Job crafting and customer service behaviors in the hospitality industry: Mediating effect of job passion

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### ABSTRACT

Customer service behaviors play a critical role in determining customer satisfaction. However, studies examining how employees' job crafting affects customer service behaviors are scant. The objective of this study is to examine the effect of job crafting on customer service behaviors and to clarify the mediating role of job passion. Survey data from 518 hotel employees demonstrate that job crafting is positively related to harmonious passion. Harmonious passion is positively associated with role-prescribed service behaviors and extra-role service behaviors. Obsessive passion is positively associated with extra-role service behaviors. Moreover, harmonious passion mediates the association between job crafting and customer service behaviors. This study extends current knowledge regarding job crafting and examines the associations among job crafting, job passion, and customer service behaviors. The results can serve as a reference for managers in human resources practices and services management.

### 1. Introduction

In the hospitality setting, empowering individuals to perform their job content has become a crucial topic (Chia and Chu, 2017; Lin et al., 2017). In addressing diverse customer needs, hospitality employees should not only perform service work based on their company's basic principles but also exceed customer expectations and provide prompt, high-quality service (Barnes et al., 2016). Therefore, customer service behaviors play a critical role in hospitality settings (Cheng and Chen, 2017). Customer service behaviors consist of service employees' positive service behaviors toward customers and include two main classifications: role-prescribed service behaviors and extra-role service behaviors (Cheng et al., 2018; Chow et al., 2015). Studies have determined that customer service behaviors can increase customer satisfaction and perceived service quality (Tsaour et al., 2014). Therefore, promoting hospitality employees' customer service behaviors has become a crucial concern for managers.

Job crafting has captured the attention of hospitality researchers (Cheng and O-Yang, 2018; Kim et al., 2018a). Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) define job crafting as employees making physical and cognitive adjustments to the task or relational scope of their jobs. During a service delivery process, because hospitality service employees must be in close contact with customers and meet diverse and unexpected customer needs, these employees must design their job roles and adapt to them.

Therefore, job crafting is a relatively key topic in hospitality settings (Cheng and O-Yang, 2018; Kim et al., 2018b). Through job crafting behaviors, hospitality employees can understand the significance and goals of their work, enabling them to be more passionate about their work and improve their job performance (Cheng et al., 2016), and both of these results have a considerable effect on employees' customer service behaviors (Cheng and Chen, 2017). However, there is a gap in the literature regarding job crafting and customer service behaviors. To enable further progress in this field, a deeper understanding of how job crafting influences customer service behaviors is required.

The concept of job crafting was established on the basis of the conservation of resources theory, which proposes that individuals endeavor to protect, preserve, and gather valuable resources as well as overcome difficulties to achieve prosperity (Hobfoll, 1989). Job crafting enables employees to obtain the resources they require for work from their coworkers, thereby improving their sense of well-being (Slemp et al., 2015). Such individuals also change their job content and how they work to obtain resources, thereby improving job performance and enhancing extra-role behaviors (Demerouti et al., 2015). Therefore, job crafting seems to positively influence employees' customer service behaviors. Although researchers have discovered that job crafting affects person–job fit, work engagement, and job satisfaction (Chen et al., 2014; Karatepe and Eslamlou, 2017; Kim et al., 2018a), the association between job crafting and customer service behaviors has not been

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thoroughly examined.

Furthermore, job crafting inspires in employees passion for their work and enhances pleasure and job significance (Demerouti et al., 2015). Through job crafting behaviors, hospitality employees can ensure that work suits their personal needs, abilities, and passions. Job passion is an individual's strong inclination toward work (Vallerand et al., 2003). Harmoniously passionate employees are devoted to their work and are inclined to go an extra mile to fulfill the task demands of their organizations (Gulyani and Bhatnagar, 2017). They are also likely to exhibit customer service behaviors to satisfy customer needs (Cheng and Chen, 2017). Therefore, job passion may act as a mediator between job crafting and the customer service behaviors of hospitality employees. However, the mechanism underlying this relationship remains unknown. This topic, therefore, merits further analysis.

The current study has two aims. First, this research examines the associations among job crafting, job passion, and customer service behaviors of hospitality employees. Second, this study examines how job passion mediates the relation between job crafting and customer service behaviors. The current study contributes to the literature in several ways. First, this study quantifies the relationships among job crafting, job passion, and customer service behaviors within the context of the hospitality industry. Second, although job passion has been proposed as a critical outcome of job crafting (Trépanier et al., 2014), to the best of our knowledge, the mediating role of job passion has not yet been empirically tested. This study contributes to the literature by highlighting the role of job passion in the link between job crafting and customer service behaviors. The results of this research offer a reference for hospitality managers in implementing the strategic directions of their human resources management and services management practices.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Job crafting

Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) propose that job crafting is an employee's redefinition of their own job to enhance its perceived meaning. In the job crafting model that they propose, the motives for job crafting include the needs for control over job meaning, positive self-image, and interpersonal connections with other employees. Moreover, they identify three kinds of job crafting practices: changing task boundaries (e.g., adjusting the types and number of job tasks), changing cognitive boundaries (i.e., adjusting the view of job), and changing relationship boundaries (e.g., adjusting the method and nature of interacting with others in the workplace). Leana et al. (2009) define job crafting as employees proactively changing their personal job boundaries and shaping actual job content, which enables employees to exhibit their own job performance and capabilities through their hard work. Job crafting is further divided into two major types: individual and collaborative crafting. Individual crafting means that individuals play proactive roles in changing their own job boundaries and forming actual job performance, whereas collaborative crafting involves cooperation among employees to change workflow.

According to the job demands–resources (JD–R) model (Demerouti et al., 2001), employees' functioning is influenced by a variety of job characteristics that can be divided into job demands (physical, social, or organizational tasks that require sustained physical or psychological effort) and job resources (characteristics of a job that may be used in achieving work goals and stimulating personal growth, learning, and development) (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007). The model proposes that job demands and resources are two broad categories that influence employees' strain (e.g., exhaustion and fatigue) and motivation (e.g., engagement and commitment), respectively. Based on the JD–R model, Tims et al. (2012) defines job crafting as individuals' self-initiated change to balance their job resources and demands to accommodate their personal needs and abilities. In addition, job crafting comprises

four constructs as follows. “Increasing structural job resources” means that employees proactively use their own resources at work (e.g., enhancing resource diversity and self-development). “Increasing social job resources” means that employees seek social support, supervisory guidance, or performance feedback from others (e.g., supervisors and colleagues). “Increasing challenging job demands” means that employees attempt to expand their job scope or adjust the content of their tasks to increase the challenge of their work. “Decreasing hindering job demands” means that employees proactively lessen the content of their tasks, set lower performance goals, and reduce their own job demands.

By adjusting job design and workplace social environment, employees perform job crafting to clearly understand their work goals and job significance, facilitating employees' occupational identification. Therefore, myriad empirical studies have discovered that job crafting can increase person–job fit and person–organization fit (Kim et al., 2018a; Tims et al., 2016), work engagement (Van Wingerden et al., 2017), job satisfaction (Kim et al., 2018b), job performance (Tims et al., 2015), and workplace well-being (Slemp et al., 2015). Accordingly, job crafting of hospitality employees has numerous positive effects for their organizations and the employees themselves.

### 2.2. Job passion

Passion is a strong psychological inclination of individuals to invest considerable energy and time in activities that they like and consider crucial (Vallerand et al., 2003). Astakhova and Porter (2015) identify two classifications of passion: harmonious passion and obsessive passion. Harmonious passion is a motivational tendency that motivates employees to employ volition and self-endorsement to accomplish their work (Vallerand and Houliort, 2003). Harmonious passion arises from the self-identity formed by an individual's autonomous internalization. When employees believe that their work has high value and a sense of meaning, they are motivated to proactively and gladly be engaged at work (Vallerand et al., 2014). That is, employees' involvement in their work is based entirely on their own free will and not on specific implications or other prerequisites (e.g., self-acceptance or self-esteem). By contrast, obsessive passion is a motivational tendency that pushes individuals towards the achievement of their job (Vallerand and Houliort, 2003). Obsessive passion arises from an individual controlling and internalizing specific beliefs with specific implications (e.g., self-esteem, and feelings of social acceptance), thereby leading to interpersonal and intrapersonal pressures that urge the individual to perform the entire activity (Vallerand et al., 2014). Accordingly, an individual with harmonious passion participates in accordance with their own free will, whereas an individual with obsessive passion participates in an activity because of interpersonal or intrapersonal pressures that urge them to participate.

Based on self-determination theory (SDT), researchers have proposed the dualistic model of passion (Vallerand, 2010). SDT investigates individuals' psychological needs and inner growth tendencies that drive self-motivation and personality integration (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Based on SDT, Vallerand et al. (2003) indicate that both harmonious and obsessive passion originate from the internalization of an interesting activity into one's identity. Harmonious and obsessive passion can properly be considered as precursors of work engagement and workaholism, respectively (Vallerand et al., 2003). Therefore, researchers have generally concluded that harmonious passion generates positive effects, whereas obsessive passion generates negative effects (Burke et al., 2015; Trépanier et al., 2014).

Because job passion is a key topic in the field of management, myriad scholars have examined variables associated with the antecedents and consequences of job passion. Studies have determined that job resources and demands (Trépanier et al., 2014), organizational climate (Permarupan et al., 2013) affect employees' job passion. In addition, employees' job passion affects job satisfaction (Burke et al., 2015), job engagement and burnout (Trépanier et al., 2014), proactive

work behavior (Gulyani and Bhatnagar, 2017), organizational citizenship behavior (Astakhova, 2015), organizational identification and job performance (Astakhova and Porter, 2015; Ho et al., 2018), and emotional exhaustion (Chen et al., 2019). Accordingly, hospitality employees' job passion has substantial effects on their attitudes and behaviors.

### 2.3. Customer service behaviors

Customer service behaviors are helpful behaviors that service providers exhibit while serving customers (Bettencourt and Brown, 1997). Studies have identified two main types of customer service behaviors: role-prescribed service behaviors and extra-role service behaviors. Role-prescribed service behaviors are service behaviors expected from employees when serving customers. Organizations usually imply their demand through organizational norms or clearly request these behaviors through explicit documents, such as performance appraisal forms or job descriptions (Bettencourt and Brown, 1997). These expected customer service behaviors include providing correct knowledge on company products or services, greeting customers by name, thanking customers, exhibiting common courtesy, and cross-selling company products (Cheng and Chen, 2017; Tsaor et al., 2014).

Extra-role service behaviors are discretionary behaviors that exceed the formal performance requirements and job descriptions exhibited by employees when serving clients (Bettencourt and Brown, 1997). These behaviors are usually called service-oriented organizational citizenship behaviors (Limpanitgul et al., 2013; Lyu et al., 2016). During a service encounter, service employees exceed their job requirements in terms of providing more care, spending more effort, and providing spontaneous exceptional services to satisfy customer needs to achieve customer satisfaction (Bettencourt and Brown, 1997). In hospitality settings, Extra-role service behaviors include offering free coupons, gifts, extra blankets, and concern for customer needs (Cheng and Chen, 2017; King and Wan, 2010).

### 2.4. Job crafting and job passion

The influence of job crafting on job passion has been discussed in previous research. Berg and Dutton (2008) state that job crafting enables employees to obtain a method for adjusting job design to meet their personal motives, strengths, and passions. They discover that employees can create opportunities for job passion through partial job crafting methods. Berg et al. (2010a) identify three methods that employees use to achieve job passion through job crafting in various occupations: by investing attention, time, and energy in working on tasks of personal interests, by assuming extra tasks, or by reframing their personal work goals. Wrzesniewski et al. (2010) and Wrzesniewski et al. (2013) determine that job crafting is a vital tool that enables re-energizing and reimagining of work to redefine job content and perception to integrate personal passions, interests, and advantages into their work. Furthermore, they find that by adjusting or redesigning their job content as well as altering their interpersonal relationships, individuals can pursue and realize their personal job passions.

Job crafting reflects employees' efforts to achieve tasks and to meet personal preferences and abilities. Based on the JD–R model, Cheng and O-Yang (2018) collect survey data from 355 frontline hotel employees in Taiwan and consider whether job resources can be enhanced through job crafting. Job resources are positive aspects of a work environment that help people to accomplish their tasks in hospitality settings (Cheng and O-Yang, 2018). Liu et al. (2011) conduct onsite investigations that include employees working for a porous metal company and a large commercial bank in the United States. They discover that resources from work units and team can increase employees' harmonious passion. Job resources can provide employees with decision-making opportunities regarding their tasks, enabling employees to develop harmonious passion toward their work. Trépanier et al. (2014) conduct a study of

two organizational settings. The samples comprise 1179 nurses and 745 school teachers working in Quebec, Canada. The results reveal that job resources can increase employees' harmonious work passion. According to the aforementioned research, theoretically, job crafting is positively related to harmonious passion.

In accordance with the JD–R model, job crafting may alter the level of job demands. In the hospitality context, examples of job demands are heavy workloads and emotionally demanding interactions with customers (Chia and Chu, 2017). Job crafters may either increase challenging job demands (e.g., new tasks) or decrease hindering job demands (e.g., cognitive demands), or both (Yen et al., 2018). Challenging job demands involve high levels of responsibility and exhibit the potential to promote mastery and personal growth, whereas hindering job demands are considered stressful because they unnecessarily thwart learning and goal attainment (Crawford et al., 2010). Heavily invested individuals may become absorbed in their job and be incompetent to detach themselves from job demands. This is likely to cause feelings of added pressure and responsibility. In other words, job demands may lead to an excessive feeling of obligation, engendering employees' obsessive work passion. Trépanier et al. (2014) observe that excessive job demands have detrimental effects on obsessive passion. In addition, the researchers indicate that the effect of job resources on obsessive passion is nonsignificant. Although job crafting may increase job demands, it also increases employees' job resources, thereby enabling individuals to mitigate the challenges of job demands (Cheng and O-Yang, 2018; Tims et al., 2015). Therefore, these factors are likely to offset each other, which would suggest that there is no relationship between job crafting and obsessive passion. Studies have not empirically investigated the relationship between job crafting and job passion. Based on the literature, this research hypothesizes that job crafting is positively related to harmonious passion. The present study also posits that nonsignificant relationships exist between job crafting and obsessive passion. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed:

**H1.** Job crafting is positively related to harmonious passion.

**H2.** Job crafting is unrelated to obsessive passion.

### 2.5. Job passion and customer service behaviors

Employees with job passion have a strong inclination toward work activities. They are engaged in these activities and invest energy and time in them (Vallerand and Houlfort, 2003). In addition, job passion can make employees appraise their job characteristics as suited to their work orientation (Lavigne et al., 2014). On the basis of SDT, intrinsically motivated individuals are apt to initiate achievement of career and organizational goals (Ryan, 2016). This theory posits that intrinsic motivation links individual factors to major individual-level outcomes. Vallerand et al. (2003) apply SDT to illustrate the ways behind individual's passion for the job. They consider that employees' attitudes affect work behaviors via the realization of their basic psychological needs. When employees feel that they have intrinsic motivation for work, they endeavor to accomplish essential work goals (Fredrickson, 2001). Therefore, when employees have intrinsic motivation for work, they are passionate at work and can contribute to goal achievement; their positive work behaviors and proactive behavior are encouraged (Cheng and Chen, 2017; Kehoe and Wright, 2013).

Based on the dualistic model, two types of passion exist, originating from an employee's predisposition to performing a desired activity in their work (Vallerand, 2015). Harmonious passion represents an autonomous regulation, while obsessive passion reflects a controlled regulation. Robertson and Barling (2013) collect survey data from leaders and their subordinates in United States and Canadian companies and determine that harmonious passion positively affects employees' extra-role behaviors. Chen et al. (2017) conduct a questionnaire survey of 94 independent hotels in China, and the results

indicate that harmonious passion positively affects hotel employees' proactive customer service performance. Tian et al. (2019) collect survey data from 218 supervisor-subordinate dyads in a commercial bank in China and present similar research findings. Hospitality employees with harmonious passion can develop myriad methods to satisfy customers by adjusting or improving the current situation and can adopt proactive service behaviors to increase customers' perceived service quality (Chen et al., 2017). Therefore, harmoniously passionate employees are energetic and motivated to invest in work-related activities (Vallerand et al., 2007) and are willing to invest additional effort to serve customers; these efforts comprise an increase in customer service behaviors (Cheng and Chen, 2017; Cheng et al., 2018).

Harmoniously passionate employees tend to invest considerable effort and time in their work because they believe that their work is stimulating and pivotal. By contrast, obsessively passionate employees cannot invest themselves fully in their job because they may instead contemplate their true interests (Vallerand et al., 2003). Obsessively passionate employees work hard on work activities. They are under external control rather than internal control (Vallerand and Houllfort, 2003). Because they are sensitive to external contingencies, these individuals may feel forced to perform in a certain manner (Burke et al., 2015). In addition, in contrast to harmoniously passionate employees, employees with obsessive passion are willing to work hard on work activities, believing that work is a means to achieve ideal results, such as pay raises, group acceptance, or promotions that strengthen their self-worth (Astakhova and Porter, 2015). Zigarmi et al. (2018) collect survey data from 2654 employees in the United States and determine that obsessive passion is positively associated with intent to expend discretionary effort. However, because harmonious passion provokes positive emotions, whereas obsessive passion engenders negative emotions (Chen et al., 2019; Lalande et al., 2017), the degree to which customer service behaviors are exhibited may vary. Related findings indicate that both harmonious passion and obsessive passion can stimulate employees' performances of customer service behaviors. However, research linking employees' job passion to customer service behaviors is scant in the hospitality literature. Therefore, this study supposes that both harmoniously passionate employees and obsessively passionate employees are consenting to exert extra effort to serve customers, that is, to perform customer service behaviors. Therefore, the following research hypotheses are presented:

**H3.** Harmonious passion is positively related to role-prescribed service behaviors.

**H4.** Harmonious passion is positively related to extra-role service behaviors.

**H5.** Obsessive passion is positively related to role-prescribed service behaviors.

**H6.** Obsessive passion is positively related to extra-role service behaviors.

## 2.6. Mediating effect of job passion

Studies investigating antecedents of customer service behaviors fall into two broad categories: one in which individual-difference variables (e.g., dispositions and job attitudes) are the research focus, and another in which contextual variables are the research focus (Wintericht et al., 2013). Studies in both of these categories are almost entirely focused on motivational variables (Malhotra and Ackfeldt, 2016). Job passion is a critical motivational variable in determining employees' customer service behaviors. Furthermore, the job passion literature has been hypothesized to be a mediating variable in diverse industries (Gulyani and Bhatnagar, 2017; Ho et al., 2018; Trépanier et al., 2014), including the hospitality industry (Chen et al., 2017). Harmonious passion is investigated as the mediator between job crafting and customer service

behaviors for two main reasons. First, based on H1, and H2, the current study proposes that harmonious passion, rather than obsessive passion, can reasonably explain the relationship between job crafting and passion. Second, SDT assumes that individual factors are linked to key individual-level outcomes through intrinsic motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2011). Harmonious passion is a more fundamental psychological mechanism underlying customer service behaviors than are other construct (e.g., positive mood) (Liu et al., 2011). Thus, harmonious passion may be a relatively effective concept for assessing the psychological process of job crafting toward customer service behaviors.

According to the employee work passion model, individuals conduct personal appraisal processes on the work environment antecedent variables of organizational or job characteristics, generating cognition, affection, and intention, thereby determining their positive or negative role behaviors in the company (Zigarmi et al., 2009). Zigarmi et al. (2009) determine that job passion plays a central role as the mediating variable between job or organizational characteristics and employees' service behaviors. Cheng et al. (2016) conduct a study on 355 tour leaders from 32 consolidated travel agencies in Taiwan. They consider that job crafting enables employees to effectively use job resources derived from themselves and their peers, helping create a favorable working atmosphere, thereby facilitating employees' passion for work, which shows that job crafting is a key factor that affects employees' job passion (Berg et al., 2010b). Between the two types of job passion, job crafting mainly affects harmonious passion (Trépanier et al., 2014). Cheng and Chen (2017) collect data from 282 frontline service employees in 25 hotels in Taiwan and indicate that highly passionate individuals are invested in their jobs and are willing to display customer service behaviors to satisfy customer needs. However, the authors do not conduct empirical studies to investigate the mediating effects of job passion in the relationship between job crafting and customer service behaviors. Drawing on SDT (Ryan and Deci, 2000), which posits that a social context within which the job is embedded can affect individual's motivation via their psychological needs. Therefore, this paper proposes the new perspective that harmonious passion is a mediator that explains the mediating influence of job crafting on customer service behaviors. The inclusion of harmonious passion as a mediator can enrich our understanding of how job crafting influences hospitality employees' customer service behaviors. Accordingly, the hypothesis is proposed:

**H7.** Harmonious passion mediates the relationship between job crafting and customer service behaviors.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Sample and data collection

Customer-contact employees in Taiwan's four- and five-star international tourist hotels were selected as research subjects for two reasons. First, the hotel industry is expanding in Taiwan and the Taiwanese government has established promotion of the tourism industry as a primary goal. Generally, following changes in government policies, hotel companies attempt to enhance service quality and offer unique experiences to increase customer satisfaction. Therefore, employee customer service behavior is crucial to success in the current competitive market. Second, as noted, the studied international tourist hotels are four- or five-star-equivalent hotels. The criteria for evaluating four- and five-star hotels are based on the total scores of service quality and hotel facilities evaluations in Taiwan (Su and Sun, 2007). Hospitality employees in four- or five-star-equivalent hotels are required to satisfy various customer needs and higher expectations than are employees of other hotels; thus, the described context was appropriate for the examination of the antecedents of employees' customer service behaviors. A pilot test was conducted on 50 customer contact employees of international tourist hotels to enhance questionnaire reliability, clarity,

and comprehensiveness. On the basis of the pilot test, the wording of the questionnaire was modified slightly.

In total, 79 four- to five-star international tourist hotels operate in Taiwan (Taiwan Tourism Bureau, 2017). Therefore, all Taiwan's international tourist hotels were included in the survey sample. To obtain a valid sample, the hotels' human resource managers were telephoned and asked for assistance. Thirty of the 79 hotels consented to participate in the survey. The distribution of hotels by scale (eight hotels have 400–700 rooms, and 22 hotels have 100–400 rooms) was proportional to the population. Subsequently, written explanations of the survey were sent to the 30 human resource managers, who announced them in their respective hotels, solicited respondents, and forwarded the information to hotel frontline employees occupying various positions. Respondents were notified that participation in the survey was voluntary, that the content of the survey would not be made public, and that personal information provided would be kept confidential. This study was performed on the basis of the research procedure suggested by Podsakoff et al. (2012), which ensures respondent confidentiality and anonymity.

Subsequently, a package containing 25 questionnaires, questionnaire explanations, and return envelopes was sent to every manager. Each completed questionnaire was mailed directly to the researcher to ensure respondent data confidentially and to protect the respondents from any pressure that may influence their answers. In recent years, the hotel industry in Taiwan has regularly worked with colleges and universities, employing numerous internship students (for a half or full year) and part-time employees to replace full-time employees. Because internship students and part-time employees have lower organizational commitment to the hotels in which they work than full-time employees do (DiPietro and McLeod, 2012), their attitudes and job perceptions are also poorer (Joung et al., 2018). This tends to influence their customer service behaviors unfavorably (Malhotra and Ackfeldt, 2016). Therefore, after a discussion with the head of a hotel's human resources department, survey questionnaires in this study were distributed only to full-time employees. To encourage respondents to complete the survey, each participant received a coupon to redeem for a cup of coffee from convenience stores after completing the questionnaire. Twenty-eight hotels returned at least 10 questionnaires. After removing samples that lacked answers to too many questions and outliers, the valid sample size was 518 questionnaires, and the valid response rate was 69.1%.

### 3.2. Measurement

The job crafting scale proposed by Tims et al. (2012) was adopted to measure hospitality employees' perception of job crafting. It includes four dimensions: increasing structural job resources (five questions), increasing social job resources (five questions), increasing challenging job demands (five questions), and reducing hindering job demands (six questions), for a total of 21 questions. Studies have considered this scale highly reliable, and it has been the most commonly used scale for measuring employees' job crafting behaviors in recent years (Karatepe and Eslamlou, 2017; Rastogi and Chaudhary, 2018).

The customer service behaviors scale developed by Tsaaur et al. (2014) was adopted to assess the customer service behaviors that hospitality employees exhibited. The scale includes three questions each for role-prescribed service behaviors and extra-role service behaviors, for a total of six questions. This scale has favorable reliability and has been frequently applied to assess the customer service behaviors of service employees in hospitality settings (Cheng and Chen, 2017; Tsaaur et al., 2014).

A short version of the Passion scale (Marsh et al., 2013) was adopted to assess the job passion of hospitality employees. The scale includes three questions each for harmonious and obsessive passion, for a total of six questions. The scale was chosen because it is the measure used for job passion construct in service settings (Trépanier et al., 2014).

The aforementioned three measurement tools were included in the questionnaire design. Aside from demographic variables (i.e., sex, marital status, educational level, age, and years of work experience), a five-point Likert scale was adopted in designing the questionnaire. The questionnaire responses ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*, in which higher scores indicated higher agreement from the respondent with the questionnaire item.

### 3.3. Data analysis

Data analyses conducted in this research included descriptive analyses, confirmatory factor analysis, a structural equation model, and the Sobel test. The descriptive statistics comprised the means and standard deviations of job crafting, job passion, and customer service behaviors. Confirmatory factor analysis was performed to assess the validity of the measures using SPSS Amos version 23. The hypothesized relationships were tested using the structural equation model and the Sobel test.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Sample characteristics

The sample structure of the 518 returned questionnaires was analyzed to obtain basic information regarding the sample. Of the respondents, 226 were men (43.6%), and 292 were women (56.4%); 263 were married (50.8%); 394 had college degrees or higher levels of education (76.1%); the average age was 35.8 years; and the average years of work experience was 10.6 years. The profile of the sample respondents was similar to those in the work of Cheng and Chen (2017) and Cheng and O-Yang (2018).

### 4.2. Measurement properties

The data were examined with regard to outliers, normality, and multicollinearity. First, responses were examined for outliers using the Mahalanobis distance test. The chi-square test with the threshold of  $p < .001$  was set as a criterion for identifying a case as an outlier (Byrne, 2010). None of the cases qualified as outliers. Second, normality assumptions were examined using skewness–kurtosis tests. Both absolute values of skewness (from  $-0.93$  to  $0.89$ ) and kurtosis (from  $-1.02$  to  $1.58$ ) were less than 2 (Kim, 2013). Therefore, the data appeared not to violate the assumptions of normality. Moreover, multicollinearity was evaluated based on variance inflation factor values. The values ranged from 1.14 to 3.26, indicating that multicollinearity was not a problem (Agresti, 2002). Therefore, the data revealed that all of the assumptions were supported.

According to the test results of each scale's reliability, the composite reliabilities ranged from 0.85 to 0.92, and all scores were higher than 0.6 (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988), which indicate that the questionnaire had favorable reliability. In terms of construct validity, to ensure that each scale could measure the degree of influence of each construct suggested by theories, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to test the goodness-of-fit of the measurement model. The various fit indices ( $\chi^2 = 2187.20$ ,  $df = 796$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 2.75$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $GFI = 0.93$ ,  $AGFI = 0.91$ ,  $CFI = 0.95$ ,  $NFI = 0.94$ ,  $IFI = 0.95$ ,  $RMR = 0.05$ ,  $RMSEA = 0.06$ ) exceeded the standards ( $\chi^2/df < 5$ ,  $GFI \geq 0.90$ ,  $AGFI \geq 0.90$ ,  $NFI \geq 0.90$ ,  $CFI \geq 0.90$ ,  $IFI \geq 0.90$ ,  $RMR \leq 0.05$ ,  $RMSEA \leq 0.08$ ) that scholars have considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2010), indicating that the measurement model adequately fit the data of this study. The average variance extracted of all variables ranged from 0.58 to 0.70, and all values exceeded 0.5, which indicates that the measurement variables of this study had favorable convergent validity (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988). Moreover, the square root of the average variance extracted of each factor was higher than the correlation coefficient among paired constructs, demonstrating that the scales of this study had discriminant validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

However, self-report scales were used to collect information from a single source, which may lead to the common method variance (CMV) concern. Therefore, Harman’s one-factor test was adopted to test for CMV among the research variables (Podsakoff and Organ, 1986). Factor analysis was conducted on the items concerning all constructs, leading to the extraction of eight factors with eigenvalues higher than one without rotating the factors. The cumulative percentage of variation explained was 66.07%, and the percentage of variance explained by the first factor accounted for only 21.68% (Lin, 2007). Furthermore, the study controlled for the effects of a single unmeasured latent method factor in the analyses, comparing the measurement model without the CMV factor and with the factor. The fit indices of the model with the CMV factor are listed as follows:  $\chi^2 = 2162.38$ ,  $df = 789$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 2.74$ ,  $GFI = 0.93$ ,  $AGFI = 0.92$ ,  $CFI = 0.95$ ,  $NFI = 0.94$ ,  $IFI = 0.95$ ,  $RMR = 0.05$ , and  $RMSEA = 0.06$ . A comparison of the two models indicated that the change in fit indices was nonsignificant. The factor loadings of these items remained significant. Accordingly, CMV caused no severe problems in this research (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

4.3. Correlation analysis

The descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients among the related constructs are listed in Table 1. The correlation analysis indicated that a positive correlation existed between job crafting and harmonious passion ( $r = 0.31$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). Also, a significant positive correlation existed between harmonious passion and role-prescribed service behaviors ( $r = 0.34$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) as well as between harmonious passion and extra-role service behaviors ( $r = 0.37$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). Additionally, a positive correlation existed between obsessive passion and extra-role service behaviors ( $r = 0.28$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ).

4.4. Hypothesis testing

Structural equation modeling was utilized in this research, and maximum likelihood estimation was employed to measure the associations among job crafting, job passion, and customer service behaviors of hospitality employees. Fig. 1 demonstrates standardized path coefficients arising from examining the proposed structural model. The fit indices ( $\chi^2 = 2238.79$ ,  $df = 782$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 2.86$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $GFI = 0.92$ ,  $AGFI = 0.90$ ,  $CFI = 0.94$ ,  $NFI = 0.93$ ,  $IFI = 0.93$ ,  $RMR = 0.05$ , and  $RMSEA = 0.06$ ) supported the appropriateness of the structural model. The paths from hospitality employees’ job crafting to harmonious passion ( $\beta = 0.42$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), from harmonious passion to role-prescribed service behaviors ( $\beta = 0.36$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), from harmonious passion to extra-role service behaviors ( $\beta = 0.39$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and from obsessive passion to extra-role service behaviors ( $\beta = 0.29$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) were positively significant. Therefore, H1, which proposes that “job crafting is positively related to harmonious passion” was supported. H3 and H4 propose that harmonious passion is positively related to role-prescribed service behaviors and extra-role service behaviors. Both of these hypotheses were supported. H6, which proposes that “obsessive passion is positively related to extra-role service behaviors” was

**Table 1**  
Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations among the Related Variables.

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
Job Crafting	4.28	0.49	<b>0.79</b>				
Harmonious Passion	3.97	0.66	0.31**	<b>0.86</b>			
Obsessive Passion	3.04	0.84	0.08	0.27**	<b>0.77</b>		
Role-Prescribed Service Behavior	4.26	0.56	0.40**	0.34**	0.10	<b>0.83</b>	
Extra-Role Service Behavior	4.04	0.65	0.27**	0.37**	0.28**	0.51**	<b>0.83</b>

The square root of AVE is shown on the diagonal of the matrix.

\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

supported. Furthermore, the path from job crafting to obsessive passion ( $\beta = 0.09$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) was nonsignificant, supporting H2 that “job crafting is unrelated to obsessive passion.” The coefficient for the path from obsessive passion to role-prescribed service behaviors ( $\beta = 0.08$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) was nonsignificant. H5 proposes that obsessive passion is positively related to role-prescribed service behaviors. Therefore, this hypothesis was not supported.

The Sobel test was performed to test the mediating effect of harmonious passion (Preacher et al., 2007). More specifically, this study determines whether the indirect influence of hospitality employees’ job crafting on role-prescribed service behaviors and extra-role service behaviors via harmonious passion differed from zero. The results demonstrated that the mediating influence of harmonious passion between job crafting and role-prescribed service behaviors ( $z = 3.06 > 1.96$ ,  $p < 0.01$ )/extra-role service behaviors ( $z = 2.98 > 1.96$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) was significant. Two nested-model comparisons were also conducted to assess whether an alternative model (direct effects) would outperform the hypothesized model (indirect effects) (Kelloway, 1998). As shown in Table 2, the chi square of the hypothesized model (2238.79) was smaller than that of the alternative model (2641.77), and the result of the chi square difference was significant ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 402.98$ ,  $\Delta df = 21$ ). The hypothesized model was thus superior to the alternative model. Hence, H7, which states that harmonious passion mediates the relationship between job crafting and customer service behaviors, was supported.

5. Discussion

5.1. Conclusions

This research investigates the associations among job crafting, job passion, and customer service behaviors of hospitality employees and aims to clarify the mediating effects of job passion. The findings indicate that job crafting has a positive influence on employees’ harmonious passion, and harmonious passion can contribute to employees’ display of role-prescribed service behaviors and extra-role service behaviors, whereas obsessive passion can facilitate employees’ extra-role service behaviors. In addition, harmonious passion has a mediating effect on hospitality employees’ job crafting and customer service behaviors. Cheng and O-Yang (2018) suggest that future studies examine the potential effect of job crafting on related outcomes. This study responds by finding that job crafting positively predicts job passion. The present research empirically validates findings from the literature by synthesizing the insights from job design theory and by examining the relationship among hospitality employees’ job crafting, job passion, and customer service behaviors.

The findings demonstrate that job crafting has a positive influence on harmonious passion. Job crafting is a type of proactive adjustment of employees toward their tasks, relationships, and cognition in that job crafting can increase employees’ job resources and adjust job demands. When hotel employees have sufficient job resources to cope with and overcome job demands, they are likely to develop harmonious passion and to overcome challenging situations. Therefore, service providers with many job crafting opportunities can facilitate harmonious passion. By contrast, obsessive passion is a type of psychological state wherein the activity controls the person. Therefore, the results indicate that the association between job crafting and obsessive passion is nonsignificant. The findings support the conclusion of Trépanier et al. (2014) that job resources can enhance employees’ harmonious passion, whereas the effect of job resources on obsessive passion is nonsignificant. In the hospitality context, this research reveals job crafting as a crucial antecedent variable that affects employees’ harmonious passion. Therefore, the results of this study are in line with the argument of the JD–R model (Demerouti et al., 2001). The present study extends the literature (Cheng and O-Yang, 2018; Kim et al., 2018a,b) by emphasizing the job crafting–harmonious passion relationship in

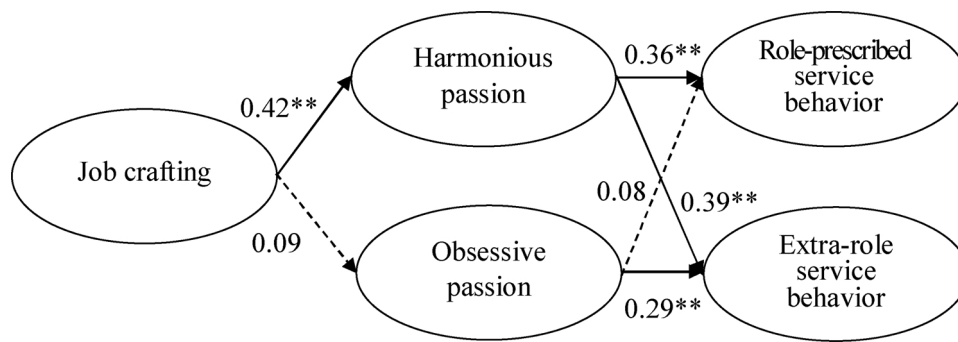


Fig. 1. The Conceptual Model of the Relationships among Job Crafting, Job Passion, and Customer Service Behaviors.

Table 2  
Structural Equation Modeling Comparisons.

Models	$\chi^2$ (df)	$\Delta\chi^2$	$\Delta df$	GFI	AGFI	CFI	NFI	IFI	RMR	RMSEA
Hypothesized Model (indirect model)	2238.79 (782)	-	-	0.92	0.90	0.95	0.93	0.93	0.05	0.06
Alternative model (direct model)	2641.77 (803)	402.98	21	0.86	0.84	0.89	0.87	0.87	0.07	0.08

$\chi^2$  critical:  $\Delta df = 803-782 = 21$ ;  $\chi^2_{.95, 1} = 5.99$ .

hospitality settings.

In addition, this study determines that harmonious passion positively affects role-prescribed service behaviors and extra-role service behaviors. On the basis of SDT (Deci and Ryan, 2000), the passion model proposes that individuals experience the need to grow psychologically and develop a sense of identity. Harmonious passion arises from the voluntary internalization of an activity into one’s identity; people willingly and freely participate in an activity (Vallerand and Houlfort, 2003). Therefore, harmoniously passionate employees are engaged in customer service work and are inclined to invest time and effort to engage in customer service behaviors. On the basis of the argument of SDT, the results indicate that harmonious passion can increase both role-prescribed service behaviors and extra-role service behaviors. In the hospitality and tourism contexts, studies have investigated the antecedents of customer service behaviors, including job standardization (Tsaaur et al., 2014), internal marketing orientation (Chow et al., 2015), and work engagement (Cheng et al., 2018; Tuan, 2018). The present study offers new insights and identifies harmonious passion as a critical antecedent variable that stimulates employees’ customer service behaviors.

This study determines that obsessive passion positively affects extra-role service behaviors but has no significant relationship with role-prescribed service behaviors. Although studies have reported that obsessive passion has myriad negative effects on individuals (Lalande et al., 2017; Trépanier et al., 2014), employees with obsessive passion remain willing to exhibit extra-role customer service behaviors when facing customers’ needs. Individuals with obsessive work passion are emotionally dependent on work (Astakhova, 2015). They have thus lost control over the activity and feel an internal compulsion to participate in it. The concept of obsessive passion can be conceptually linked to workaholism (Gorgievski and Bakker, 2010). Workaholics are excessively and compulsively hard workers who spend substantial time performing work-related activities. In recent years, employees’ customer orientation and extra-role service behaviors have been prioritized in hospitality settings (Cheng and Chen, 2017; Tsaaur et al., 2014). In practice, many companies use these to assess performance and allocate rewards (Eren et al., 2014). Employees with obsessive passion, instead of performing within their scope of work, display extra-role service behaviors to save the time and energy in the most cost-effective manner. By exhibiting extra-role service behaviors, they are also able to gain the recognition of their organizations and customers (Burke et al., 2015). In addition, employees’ willingness to exhibit service behaviors

toward customers is employees perceiving work as a means to earn the goodwill of their organizations or customers (Astakhova and Porter, 2015), leading to employees’ willingness to exhibit service behaviors that exceed their role expectations. Therefore, obsessive passion only increases extra-role service behaviors but does not have a significant impact on role-prescribed service behaviors.

Although past studies (Chen et al., 2014; Cheng et al., 2016) have already investigated the potential mediators between job crafting and employees’ work outcomes, no studies have examined the role of job passion. Based on the work passion model (Zigarmi et al., 2009), employees’ internal assessment process affects the performance of their job behaviors. Job crafting enables individuals to use the job resources within their reach to overcome their job demands. When hotel service employees perform substantial job crafting, they develop a corresponding level of job passion and are engaged in their work; thus, they are likely to exhibit customer service behaviors toward customers. Harmonious passion is a psychological mechanism through which job crafting affects customer service behaviors. Chen et al. (2017) observes that high-commitment human resource practices positively influence hospitality employees’ proactive customer service performance by inciting harmonious passion for work. The findings of the present study further support that harmonious passion is a fundamental psychological mechanism that stimulates proactive employee behaviors toward customers.

5.2. Theoretical implications

Our findings supplement the job crafting literature as follows. First, this research responds to the suggestions of Cheng and O-Yang (2018) to analyze the influence of employees’ job crafting on related outcomes in the hospitality context. This study fills the gap by providing empirical evidence on the connection between job crafting and harmonious passion. One of its major contributions is by incorporating JD-R theory into the work passion literature. The present research extends the job crafting literature by quantifying the association between job crafting and job passion in hospitality settings. Second, although several scholars have investigated the effect of job passion on organizational citizenship behavior (Astakhova, 2015; Burke et al., 2015), organizational citizenship behaviors are employees’ positive behaviors toward their organizations or other employees, and customer service behaviors are employees’ positive service behaviors toward customers. The objects to which the two behaviors are directed are different. On

the basis of SDT, this study contributes to the dualistic model by integrating passion for work with employees' service behaviors toward customers, thereby verifying the relationship between job passion and customer service behaviors. This research also establishes a causal connection between job passion and customer service behaviors in hospitality settings. Third, studies focusing on psychological mechanisms explaining why job crafting affects customer service behaviors are scant. This study includes job passion as a mediating variable and investigates the association between job crafting and customer service behaviors. Although early research concluded that job passion is a crucial outcome variable of job crafting (Berg et al., 2010b; Wrzesniewski et al., 2013), prior scholars have not empirically tested the mediating effect of job passion. Based on the arguments of the JD–R model (Demerouti et al., 2001) and SDT (Ryan and Deci, 2011), this study contends that harmonious passion is a critical mediating variable between job crafting and the customer service behaviors of employees. The study's theoretical contribution to the literature is the association between job crafting and customer service behaviors. Additionally, it uncovers the mediating role of harmonious passion. Specifically, this research proposes that harmonious passion is pivotal in detecting how job crafting influences employees' customer service behaviors.

### 5.3. Practical implications

The study offers several recommendations for management practices. First, in terms of human resource strategies at the functional level, hotel managers should increase work autonomy and discretion of service employees by creating a supportive work environment, wherein employees are given flexibility in their work, thereby encouraging employees' job crafting behaviors and enabling employees to increase harmonious passion and become invested in their work. Second, on-the-job training equips service employees with job resources that enable them to accomplish new tasks. Hotel managers can plan training courses that facilitate job crafting behaviors to increase hotel employees' harmonious passion. In addition, hotel managers can create an organizational climate with incentive and reward mechanisms that promote employees' job crafting and encourage employees to exhibit customer service behaviors.

Third, because harmonious passion can increase role-prescribed service behaviors and extra-role service behaviors, hotel managers should promote or maintain employees' mental health, thereby cultivating in employees harmonious passion for their work. The key feature of harmonious passion is individuals' voluntary internalization of the work, hotel managers can enhance employees' harmonious passion by methods including empowering employees, supporting their autonomy, and providing them with constructive feedback.

Fourth, because customer service behaviors can increase customer satisfaction and perceived service quality (Tsaour et al., 2014), hotel managers should pay attention to employees and strengthen employees' proactive service behaviors. Furthermore, during the recruitment and selection process for service employees, employees with harmonious work passion may be identified through their personality attributes. Employee selection on the basis of the presence of harmonious work passion may be valuable. Owners in the hospitality industry should regard employees' customer service behaviors as an asset; harmoniously passionate employees are invested in their jobs and exhibit customer service behaviors in practice. Moreover, in terms of the arrangement of hotel work, employees that are more harmoniously passionate are suitable for tasks that require close contact with the consumers, because these employees are likely to display customer service behaviors.

Lastly, this study determined that obsessive passion can increase the extra-role service behaviors of hospitality employees. Thus, the effect of obsessive passion cannot be discounted given that this current study found empirical evidence of its positive influence on outcome. Hotel managers should thus develop incentive systems, service rewards, and

promotion opportunities for those employees who are obsessively passionate to encourage their extra-role service behaviors.

### 5.4. Limitations and future research

Some limitations involved this research should be mentioned. First, this study uses a self-report approach to measure hospitality employees' cognition of job crafting, job passion, and customer service behaviors, which may result in a response bias. Second, this research is a cross-sectional analysis, which may affect the causal inference of the results. Future scholars can conduct a longitudinal study to strengthen the causal inference. Third, this study is based on the context of four- and five-star hotels in Taiwan; therefore, the findings may not be fully generalizable to other types of hotels. Fourth, this study examines only customer contact employees in hotels; thus, the findings may not be fully applicable to other industries. Future scholars can examine similar topics in other tourism industries, such as the aviation industry or travel industry, or service industries. Fifth, this study only focuses on the relationships among job crafting, job passion, and customer service behaviors. We do not include other managerially relevant outcomes (e.g., job satisfaction, organizational commitment) in this research. We suggest that future studies examine these outcomes. Sixth, this study examines how job crafting influences customer service behaviors through job passion but does not consider situational factors. In future studies, scholars can further examine whether employees' job crafting, job passion, and customer service behaviors are affected by moderating variables. Finally, Astakhova (2015) identifies an inverted U-shaped association between harmonious passion and organizational citizenship behaviors. Scholars can further examine whether this inverted U-shaped association exists between harmonious passion and customer service behaviors in terms of employees' behaviors.

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