MODESTUM

Effects of The Practice of Experiential Education on Employee Self-Efficacy and Organizational Commitment in Catering Industry

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ABSTRACT

Under the social pattern with gradual increase in consuming ability and the enhancement of the citizens' emphasis on leisure travel, the rapidly increasing outside dining has catering businesses move toward diversified brand management. The ratio of labor force employed in the relevant industries and catering industry in Taiwan in total labor force employed and the employment population are increasing. It becomes critical to promote the competitiveness of catering businesses through complete educational training systems. Aiming at the supervisors and employees of Wowprime Corp., total 500 copies of questionnaire are distributed and 384 valid copies are retrieved, with the retrieval rate 77%. The research results show significant correlations between 1.experiential education and elf-efficacy, 2.self-efficacy and organizational commitment, and 3.experiential education and organizational commitment. Eventually, suggestions are proposed, expecting to assist catering businesses in educating the employees, reducing costs for the enterprises, and enhancing the competitiveness.

Keywords: catering industry, experiential education, employee self-efficacy, organizational commitment

INTRODUCTION

The 21st century is an era when people enjoy information richness, technology progress, rapid social change, convenient life, and close international relationship but face fiercely international competition. "People" are the major element of the sustained management of an enterprise. It becomes an important issue for an enterprise promoting the personnel to be excellent talents. A lot of enterprises devote to developing complete educational training systems to enhance organizational personnel's productivity and job satisfaction and further promote higher job satisfaction. Meanwhile, under the social trend of low fertility and aging, personnel recruitment becomes more difficult. In addition to recruitment, employees' retention is another effort for enterprises, who expect to reduce learning obstacles and enhance employees' learning confidence through the complete educational training system, to effectively reduce the turnover rate caused by personnel's maladaptation and largely reduce the cost for enterprises. Under the social pattern with increasing consuming ability and the citizens' enhancing emphasis on leisure travel, the increasing outside dining has catering businesses gradually move toward diversified brand management, expecting to create higher operating revenue. A lot of catering brands are accordingly emerging.

Regarding education, experiential education has gradually become a primary learning method, comparing to traditional lecture-based instruction. Experiential education presents different education models from the past up-down one-way teaching, allows more learners walking out of the comfort zone, learning by doing, and learning through personal practice, and has people appear more self-awareness through guidance and reflection. Experiential education allows experiencing learning with real perception; the reflective learning process could guide learners, according to personal abilities and needs, to recombine and internalize as meaningful rewards; and, learners could seek for living meanings and goals through the activity experience. Aiming at catering industry, the effect of the practice of experiential education on employee self-efficacy and organizational commitment is researched in this study.

Contribution of this paper to the literature

- When promoting experiential education, could specially emphasize that experiential education allows pursuing individual development, understanding oneself, enhancing professional growth, perceiving interests, and searching for the direction of life.
- When practicing experiential education, catering businesses could encourage the employees to hold open attitudes toward experiences and challenges, but not escape or resist new experiences or challenges, to insist on facing difficulties and obstruction, and to grasp every learning opportunity to participate in the activity.
- The information should be embedded in the experiential situations so that the employees, who actively participate in the experience, could naturally absorb relevant information, get in the "educational experience", acquire knowledge and skills, promote the organizational commitment to catering industry, and achieve the learning objective.

LITERATURE AND HYPOTHESIS

Experiential Education

Experiential education has been popular overseas for a long time. In early research, lots of researchers regarded experiential education as the experimental result of individuals in the situation and the construction of knowledge through reflection in the process (Kraft et al., 2013). Cajanding (2017) indicated that experiential education was the process to construct knowledge through experience transfer. Apparently, experiencing activity presented learning meaning. Reddick and Holland (2015) regarded experiential education as the contact with real environment, the process to acquire learning through personal perception and experience, and the emphasis of learners' comprehensive participation in knowledge, emotion, and behavior. Hair et al. (2013) defined experiential education as a philosophical education, in which a guide had learners actively participate through various models and reflect in the experience to enhance knowledge, develop skills, clarify value, and develop individual ability. Schunk (2012) emphasized that students were the body in experiential education to construct meaningful learning through actively participation in activity and reflection. Aksoy et al. (2014) defined that experiential education mainly stressed on participants being the body of learning activity, the necessity of experience, which should be interacted with real situations, and the construction of knowledge through reflection and internalization. Zhu et al. (2015) defined experiential education as the process of an individual building knowledge, acquiring skills, and promoting value through experiencing. Such experiences were created and transformed into knowledge, skills, attitudes, value, emotion, beliefs, and perception (Gonçalves-Bradley et al., 2017). Diesing (2015) also indicated that the point of experiential education was learning by doing and guiding learners, in the reflective learning process, to engage in progressive activity according to personal abilities and needs, integrate physical and mental function, create peak experiences, and experience the meaning of life.

Li (2014) mentioned the important dimensions of "challenge", "team", and "self-reflection" for experiential education. Challenge: Activity for experiential education should contain challenging and interesting elements to attract learners' participation. Team: Experiential education is preceded with teams, and learners in the activity are the participants, who could engage in the activity according to personal abilities and needs. Self-reflection: After experiencing a series of designed activity, learners have to reflect, digest and absorb specific physical, mental, and spiritual perception and experiences, as well as recombine and internalize as meaningful rewards to change the behaviors. Such dimensions are applied to this study.

Self-Efficacy

Jennifer and Stephen (2015) regarded self-efficacy as individual belief in the ability to successfully perform tasks or behaviors, i.e. evaluation of individual performance on the action for dealing with certain situations. It was also considered that individual expectation of self-efficacy was greatly related to the effort behavior as well as individual willingness to pay efforts for certain objectives. When an individual presented proper skills and were given suitable stimulation, self-efficacy was the key factor in individual taking actions under pressure, being willing to pay efforts, and continuously making efforts in face of frustration (Goodman et al., 2013). Langhorne and Baylan (2017) defined self-efficacy as the belief in an individual being able to complete an action in specific situation. Self-efficacy referred to an individual, when encountering major conditions, believing in the ability to deal with problems and solve problems. In this case, an individual would avoid the situation when it exceeded personal ability; on the other hand, an individual would face the situation when it was controllable. Self-efficacy would affect individual efforts to put into practice and influence the insistence on dilemmas. Braet and Weltens (2016) defined self-efficacy as individual ability to judge the action; it stressed on individual judgment to complete tasks with skills, rather than

the possessed skills (Fox et al., 2013). Mari et al. (2013) indicated self-efficacy as individual ability to engage in certain work and the subjective evaluation of the work being done. DeCaporale-Ryan et al. (2014) defined that individual belief in successful performance and the strength of individual self-belief could determine the efforts to cope with difficult designated situations. Sakai et al. (2015) considered that individual belief in acquiring success was the ability judgment to complete certain work.

Wang (2014) defined that the expectation of self-efficacy was individual belief in successfully performing a task or behavior. In other words, an employee should present adequate professional knowledge, skills, and literacy for the thorough confidence and belief to perform and complete specific work. Such confidence and belief in the ability to complete specific work was "self-efficacy". The three dimensions of "interpersonal relationship", "control of goal", and "judgment of demand" are uitlized in this study.

Organizational Commitment

The idea of organizational commitment was first proposed by Whyte in the article of "Organizational man" in 1956. An organizational man worked for an organization, belonged to the organization, and believed that a group was the source of creativity and the final belonging of individuals (Kim and Park, 2014). In other words, an organizational man was not simply a person working for an organization, but was a person belonging to the organization (Franklin et al., 2014). It represented individual loyalty and contribution to the organization (Nordmark et al., 2016), in which individual affective attachment and belonging to the organization were covered (Atallah et al., 2013). It also referred to individual perceived value in the organization with the sense of belonging (Sakai et al., 2015). An individual with higher commitment to agree with the organization and be loyal to organization would regard himself/herself as a member of the organization to show lower turnover rate. Denson et al. (2013) regarded organizational commitment as employees not being willing to leave the organization because of the salary, status, or occupational autonomy, and friendship with partners. Snyder (2015) pointed out organizational commitment as individual attitudinal reaction at work. It presented the characteristics of (1) consistency between individual actual work and ideal work, (2) agreement with chosen work, and (3) unwillingness to find another work. Guthrie et al. (2012) described it as a psychological state which involved not only the consistent value between individual and organization, but was also influenced by organizational loyalty, and the desire, needs, or obligation. Zumrah et al. (2013) mentioned organizational commitment as an attitudinal concept that an individual strongly agreed with the goal and value of the organization and involved such perceived goal and value in the role in the organization.

Referring to Lau et al. (2015), organizational commitment in this study is divided into (1) value commitment, (2) effort commitment, and (3) retention commitment.

Research on the Correlation between Experiential Education and Self-Efficacy

In comparison with past traditional knowledge-delivery instruction, Cajanding (2017) agreed with the better teaching effect of experiential learning, including good benefits on knowledge, behavior, and psychology. Aksoyet al. (2014) proposed that experiential education, in the self-efficacy reinforcement process, could help adolescents enhance the self-confidence in facing difficulties, peer interaction, and problem-solving capability as well as cultivate the confidence in active learning and self-adaptation. Zhu et al. (2015) pointed out the remarkable effects of the practice of experiential science learning on pupils' scientific attitudes and scientific self-efficacy. Apparently, applying experiential learning to subject and skill education might affect learners' learning self-efficacy. The following hypothesis is therefore proposed in this study.

H1: Experiential education presents significant correlations with self-efficacy.

Research on the Correlation between Self-Efficacy and Organizational Commitment

In the research on teacher's work value, perceived self-efficacy, working pressure, and teaching commitment, Langhorne and Baylan (2017) found out the notably positive correlations between teachers' work value, perceived self-efficacy and teaching commitment and the most predictive power of "teacher's perceived self-efficacy", "teacher's work value", and "teacher's individual background" on teaching commitment. Li (2014) indicated that dropouts counseling volunteers appeared distinct self-efficacy on the working pressure and continuous service commitment, and volunteer self-efficacy showed significant correlations with working pressure and continuous service commitment. Braet and Weltens (2016) discussed the relationship among self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment of television station employees and revealed the remarkable correlations between employees' perceived self-efficacy and organizational commitment. Wang (2014) pointed out the notable correlation between organizational commitment, self-efficacy and corporate performance. In other words, self-

efficacy seriously affected firm performance because of the positive correlation between organizational commitment and self-efficacy. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed in this study.

H2: Self-efficacy shows remarkable correlations with organizational commitment.

Research on the Correlation between Experiential Education and Organizational Commitment

Kim and Park (2014) pointed out the remarkably positive correlation between experiential education and organizational commitment of volunteers in Rainbow Family Life Education that volunteers with stronger perception to participate in experiential education would present higher organizational commitment. Nordmark et al. (2016) also discovered notably positive correlations between volunteers' organizational commitment and experiential education. Lau et al. (2015) indicated that the dimensions in experiential education showed significantly positive correlations with volunteers' "value commitment" and "effort commitment". Besides, experiential education appeared remarkable predictive power on organizational commitment. In this case, the following hypothesis is proposed in this study.

H3: Experiential education reveals notable correlations with organizational commitment.

SAMPLE AND MEASURING INDICATOR

Research Sample and Object

Aiming at Wowprime Corp., the supervisors and employees, as the research objects, are distributed 500 copies of questionnaire in this study. Total 384 valid copies are retrieved, with the retrieval rate 77%. Being a catering corporate, Wowprime Corp. is located in West District in Taichung City and established by Sheng-yi Dai, who successfully establishes 13 catering brands with more than 300 branches in the world. The restaurants cover various types, such as western styles, Japanese styles, BBQ, hotpots, and teppanyaki, and devote to multi-brand management and service innovation. With constant progress, the annual turnover exceeds USD 0.425 billion and keeps 20% growth rate annually to become the largest catering corporation in Taiwan and the benchmark in the same industry. It is the model for catering management that it is selected for this study.

Test of Reliability and Validity

Validity refers to a measuring tool being able to really measure the questions which a researcher would like to measure. Generally speaking, validity is divided into content validity, criterion-related validity, and construct validity. The questions in this study are referred to domestic and international researchers, and a pretest is preceded before the distribution of formal questionnaire that there is certain content validity. Experiential education, self-efficacy, and organizational commitment in this study are tested the overall structure causality with the Linear Structural Relation model. The data input is based on the correlation coefficient matrix of above observed variables. The analysis of the Linear Structural Relation model reveals the overall model fit achieving the reasonable range that it presents favorable convergent validity and predictive validity. According to Kerlinger's (1986) suggestion, item-to-total correlation coefficients could be used for testing the construct validity of the questionnaire content, i.e. reliability analysis; and, the acquired item-to-total correlation coefficient could be used for judging the questionnaire content. The item-to-total correlation coefficients of the dimensions in this study are higher than 0.4 that the dimensions in this questionnaire present certain construct validity.

To further understand the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, reliability and validity are analyzed. The higher Cronbach's α reveals the better reliability. When the Cronbach's α is higher than 0.7, it appears high reliability; on the contrary, the Cronbach's α lower than 0.35 should be deleted, while it in 0.7~0.98 is regarded as high reliability. Furthermore, the item-to-total correlation coefficient should be higher than 0.4, or it would be deleted. According to above standards to develop the formal questionnaire, the measured Cronbach's α appears in 0.76~0.90, obviously conforming to the reliability range.

EMPIRICAL RESULT ANALYSIS

LISREL Model Evaluation Indicator

The LISREL (linear structural relation) model combines factor analysis and path analysis in traditional statistics and includes simultaneous equations in econometrics to simultaneously calculate multiple factors and multiple causal paths. The model fit is evaluated from preliminary fit criteria, overall model fit, and fit of internal structure of model.

Table 1. Analysis result of LISREL model

Evaluation item	Parameter/evaluation standard		Result	t
preliminary fit criteria	experiential education	challenge	0.642	8.66**
		team	0.728	10.65**
		self-reflection	0.713	9.92**
	self-efficacy	interpersonal relationship	0.751	12.16**
		control of goal	0.772	16.31**
		judgment of demand	0.747	11.27**
	organizational commitment	value commitment	0.769	14.58**
		effort commitment	0.783	17.88**
		retention commitment	0.792	18.94**
internal fit	experiential education→self-efficacy		0.846	25.63**
	self-efficacy→organizational commitment		0.883	36.88**
	experiential education→organizational commitment		0.867	31.75**
overall fit	X2/Df		1.238	
	GFI		0.971	
	AGFI		0.934	
	RMR		0.006	

Table 2. Hypothesis test

Research hypothesis	Correlation	Empirical result	P	Result
H1	+	0.846	0.00	Supported
H2	+	0.883	0.00	Supported
H3	+	0.867	0.00	Supported

The data are organized in **Table 1**. Aiming at the model, the preliminary fit, internal fit, and overall fit are explained as follows.

Regarding preliminary fit criteria, challenge, team, and self-reflection show remarkable explanations on experiential education (t>1.96, p<0.05), interpersonal relationship, control of goal, and judgment of demand present remarkable explanations on self-efficacy (t> 1.96, p<0.05), and value commitment, effort commitment, and retention commitment reveal notable explanations on organizational commitment (t>1.96, p<0.05), **Table 1**. Apparently, the overall model presents favorable preliminary fit.

Regarding internal fit, experiential education presents positive and significant correlations with self-efficacy (0.846), self-efficacy shows positive and remarkable correlations with organizational commitment (0.883), and experiential education appears positive and notable correlations with organizational commitment (0.867), revealing that H1, 2, and 3 are supported.

In terms of overall model fit, the standards $\chi 2/Df$ 1.238 is lower than the standard 3 and RMR 0.006, showing the appropriateness of $\chi 2/DF$ and RMR. Furthermore, chi-square value is sensitive to sample size that it is not suitable for directly judging the fit. Nevertheless, the overall model fit standards GFI 0.971 and AGFI 0.934 are higher than the standard 0.9 (the closer GFI and AGFI to, the better model fit) that the mode shows better fit index. The hypothesis test results are shown in **Table 2**.

CONCLUSION

The research results reveal that employees in catering industry learn new successful experience and new knowledge through various experiential courses in experiential education and apply such successful experience to the later learning so that they do not easily give up when encountering difficulties, select to actively face problems and solve problems, and apply the learned new knowledge to the work and life. Experiential education does not simply progress and change employees' related knowledge and skills, but more importantly has them understand "responsibility for catering", "importance of responsibility", and "mind training through experience" to perceive joy in the participation process, involve in it whole-heartedly, and be glad to continue the work in the current organization. In the experiential education interaction process, employees in catering industry would precede self, life, and environment reflection through experiencing to acquire better learning effect. Such a learning method allows employees in catering industry appear profound impression on the acquired knowledge and skills, without forgetting after learning, apply what they learn to the life, and even recommend and share when they learn.

SUGGESTION

By concluding the important results and findings, practical suggestions are further proposed in this study.

1. Catering businesses, when promoting experiential education, could specially emphasize that experiential education allows pursuing individual development, understanding oneself, enhancing professional growth, perceiving interests, and searching for the direction of life. It could reinforce employees' learning motivation of "interests in seeking knowledge" and "searching meaning" to further enhance employees' involvement in the learning activity. It is suggested to make specially promotion by the end of the experiential education so that employees in catering industry, when intending to share the activity with others, could emphasize the interesting experiences and self-development experiences in the activity to attract other employees' participation.

2. When practicing experiential education, catering businesses could encourage the employees to hold open attitudes toward experiences and challenges, but not escape or resist new experiences or challenges, to insist on facing difficulties and obstruction, and to grasp every learning opportunity to participate in the activity. A guide should establish good relationship with employees during the experiential education so as to timely provide positive emotional feedback for employees with low emotion and to give challenging tasks for employees enjoying the experiential education.

3. The education contents for the practice of experiential education should be designed with different difficulties and proper challenge according to employees' gender, seniority, or capability to enhance employees' intrinsic learning motivation for autonomously involving in and maintaining the learning behavior, presenting self-capability, and appearing sense of achievement by the end of the activity in order to acquire the unforgettable experience. The information should be embedded in the experiential situations so that the employees, who actively participate in the experience, could naturally absorb relevant information, get in the "educational experience", acquire knowledge and skills, promote the organizational commitment to catering industry, and achieve the learning objective.

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