服務氣候、目標導向、情感性專業承諾與服務績效之關係

The Study of the Relationship among Service Climate, Goal Orientation, Affective Professional Commitment and Service Performance

葉晶雯[1] Ching-Wen Yeh

中華科技大學 企業管理系

Department of Business Administration, China University of Science and Technology

摘要：本研究旨在探究服務氣候、目標導向、情感性專業承諾與服務績效的關係。本研究以台灣三大地區（台北、高雄、新竹）122 家汽車駕訓班的教師與學員為問卷調查實證的對象，採用 HLM 方法以檢測服務績效多層次模式。研究結果顯示：（一）服務氣候正向影響情感性專業承諾；（二）學習式目標導向正向影響情感性專業承諾；（三）表現式目標導向正向影響情感性專業承諾；（四）情感性專業承諾正向影響服務績效；（五）情感性專業承諾部分中介服務氣候和服務績效之間的關係；（六）學習式目標導向正向影響服務績效；（七）表現式目標導向正向影響服務績效。最後，依據研究結果提出有關服務管理的建議，以供駕訓業者參考。

關鍵詞：服務氣候；目標導向；專業承諾；服務績效；服務管理

Abstract: We set out in this study to examine the relationships between service climate, goal orientation, affective professional commitment and service performance, exploring the influence on service performance stemming from service climate and goal orientation through affective professional commitment.

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[1] Corresponding author: Department of Business Administration, China University of Science and Technology, Nankang, Taipei, Taiwan, E-mail: jwyeh@cc.cust.edu.tw

Driving schools (122) in three regional markets of Taiwan (Taipei, Kaohsiung and Hsinchu) are taken as examples to clearly illustrate these relationships. The present study contributes to the current knowledge on service performance, with its main strengths being the examination of data from multiple sources, the multi-level approach to the testing of the constructs, and the use of HLM to test the multi-level model of the antecedents of employee service performance.

Our results reveal that: (i) service climate has a positive influence on affective professional commitment; (ii) a learning-goal orientation has a positive influence on affective professional commitment; (iii) a performance-goal orientation has a positive influence on affective professional commitment; (iv) affective professional commitment has a positive influence on service performance, (v) affective professional commitment partially mediates the relationship between service climate and service performance, (vi) learning goal orientation has a positive influence on service performance, and (vii) performance goal orientation is positively related to service performance.

We conclude by providing suggestions for improvements in service management within the driving school industry in Taiwan.

Keywords: Service climate; Goal orientation; Affective professional commitment; Service performance; Driving schools.

1. Introduction

Customer evaluations of salespeople's performance are essential to managerial understanding of salespeople's contributions (Jackson *et al.,* 2010). A positive unit climate of concern for customers makes employees perceive that superior service is expected, desired, and rewarded, thus providing a strong motivational force for employees to provide high-quality service in their service delivery (Chuang and Liao, 2010).

Schneider (1980) had earlier argued that if customers provide good feedback, employees will invariably provide similar, or better, services at the next available opportunity. That is, Customer's word of mouth may enhance employees'

motivation, and employees reciprocate with better service. This study sets out to determine whether employees exhibit any discernible improvements in their job performance as a result of their awareness of improvements in the overall service climate within their organization.

Van Dyne, Graham and Dienesch (1994) note that service personnel are the first-line representatives of a company within the overall provision of services, with the actions that they take having the potential to either improve or damage the company's image (Schneider and Bowen, 1993). Externally, employees provide customers with the necessary information on a company's products or services, whilst internally; they can propose suggestions to the company with the overall aim of improving services. Therefore, one of the keys to the success of a company lies in improving the attitudes and behavior of service personnel.

Schneider et al. (1998) proposed that employee's perceptions of how much the organization cares about customers or service quality rest on their perceptions about service climate involving providing training that supports and facilitates employee service delivery. Affective professional commitment refers to an employee's emotional attachment to identification with, and involvement in jobs. Because a positive service climate may help employees perceive that superior service is expected desired, and rewarded, thus providing a strong motivational force for employees to deliver better service. Therefore, according motivational theory, we argue that service climate influence employee affective professional commitment and service performance. Dweck's motivational theory suggests that goal orientation is a relatively stable dispositional trait that covaries with the individual's implicit theory of ability (Dweck and Leggett, 1988). Learning goal orientation has a positive effect on motivation and performance (Roberts, Treasure and Hall, 1994). We apply motivational theory to develop a model that links service climate with goal orientation, affective professional commitment and service performance.

We adopt the proposal of Harris and Ogbonna (2006), connecting the 'frontline customer-contact personnel' with the instructor-client interaction in driving instruction services. Hammond et al. (2004) describe how students in a business school perceived teaching as an indicator of performance; in a similar way,

the interaction between service providers and their clients will ultimately influence the positive or negative images of their organization amongst consumers. Given the growth in driving schools permitted by new laws in Taiwan, it is somewhat surprising that there has been no investigation of service performance amongst driving instructors. Hence, we consider the main recipients of this particular instructional service to investigate the service climate, the perception of the organizational service climate amongst the instructors, and the perceptions of the service performance of the driving instructors amongst their customers.

Van Dyne *et al.* (1994) note that since direct contact personnel are representing the company when providing services, they can directly improve or damage its image (Schneider and Bowen, 1993); thus, improving the attitudes and behavior of service personnel can be a key to the success of the company. This study determines whether the professional commitment of driving school instructors is improved as a result of their awareness of an improved service climate within their organization.

Meyer and Allen (1993) argue that those with affective commitment are more likely to exert effort to effectively carry out their role. Meyer *et al.* (1993) earlier found that affective commitment was positively correlated with unit-managed ratings of performance and consideration for promotion. Wood *et al.* (2000) note that employees with high levels of professional commitment are typically dedicated to their career and ensure consistent service quality to their customers. In the service encounter, as opposed to simply being workers, employees are essentially performers, and their behavioral performance is the quality of service perceived by their customers (Binter and Brown, 2000; Yoon *et al.*, 2001). Vandenberghe *et al.* (2007) argue that affective commitment to customers enhances service quality, whilst Siders *et al.* (2001) also propose that affective commitment by sales executives towards their customers is related to customer-relevant objective performance.

Dweck and her colleagues (Dweck and Leggett, 1988; Licht and Dweck, 1984) have proposed that the goals pursued by individuals create the framework for their interpretation and reaction to events or outcomes. They have identified two classes or type of goals: performance goal and learning goals. In their attempts to achieve success, people will generally display either a 'learning-goal' or

'performance-goal' orientation (Elliott and Dweck, 1988; Dweck and Leggett, 1988). Although Button *et al*. (1996) note that those with a learning-goal orientation will tend to focus on improving their personal skills, there has, nevertheless, been little discussion within the prior studies on the correlation between goal orientation and affective professional commitment. Thus, there are unanswered questions relating to whether a learning-goal orientation can help people to improve their skills, become more familiar with their roles and to generally become more committed, or whether a performance-goal orientation can make people become more committed to their jobs based upon their desire for acknowledgement by their supervisors. The influence of service climate on affective professional commitment is, as yet, undetermined; thus, a further unanswered question is whether employees can hold on to their passion for their work and achieve higher job performance as a result of the service climate.

Few things are as important to service firms as the behavior and attitude of direct contact employees towards their customers. The service climate will, in turn, influence service performance, which will ultimately impact on customer satisfaction (Borucki and Burke, 1999; Johnson, 1996). Several studies have examined the relationship between service climate and the evaluation of services by customers (Schneider and Bowen, 1993; Johnson, 1996; Yoon *et al*., 2001). In the present study, we argue that the service climate influences professional commitment, thereby enhancing service performance. Focusing on employees and their dyadic interactions with customers at the service encounter level, we investigate the goal orientation, professional commitment and service performance of employees, as perceived by customers; such a focus has managerial implications for the evaluation of the performance of individual employees.

Data for this study are collected from both employees and customers, with this multi-level approach being used to integrate the relationship between service climate, goal orientation, professional commitment and service performance. We test our proposed model using data on instructors and customers at driving schools and by adopting "hierarchical linear modeling" (HLM). Our research objectives are to examine: (i) the influence of service climate on professional commitment; (ii) the influence of goal orientation on professional commitment; (iii) the influence of

service climate on service performance; (iv) the influence of professional commitment on service performance; and (v) whether professional commitment mediates the relationship between service climate and service performance.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Schneider (1990) points out certain constructs of an organizational service climate, including global service, customer orientation and managerial practices. Of these, global service refers to the value that an organization places on service quality and the level of resources they invest in achieving high-quality services. Customer orientation indicates that an organization uses various methods to satisfy the needs of its customers, whilst also placing effort into improving the quality of its service. Managerial practices refer to the support and rewards for high-quality services provided by supervisors.

Other scholars define the organizational service climate as the employees' perception of the organization's emphasis on high-quality services, including awareness of service, customers, quality and teamwork. A service climate is defined as the shared perceptions amongst employees, with regard to the policies, practices and procedures in customer services that are expected, supported and rewarded (Schneider *et al.,* 1998). The term "climate" involves the idea of shared norms; that is, the service climate is the message that employees receive regarding the importance attached to service delivery within their organization (Schneider and Bowen, 1993). "A service climate in this study is defined as the shared perceptions amongst employees, with regard to the policies, practices and procedures in customer services that are expected, supported and rewarded (Schneider *et al.,* 1998). The term "climate" involves the idea of shared norms; that is, the service climate is the message that employees receive regarding the importance attached to service delivery within their organization (Schneider and Bowen, 1993)".

Affective professional commitment refers to the identification and commitment that people have towards the values of their occupation, the perceived loss due to a change in such occupation and the commitment to internal

norms and standards (Meyer *et al.,* 1993). Affective professional commitment is operationalized in this study using a version of the Meyer *et al.* (1993). Meyer *et al.* (1993) proposed that a person who is affectively committed (i.e. has a strong desire to remain in the occupation) might be more likely than someone who is not attached to keep up with developments in the occupation (e.g., by subscribing to trade journals or attending conferences), to join and participate in relevant associations, and so on. Such commitment is based upon the ways in which professional workers within an organization identify with, and care about, their work (Blau and Scott, 1962). A high level of professional commitment suggests that people are committed to the values of his/her profession, are proud of their profession, and are willing to work harder for it.

Service-oriented behavior requires employees to use their abilities and qualities flexibly to satisfy customer needs (Peccei and Rosenthal, 2001). Kopelman *et al.* (1990) argue that the climate within an organization affects employee behavior through cognition. According to Brown and Leigh (1996), the work effort of employees ultimately comes under their own control, with such effort being sensitive to their perceptions of the climate at work. When direct contact employees perceive that their organization emphasizes customer service, they are likely to respond by investing more time and energy into their work activities (Yoon *et al.,* 2001).

The present study focuses on affective commitment to occupation since it is argued in several of the prior studies that this predicts desired employee behavior (Meyer *et al.,* 2004; Vandenberghe *et al.,* 2004). When direct contact employees perceive that their organization is setting standards for customer service by removing barriers to service quality, and by training and rewarding employees for providing excellent service, this results in the positive development of employees' work attitudes (Little and Dean, 2006) which are then reflected in their delivery of value to customers; that is, the service climate communicates a message to employees that their professionalism and consistent customer service quality will be rewarded. A service climate may, therefore, encourage employees to identify with their profession and to place some emphasis on continuing professional development to improve their knowledge and skills, so as to ensure the consistent

delivery of high-quality services to their customers.

Meyer *et al.* (1993) propose that affective commitment towards an occupation will be further developed when involvement in the occupation provides opportunities for the development of valued skills. In order to achieve high-quality customer service, many organizations provide such opportunities to help their employees develop these highly-valued skills, such as enabling employees to participate in relevant associations and to attend conferences. When employees feel that their organization values good quality service, they will invariably work harder to improve their skills. On the basis of the preceding discussion, the service climate within a work unit may have top-down influence on the affective professional commitment of employees; thus we propose:

H1: Service climate is positively related to affective professional commitment.

People with a learning-goal orientation will constantly strive to improve their competency in a given activity by using effective learning strategies to help them to perform better (Dweck and Leggett, 1988), whilst those with a performance-goal orientation will strive to demonstrate their abilities through their task performance, thereby gaining favorable assessments of their competence (Dweck and Leggett, 1988). These two goal orientations will foster different response patterns. Learning-oriented individuals will seek out challenging tasks and continue to strive under difficult conditions; conversely, when faced with failure, those with a performance-goal orientation will invariably attribute this to low ability which ultimately has a negative effect, and they may seek to withdraw entirely from the activity.

Middleton and Midgley (1997) indicate that learning-goal oriented students achieve more positive results in learning and self-adjustment, whilst Button *et al.* (1996) also note that those with a learning-goal orientation tend to focus on their own growth and improvement, which enhances their future job performance. VandeWalle (1997) also notes that learning-goal oriented individuals focus on their self-improvement by acquiring new skills. We can further assume that people who are learning-goal oriented are more positive in professional development and

self-learning, and that they may push themselves to develop new skills since they perceive their efforts as being valuable. They believe that success and abilities are determined by the level of sophistication of a person's skills; thus, they will place greater time, effort and commitment into developing such skills.

Learning-oriented individuals tend to deal with circumstances by putting greater effort into their jobs and by attempting to identify those strategies that are necessary to successfully meet the demands of the job (Dweck and Leggett, 1988). There is a consistent link between learning orientation and affective outcomes, such as intrinsic interest, task enjoyment and satisfaction (Harackiewicz *et al.,* 1997), and we might expect to find employees with a strong learning orientation to exhibit more task persistence and task enjoyment; therefore, employees with such a strong learning orientation will, in turn, exhibit a positive correlation with affective professional commitment.

Performance-goal oriented individuals believe that abilities are innate and that they are the key to success (Duda and Nicholls, 1992; Roedel and Schraw, 1994); they are also willing to work to accomplish their performance goals. However, they differ from learning-oriented individuals in terms of the satisfaction and enjoyment they derive from the effort required to maintain their standards. We might expect employees with a strong performance orientation to exhibit low task persistence and task enjoyment, and therefore, to demonstrate a negative correlation with affective professional commitment.

> **H2a: Learning-goal orientation is positively related to affective professional commitment.**

> **H2b: Performance-goal orientation is negatively related to affective professional commitment.**

We follow Liao and Chuang (2004) define employees' service performance as employees' behaviors of serving and helping customers. Employee service performance refers to the results of service performance, such as customer satisfaction and retention. A key element of service performance involves

providing nonstandard, adaptive, and creative service (Schmit and Allscheid, 1995). Many studies have found that aggregated work climate perceptions amongst employees have a significant correlation with performance (Schneider and Bowen, 1993; Schmit and Allscheid, 1995; Johnson, 1996; Ryan *et al.,* 1996). Schneider and Bowen (1993) argue that the organizational unit expects and rewards a consistent level of service performance and establishes practices to facilitate such service delivery. Employee perceptions of the service climate also have a positive influence on customer perceptions of service quality (Schneider and Bowen, 1993; Schmit and Allscheid 1995; Johnson, 1996; Schneider, *et al.,* 1998).

Loveman (1998) argues that capable employees who are enthusiastic in their delivery of good quality service will enhance customer satisfaction. Schneider *et al.* (1998) find that an organizational climate which encourages service employees to exert effort and to use their competencies to deliver high service quality will, in turn, yield positive customer evaluative judgments of the service delivery. A climate of customer orientation encourages employees to adopt a positive stance on satisfying customer needs, thereby resulting in good performance (Grizzle *et al.,* 2009) When employees are strongly focused and share common perceptions of the service climate within their company, they should interact very well with their customers, who will then report favorable employee performance (Salanova, Agut and Peiro, 2005). These service climate perceptions are in turn related to customer perceptions of service quality (Salvaggio *et al.,* 2007).

A service climate may act as a situational enhancer (Howell, Dorfman and Kerr, 1986), with its strategic focus being to stress the importance of service to employees (Schneider *et al.,* 2005). A positive service climate provides specific service goals for employees, directing their focus towards achieving these goals. Emphasis on the importance of service by the organization increases the service quality values of its employees, acting as a powerful motivational force to enhance their service behavior (Shamir, Zakay, Breinin and Popper, 1998; Bono and Judge, 2003). A service climate also influences the service performance of all employees by directly influencing the attitudes of individual employees and raising their intrinsic motivation.

Furthermore, a service climate is favorable to consumption, since it provides a strong stimulus to the emotional reactions of consumers (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). A favorable organizational climate and the appropriate allocation of resources should improve the satisfaction of the organization's staff. We expect to find that the better the service climate, the better the customer perception of employee service performance; thus, we propose:

H3: Service climate is positively related to service performance.

Meyer and Allen (1993) argue that those with affective commitment are more likely to exert effort to effectively carry out their role. Meyer *et al.* (1993) earlier found that affective commitment was positively correlated with unit-managed ratings of performance and consideration for promotion. Wood *et al.* (2000) note that employees with high levels of professional commitment are typically dedicated to their career and ensure consistent service quality to their customers. In the service encounter, as opposed to simply being workers, employees are essentially performers, and their behavioral performance is the quality of service perceived by their customers (Binter and Brown, 2000; Yoon *et al.,* 2001).

Vandenberghe *et al.* (2007) argue that affective commitment to customers enhances service quality, whilst Siders *et al.* (2001) also propose that affective commitment by sales executives towards their customers is related to customer-relevant objective performance. Committed individuals will tend to help their organization to provide quality services (Allen and Grisaffe, 2001); thus, those with affective commitment may be more likely to keep pace with developments in their occupation than others who are not so committed (Meyer *et al.,* 1993).

We extend the previous findings in the present study, arguing that employees with affective professional commitment will be more likely to place time and effort into their occupation, which will be reflected in their service performance, as perceived by their customers. We suggest that such employees will attempt to provide warm and personalized service to their customers, keeping the long-term interests of both customers and the organization in mind, and thereby making them less likely to

maximize any personal short-term gains at the expense of either the organization or its customers; we therefore expect to find that the stronger the affective professional commitment, the better the customer perception of employee service performance.

H4: *Affective professional commitment is positively related to service performance.*

Yoon *et al.* (2001) find that a service climate contributes to employees' job satisfaction and work effort, and that it has indirect impacts on customer perceptions of employee service quality. Little and Dean (2006) note that employee commitment partially mediates the relationship between global service climate and the service quality capabilities of employees; thus, organizational emphasis on customers and rewards for service quality directly affect the work attitudes and behavior of employees, and hence, their service performance.

A service climate can influence employee attitudes. Some scholars suggest that companies should focus on improving their employees' perceptions of the service climate, essentially because such perceptions help to define employee attitudes (Lux *et al.,* 1996); such attitudes include the affective commitment of employees to their occupation. Little and Dean (2006) suggest that the service climate includes assessments of the knowledge and skills of employees to deliver superior quality work and services; that is, it refers as much to the tools, technology and resources available to employees to provide them with the necessary support, effects to measure and track the quality of work and services, and the overall quality of the services provided. A service climate can therefore encourage employees to keep up with developments in their field.

Meyer *et al.* (1993) also argue that affective commitment is likely to be further developed when involvement in an occupation proves to be a satisfying experience; that is, when it provides opportunities to develop valued skills. A service climate can therefore influence employees to develop affective commitment to their occupation; an increase in affective commitment amongst employees can therefore contribute towards feelings amongst employees of being valued, and consequently to the delivery of superior service quality to customers.

A service climate causes employees to identify with organizational service values and goals and to consistently behave in line with these traits.

Employees with high levels of professional commitment will embrace the values of the organization, striving to achieve customer satisfaction by providing superior service, with the delivery of such superior service by employees coming as a result of them being more attentive towards the interests of their customers. We therefore expect to find that affective professional commitment acts as a mediator in the relationship between service climate and service performance.

H5: *Affective professional commitment mediates the relationshipbetween service climate and service performance.*

The 'goal-setting' theory interprets behavior from a cognitive perspective in the belief that human ambition guides behavior; clear objectives do indeed improve job performance (Locke and Latham, 1990), with the objective providing the direction, sustainability and the development of job strategies. Janssen and Van Yperen (2004) proposed that those who are learning or performance goal oriented are highly motivated to achieve their goals; thus, there is a positive correlation between goal orientation and job performance.

VandeWalle *et al.* (1999) also discovered that salespeople who were highly learning- oriented tended to set higher goals, work harder and plan their tasks in order to improve their overall job performance. This indicates that a learning orientation will tend to encourage salespeople to work long hours and improve their service performance.

What is worth noting is that there are mixed views with regard to the correlation between the job performance of people who are performance oriented. Some scholars have found a positive correlation (Sujan *et al.*, 1994; VandeWalle, 1997), whilst others have found no significant correlation (Lee *et al.*, 2006; VandeWalle *et al.*, 1999). Based upon the preceding discussion, we now propose our final hypotheses:

H6a: Learning goal orientation is positively related to service performance.

H6b:Performance goal orientation is positively related to serviceperformance.

Figure 1
Model schema
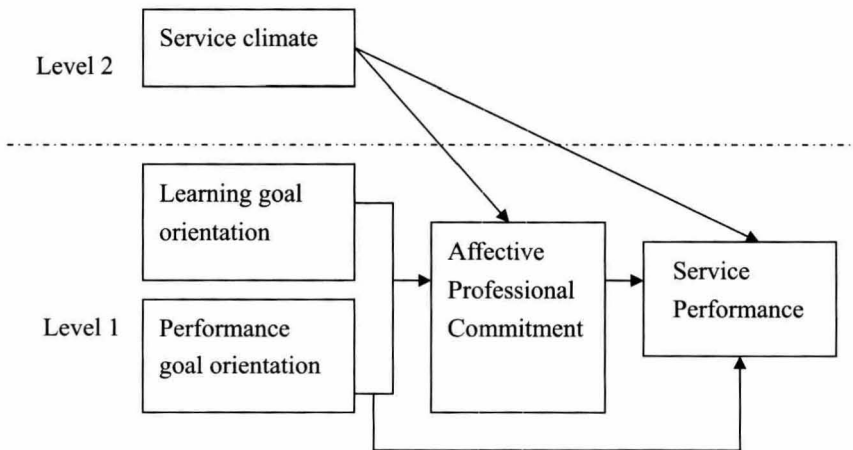
3. Method

3.1. Data Source

The sample comprises all driving schools numbering 122 in total in three provincial markets in Taiwan, namely Taipei, Kaohsiung, and Hsinchu. Driver training instructors exhibit high professionalism and undergo extensive training before teaching their students the fundamentals of driving. Instructors spent an

average of 14 hours weekly interacting with every student (2 hours each day). Each driving course lasted 5 weeks.

The number of driving schools in Taipei is 45. Meanwhile, the number of instructors at individual driving schools in Taipei ranges between 10 and 30. Finally, the average number of students per instructor was approximately 16. The number of driving schools in Kaohsiung is 31. Meanwhile, the number of instructors in the driving school of Kaohsiung rang from 10-25. Finally, the number of students per instructors was about 14. The number of driving schools in Hsinchu is 42. Meanwhile, the number of instructors in the driving school of Hsinchu rang from 6-14. Finally, the number of students per instructor was about 11.

Our proposed theoretical framework is tested using data samples collected from these driving schools. In order to avoid the issue of 'common method variance', we adopt the method proposed by Scott and Bruce (1994), which is to divide our research instrument into 'employee' and 'customer' questionnaires. The employee questionnaires include demographic variables, service climate, goal orientation and professional commitment, whilst the customer questionnaires include basic information on the individuals and assessments of the service performance of their instructors. Furthermore, we applied the Harman's one-factor method suggested by Podsakoff and Organ (1986) to test for the possibility of common-method bias in self- reported measures. We entered all of the measures into a factor analysis to examine the likelihood of a dominant single factor. The results of Harman's one factor method revealed that the first factor account for 31.2% variance. The results of Harman's one-factor method revealed that the first factor did not account for the majority of the variance and there was no one general factor in the unrotated factor structure. On the basis of our results, we had enough evidence to conclude that common-method bias was not a likely threat to our study (Podsakoff and Organ 1986).

A total of 1,000 employee questionnaires were distributed, with collection boxes being set up for the return of the completed questionnaires in every driving school. A total of 503 employee questionnaires were returned, giving a response rate of 50.3 per cent, with 15 of these being deleted on the basis of missing values,

thereby reducing the total to 488.

Trained graduate level research assistants administered driving instructors and customers at each driving school. Customers were randomly approached by trained graduate research assistants to complete a brief survey after receiving their driving instruction. In order to increase the accuracy of the customer assessment, our study sample includes only those instructors who had at least three matched customer evaluations. The surveys were offered to a total of 2,000 customers, 1,500 of whom agreed to participate, thereby giving a response rate of 75 per cent. All customer questionnaires with missing values were deleted, ultimately reducing the customer sample to 1,464.

3.2. Measures

Two way translations were performed by two bilinguals with English and Chinese Proficiencies to ensure equivalency of meaning. The scale was examined by two experts in the area of school service marketing and two driving instructors to assess the scale's content validity. In addition, a pilot study was conducted by sending the questionnaire to 30 instructors by e-mail.

Service climate: Service climate was measured using 13 items adopted from the scales proposed by Schneider (1990). Service climate, which is formed via an emergent bottom-up process (Kozlowski and Klein, 2000) is theorized and analytically tested at work unit level (Schneider *et al.*, 1998, 2005; Liao and Chuang, 2004). We aggregated the climate perceptions amongst individual employees to an organizational level in order to form our measure of service climate. Example items include "my immediate manager puts a lot of emphasis on giving good service to customers", "this company informs us about customer evaluations of the quality of service that we deliver" and "we maintain a high level of commitment to our customers". The Cronbach's α for service climate in this study, was 0.94.

Affective professional commitment: Affective professional commitment is operationalized in this study using a version of the Meyer *et al.* (1993) scales, containing six items. These items were measured using a five-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree), with examples including "I am

enthusiastic about providing driving instruction", "I am proud to be in the driving instructor profession" and "professional driving instruction is important to my self-image". In this study, the Cronbach's α for professional commitment was found to be 0.899.

Goal orientation: This study adopts the definition of 'goal orientation' proposed by Button *et al.* (1996), which includes 'learning-goal' and 'performance-goal' orientations. This scale has also been utilized in many other studies on goal orientation (Philips and Gully, 1997; Ford *et al.,* 1998; Bell and Kozlowski, 2002). The scale utilizes a seven-point scale in which respondents select their answers from options ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree", with the first eight items focusing on performance-goal orientation and the last eight focusing on learning-goal orientation. Example items include "I prefer to do things that I can do well rather than things that I do poorly", "I'm happiest at work when I perform tasks in which I know that I will not make any errors", "the opportunity to do challenging work is important to me" and "I prefer to work on tasks that force me to learn new things". In this study, the Cronbach's α for learning goal orientation was 0.861, whilst that for performance goal orientation was 0.916.

Service performance: The scale developed by Borucki and Burke (1999) and Liao and Chuang (2004) is used as the measure of service performance in the present study, with the wording of the items being changed slightly to fit our driving school service setting. Respondents select their answers from a seven-point scale comprising of options from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". Example items include "my instructor finds out what I need by asking good questions and listening attentively to me", "my instructor is friendly and helpful to me", "my instructor is always punctual" and "my instructor provides good service". Evaluations on the same driving school instructor were aggregated from multiple customers, essentially because we are interested in the average customer perception of the service performance of driving school instructors. In order to increase the accuracy of customer assessment, only those instructors with at least three matched customer evaluations were included in the sample. The Cronbach's α for service performance in this study was found to be 0.98.

3.3. HLM

Luke (2004), for instance, argues that there are both theoretical and statistical reasons for using multilevel models when confronted with multilevel data. Statistically, multilevel models address this problem, providing the best estimation of standard errors. HLM can measures within and between-group differences; this helps to determine if there is enough variation across contexts to demand a multilevel analysis to begin with. In particular, it allows us to assume that both the intercepts *and* slopes of individual predictors (level-1) vary across aggregate predictors (level-2).

In addition, this study conducts Hierarchical linear models to deal with hierarchically nested data structures. Hofmann (1997) proposed that HLM models are specifically designed to overcome the weakness of aggregated approach. First, these models explicitly recognize that individuals within a particular group may be more similar to one another than individuals in other groups. More specifically, these approaches explicitly model both individual and group level residuals, therefore, recognizing the partial interdependence of individuals with the same group. Second, HLM models allow one to investigate both lower level unit and higher level unit variance in the outcome measure, while maintaining the appropriate level of analysis for the independent variables.

Multi-level analysis is adopted for our theoretical model, spanning both individual employee and organization levels, with the 'hierarchical linear modeling' (HLM) approach being adopted to test our hypotheses. HLM, which explicitly accounts for the nested nature of the data, can simultaneously estimate the impact of factors at various levels on individual-level outcomes whilst maintaining appropriate levels of analysis for the predictors (Bryk and Rauden-Bush, 1992). Both my theoretical framework and hypotheses operate at multiple levels, providing the justification for this approach.

The Level 1 predictors were grand-mean centered, since such an approach facilitates the interpretation of the HLM results and ensures that the Level 1 effects are controlled during the testing of the incremental effects of the Level 2 variables, whilst also reducing multicollinearity in the Level 2 estimations by

reducing the correlation between the Level 2 intercept and slope estimates (Hofmann and Gavin, 1998).

3.4. Aggregation statistics

The viability of the constructs was checked by means of aggregation of the organizational level service climate (aggregated across multiple employees in the same driving school) and employee-level customer perceptions of service performance (aggregated across multiple customer evaluations of the same instructor). Following James, Demaree and Wolf (1984) and Kozlowski and Hults (1987), we assessed inter-rater agreement by computing the $r_{wg}(j)$ of James *et al.* (1984), which adjusts for the slight negative skewness in the expected variance.

The r_{wg} value for service climate ranged from 0.9786 to 0.9961, whilst the r_{wg} value for service performance ranged from 0.9179 to 0.9964. Significant inter-group variances were found for all of these variables as a result of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). We further obtained the values for the intra-class correlation (ICC1) and the reliability of the group mean (ICC2), which were, respectively, 0.21 and 0.51 for service climate, and 0.26 and 0.50 for service performance.

4. Results

Table 1 reports means, standard deviations, and correlations among study variables.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Construct	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1.Service climate	4.15	0.54				
2.Learning goal orientation	4.16	0.48	0.53*			
3.Performance goal orientation	4.12	0.49	0.55*	0.68*		
4. Affective professional commitment	4.25	0.58	0.69*	0.54*	0.52*	
5.Service performance	3.83	0.75	0.52*	0.50*	0.50*	0.48*

Note: Significance: *$p < 0.001$

The CFA revealed a good overall fit ($\chi^2_{(94)}$ = 1475.187, p = 0.000; GFI = 0.894,

IFI = 0.904, CFI = 0.903, RMR = 0.027). All modification indices (MIs) were low, and squared multiple correlations (SMCs) ranged from 0.483 to 0.829. For internal consistency, a reliability assessment was conducted using Cronbach's coefficient α to ensure that the items for each factor were internally related. The final a values all surpassed 0.7, indicating good internal consistency (as shown in Table 2).

We assessed convergent validity by reviewing the t-tests for the factor loadings (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). Convergent validity was assessed by reviewing the tests for the item loadings. Table 2 shows that all the t-values are significant (α = 0.01). All factor loadings were statistically significant with critical t values ranging from 22.867 to 47.559 (p < 0.001) and the standardized factor loadings values ranging from 0.691 to 0.910 Therefore, these findings offer strong support for the convergent validity. Next, we examined the composite reliability and average extracted variances (AVEs) for all observed variables, and found all composite reliability over 0.7 and AVEs over 0.50. These findings offer strong support for the convergent validity of the scale. We confirmed discriminant validity using the procedure Anderson and Gerbing (1988) recommend. We compared each pair of seven dimensions using a χ^2 test between allowing phi (Φ) to vary and constraining Φ correlation to unity. In this case, we found the χ^2 for the unconstrained model to be significantly lower than the constrained model, supporting discriminant validity.

HLM results

Table 3 presents the HLM results. *H1* predicts that service climate is positively related to professional commitment. The results in model 2 reveal that organization level service climate has significant direct effect on affective professional commitment (γ = 0.3247, p < 0.001). Therefore, *H1* was supported. *H2a* predicts that the influence of learning goal orientation has positive influence on professional commitment. The results in model 1 in Table 3 reveal that learning goal orientation has significant direct effect on professional commitment (γ = 0.4410, p < 0.001). Therefore, *H2a* was supported. *H2b* predicts that the

influence of performance goal orientation has negative influence on professional commitment. The results in model 1 in Table 3 reveal that performance goal orientation has significant direct effect on professional commitment (γ = 0.2908, p < 0.001). Therefore, **H2b** was not supported.

The result of CFA is as follow:

Table 2

Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Reliability Estimates

Construct Items	Standardized Loading	Composite Reliability	Coefficient α	Average Variance Extracted
Service Climate		0.872	0.897	0.698
SC1	0.888			
SC2	0.910			
SC3	0.691			
Affective Professional Commitment		0.843	0.853	0.642
APC1	0.849			
APC2	0.789			
APC3	0.763			
Learning Goal Orientation		0.850	0.864	0.587
LGO 1	0.760			
LGO 2	0.804			
LGO 3	0.775			
LGO 4	0.724			
Performance Goal Orientation		0.775	0.742	0.534
PGO 5	0.702			
PGO 6	0.695			
PGO 7	0.795			
Service Performance		0.860	0.875	0.672
SP1	0.859			
SP2	0.768			
SP3	0.830			

Table 3

Hierarchical Linear Modeling Results: Effects of Learning Goal Orientation, and Performance Goal Orientation on Affective Professional Commitment

Level and Variable	Affective professional commitment	
	Model 1	Model 2
Level 1		
Intercept	4.2649***	4.2582***
Learning goal orientation	0.4410***	0.4145***
Performance goal orientation	0.2908***	0.2523***
Level 2		
Service climate		0.3247***
n (Level 1)	488	488
n (Level 2)	122	122
Model deviance	628.0921	610.8946

Note: 1. $^{***}P < 0.001$, $^{**}P < 0.01$, $^{*}P < 0.05$

2. In all models, Level 1 variables were grand-mean centered. Entries corresponding to the predicting variables are estimations of the fixed effects, γs, with robust standard errors.

3. Deviance is a measure of model fit

Table 4

Hierarchical Linear Modeling Results: Effects of Affective Professional Commitment on Service Performance

Level and Variable	Service performance		
	Model 0	Model 1	Model 2
Level 1			
Intercept	3.8356***	3.8320***	3.8262***
Learning goal orientation	0.4225***	0.3808***	0.3323***
Performance goal orientation	0.3919***	0.3259***	0.3270***
Affective professional commitment		0.2931***	0.2322**
Level 2			
Service climate	0.3232***		0.2365**
n (Level 1)	488	488	488
n (Level 2)	122	122	122
Model deviance	912.6012	903.0949	896.8466

Note: 1. $^{***}P < 0.001$, $^{**}P < 0.01$, $^{*}P < 0.05$

2. In all models, Level 1 variables were grand-mean centered. Entries corresponding to the predicting variables are estimations of the fixed effects, γs, with robust standard errors.

H3 predicts that service climate will be positively related to service performance. The results in model 2 in Table 4 reveal that organization level service climate significantly predict service performance ($r = 0.2365$, $p < 0.01$). Therefore, *H3* was supported. *H4* predicts that professional commitment will be positively related to service performance. The results in Model 1 in Table 4 reveal that affective professional commitment significantly predicted service performance ($r = 0.2931$, $p < 0.001$). Therefore, *H4* was supported.

H5 predicts that affective professional commitment will mediate the relationship between service climate and service performance. This study followed the four-step test procedures for mediation described in Kenny, Kashy, and Bolger (1998). As a first step, this study found that service climate was related to service performance ($r = 0.3232$, $p < 0.001$; in Table 4). In the second step, this study found that service climate was significantly related to affective professional commitment ($r = 0.3247$, $p < 0.001$; in Table 4), thus meeting the second requirement that service climate needs to be related to the mediators. In testing Steps 3 and 4, this study included both service climate and the mediators in the regression. This study found that affective professional commitment was significantly related to service performance ($r = 0.2322$, $p < 0.001$; in Table 4) and that the effect of service climate was significant and was reduced in magnitude ($r = 0.2365$, $p < 0.01$; in Table 4) compared with the effect in Step 1. Furthermore Sobel (1982) tests revealed that the indirect effect of service climate through the transmission of affective professional commitment on service performance was significant at the 0.05 level ($z = 2.8669$, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, affective professional commitment partial mediated the relationship between service climate and service performance, providing support to *H5*.

As regards the effects of learning goal orientation, performance goal orientation on service performance, the regression coefficient values are, respectively, 0.4225 and 0.3919 (in Table 4), both of which represent a level of significance ($p = 0.000$), providing support to *H6a*, *6b*.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

We set out in this study to explore the influence on service performance attributable to service climate and goal orientation through affective professional commitment, and find that service climate has a positive influence on affective professional commitment, whilst both 'learning goal' and 'performance goal' orientations also have positive influences on affective professional commitment. Affective professional commitment has a positive influence on service performance and partially mediates the relationship between service climate and service performance; thus, both service climate and goal orientations influence affective professional commitment, thereby resulting in superior service performance.

5.1. Contributions to Scholarship

Our research has several strengths that are worthy of note. Firstly, information is acquired from two different data sources to test our proposed multi-level conceptual model; secondly, we use HLM to account for the hierarchical nature of the model and the data; and thirdly, given that the extant literature on service climate and affective professional commitment is very limited, we attempt to explore the effects of a service climate through the transmission of affective professional commitment towards service performance.

According to Cascio (1991), people's attitudes may be affected by environmental factors, which in turn will affect their behavior. Employees may have strong affective professional commitment because the service climate is compatible with their professional occupation values. Our results show that when employees become aware that their organization places significant emphasis on services, they will place greater emphasis on developing their professional skills to satisfy their customers.

The resulting effect of a 'learning goal' orientation on professional commitment is consistent with the findings of VandeWalle, (1997) and Middleton and Midgley (1997), both of which note that learning-goal oriented individuals care more about self-improvement; thus, they will place far more effort into the

development of their professional skills and enhanced professional commitment. Such employees will therefore tend to emphasize continuing skills development and participation in a variety of developmental opportunities, including information dissemination, conferences and seminars, research and the open exchange of ideas amongst professionals. These activities are useful for improving the professional knowledge and skills of employees and enhancing their strong identity with their profession.

Our results show that a performance-goal orientation has a significant effect on affective professional commitment, and that this is possibly because workers who are performance-goal oriented want to prove that they are better than others; they will therefore tend to work harder to obtain professional credentials, such as licenses or certificates, in order to gain the acknowledgement of their supervisors. Furthermore, according to the 'side-bets' theory proposed by Becker (1960), the trust which is placed in professionals has a strongly positive correlation with the commitment of such professionals. Thus, performance goal-oriented workers may place greater effort into winning the trust of others.

As regards our third hypothesis, which proposed that a work unit's service climate is positively related to service performance, we have found that the service climate has positive direct effects on service performance, with such effects being consistent with the findings of Schneider *et al.* (1998), Liao and Chuang (2004) and Jong *et al.* (2005); that is, a service climate encourages service employees to exert greater effort and to use their competences to deliver superior service quality, which in turn, yields positive evaluative judgments of such service delivery amongst customers.

As expected, a positive relationship is found in this study between professional commitment and service performance; this is consistent with the findings of Aranya and Ferris (1984), who stated that professional commitment includes attitude and behavior intentions. This is also consistent with the findings of Meyer *et al.* (1993), in which employees who identified with their job values were found to work harder and learn new ways to improve their overall service performance. The professionalism, attitude and behavior of service personnel gives rise to customer satisfaction, which makes return visits by such customers

far more likely (Bitner and Brown, 2000).

Affective professional commitment is also a mediator of both service climate and service performance, with the organizational climate affecting organizational behavior through the perceptions of its employees (Brief and Guzzo, 1990). An organization with a more pronounced service climate will have a greater likelihood of motivating employees to upgrade their professional commitment. Since the professional knowledge and friendly attitude of employees can improve the way that customers view their company and its products, it is quite clear that in jobs involving frequent direct customer contact, professionalism is extremely important; as such, there will be a greater likelihood of employees applying their improved skills towards such service quality.

5.2. Applied Implication

No connection has been made in the prior studies between service climate, goal orientation, affective professional commitment and service performance; thus, we make an attempt in the present study to examine the relationship between these variables. The results of this study have five important implications for management. Firstly, a bad attitude displayed by one individual can affect the image of the entire organization; thus, before making any attempt to transform the organizational service climate, organizations should engage in actively communicating the importance of service quality with their employees. It is also extremely important for managers in driving schools to reflect upon driving instruction as a service, to stress the importance of the instructor's role as a service provider, and to establish measures to improve the interactions with their customers.

Secondly, the customer's assessment of service performance is critical to service providers who are keen to improve their business performance, strengthen their core competencies, and position themselves more strategically in the marketplace (Jain and Gupta, 2004). Organizations will benefit from a better understanding of customer requirements by guiding their employees towards better service skills and constantly monitoring service performance through surveys and telephone interviews.

Thirdly, if an organization wants its employees to demonstrate their professional commitment, managers must first of all create a workplace that is passionate, safe and fair to enable their employees to perform well, fulfill their duties and create a sense of professional commitment. Companies should regularly provide their employees with training to help them to develop professional and enthusiastic services.

Fourthly, a service climate is a form of organizational climate; as noted by Kopelman, Brief and Guzzo (1990), the organizational climate affects organizational behavior through the perceptions of employees. Organizations should therefore help their employees to identify with company policies and improve their service skills through learning, and they should also consider providing both opportunities and rewards for continuing personal development and improved service performance.

Fifthly, managers should consider ways of formulating appropriate job performance evaluation systems that will allow their members to effectively apply their goal orientation into commitment towards improving their professional skills which will in turn improve their job performance.

Finally, the driving school can know the trainees' quality of satisfaction by the last stage questionnaire after a series of courses. The aspect of last stage survey's satisfaction includes academic subject, skill subject, equipments, environment and service. Schools should provide incentives to encourage instructor s to provide a good quality of teaching.

All driver education activities involve face to face interaction between instructor and learner. It is important that the instructor gets along well with students. Since poor communication between instructor and students can negatively impact learning. Driving instructor attitude, expression and communication ability thus influence customer satisfaction. During training, instructors teach students accident presentations and on-road driving, safety rules and car handling, and offers advice on all aspects of driving, books to read, when to take the driving test, how to practice and so on. Driving schools should provide teacher education and training opportunities to enhance expression and communication skills.

Hammond *et al.* (2004) describe how students perceive teaching as an indicator of business school performance. This study adopts the proposal of Harris and Ogbonna (2006), linking "frontline customer-contact personnel" with the teacher-student interaction regarding educational services. Because teachers (educational service providers) interact with students and their parents (educational service customers), they influence consumer positive or negative images of educational institutions. Given the legally permitted growth of driving schools in Taiwan, it is surprising that teacher service performance has received so little attention. This study thus considers the main receivers of educational services and examines the related service climate, teacher perceptions of organizational service climate and customer perceptions of the teacher service performance.

5.3. Limitations and Future Research Directions

There are three limitations of this study which should be considered. Firstly, our focus is on driving schools in just three regional markets in Taiwan; secondly, given the specific nature of the instructional context analyzed, caution is required in any attempt to generalize the findings; thirdly, although professional commitment is a multi-dimensional construct (Meyer *et al.,* 1993), we focus on only affective professional commitment; and finally, we focus on the antecedents of service performance with no investigation of the consequences; future research effort should therefore attempt to examine the relationships between service performance, customer loyalty and profits.

This study concludes with further suggestions for future research. As noted by Clark (2005), consumer perceptions of the quality of service providers are mainly influenced by their image of the human resources and reputation of the organization; therefore, future studies may consider elements such as consumer expectations, consumer experience, and the interaction between service providers and customers, all of which have influences on the quality of the services provided. Secondly, future studies should also consider examining the influences of leadership behavior on the goal orientation and professional commitment of employees. Thirdly, future research could be directed at evaluating similar roles in

other countries so as to determine whether cultural differences have influences on the perception of the services provided.

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