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Positive psychological capital and emotional labor in Korea: the job demands-resources approach

Won-Moo Hur[a], Seung-Yoon Rhee[b]* and Kwang-Ho Ahn[c]

[a]*School of Business Administration, Pukyong National University, Busan, South Korea;* [b]*School of Business Administration, Hongik University, Seoul, South Korea;* [c]*School of Business Administration, Inha University, Incheon, South Korea*

This study examined the effect of organizational justice perception on service employees' positive psychological capital and the influence of positive psychological capital on surface and deep acting. Drawing on the job demands-resources (JD-R) model and the literature on positive work environment, the indirect effects of perceived distributive and procedural justice on surface and deep acting through service employees' psychological capital were hypothesized. Using data from 263 flight attendants of the largest airline company in South Korea, the results indicated that perceived distributive and procedural justice were positively related to service employees' psychological capital, which, in turn, fostered deep acting but not surface acting. Deep acting was negatively related to emotional exhaustion, while surface acting showed a positive relationship. Emotional exhaustion, in turn, increased turnover intention. This study offers contributions to our understanding of positive psychological capital and implications for emotional labor in service management. Limitations and future research directions are discussed.

Keywords: emotional exhaustion; emotional labor; flight attendants; organizational justice; positive psychological capital

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Introduction

High-contact service requires intense interactions between customers and employees as service providers. It naturally becomes critical for employees to manage the way they express emotion to customers during service interactions by following specific emotional display rules (Grandey, Fisk, Mattila, Jansen, & Sideman, 2005; Hochschild, 1983; Morris & Feldman, 1996; Seymour, 2000). Service employees' tendencies to regulate their own emotional displays result in two types of emotional labor behaviors: surface acting and deep acting (Hochschild, 1983; Judge, Woolf, & Hurst 2009; Rupp, McCane, Spencer, & Sonntag, 2008).

Surface acting involves a change in emotional expression without a change in inner emotional state. When emotional display rules are inconsistent with the employees' feelings, they modify outward emotional displays by suppressing their true feelings and faking the desired emotion during service encounters. In comparison, deep acting involves regulating both displayed emotions and inner feelings. Employees engage in deep acting by modifying their inner emotional state so that it becomes aligned with organizationally desired emotions for customer service. There is evidence that deep acting is more beneficial than surface acting for employees as well as the organization in that it minimizes burnout and emotional exhaustion and enhances customer satisfaction (Côté, 2005). Despite the growing interest in the phenomenon of emotional labor, however, little has

*Corresponding author. Email: syrhee@hongik.ac.kr

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been discovered regarding its psychological antecedents such as service employees' perceptions, cognitions and emotions (Lam & Chen, 2012; Spencer & Rupp, 2009).

Drawing on the job demands-resources (JD-R) model (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), we propose that job resources such as social support, autonomy and fair treatment are likely to influence service employees' surface or deep acting. Job resources foster positive thoughts and feelings about work and the organization, which leads to the experience of well-being in the workplace (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2007) and organizational commitment (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). We propose that such positive thoughts and feelings about their role, job and organization may influence the extent to which service employees engage in surface or deep acting.

In particular, we focus on organizational justice perception as a key job resource. A large body of research demonstrates the importance of perceived organizational justice in promoting intrinsic motivation, psychological well-being, and trust in the organization (Folger & Konovsky, 1989; Greenberg, 1990; Judge et al., 2009). It is considered to be a critical factor in shaping employees' overall evaluation of their job, work environment and the organization. Since organizational justice or injustice has the potential to either support or hinder employees' motivation toward goals and their sense of growth and learning in the organization, it is a core component of job resources. By examining the effect of perceived organizational justice in service settings, we attempt to address the call for research on the psychological antecedents of emotional labor.

We further extend our argument by exploring how positive aspects of job or job resources can cultivate employees' psychological resources, which in turn influence emotional labor. A recent extension of the JD-R model reveals a growing interest in the notion of psychological resources or personal resources such as self-efficacy, optimism and self-esteem (Fernet, Austin, & Vallerand, 2012; Karatepe & Olugbade 2009; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). According to Hobfoll (2002), personal resources refer to individuals' psychological capacities that enable them to be flexible and adaptable to resource-draining circumstances. Although a few studies highlight the interplay between job demands, job resources and personal resources (Karatepe & Olugbade, 2009; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007), relatively little is known about the psychological mechanism underlying the the JD-R model (Fernet, Austin, Trépanier, & Dussault, 2013; Van Den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, De Witte, & Lens, 2008). We attempt to fill this gap by empirically testing the effect of perceived organizational justice as a job resource on service employees' psychological resources, and, further, on emotional labor.

The idea is based on the mounting evidence in the literature on positive work environment, which indicates that an environment with social support, trust and constructive feedback helps employees to discover their strengths, competencies and added value at work (Roberts, 2007; Roberts, Dutton, Spreitzer, Heaphy, & Quinn, 2005), thus strengthening their psychological resources. We build on these findings and propose that job resources created in a positive work environment are likely to enhance employees' psychological resources. Through their psychological resources, service employees may acquire willpower and energy to invest in deep acting during service encounters. The current study seeks to address the call for a deeper understanding of the psychological mechanism underlying the JD-R model.

Luthans and colleagues introduced the term 'psychological capital' to refer to four elements which comprise individuals' positive psychological resources or capacities: efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience (Luthans, 2002; Luthans & Youssef, 2007; Youssef & Luthans, 2007). Collectively, these four elements can be developed, manifested and utilized as psychological resources (e.g., Hobfoll, 2002) and are likely to create

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resource reservoirs that help individuals overcome adversities and challenges. Although there is a growing interest in the notion of psychological capital, the impact of service employees' psychological capital on emotional labor has largely been neglected (for an exception, see Cheung, Tang, & Tang, 2011). We believe, however, that understanding psychological capital in service settings has important ramifications for service employees and service organizations.

In this study, we focus on organizational justice perception as a key job resource that builds service employees' psychological capacities and resources. Service employees' psychological capital is likely to influence the extent to which they engage in either surface or deep acting. More specifically, the enhanced motivation and cognitive flexibility through psychological capital may facilitate the modification of inner feelings, thus leading to deep acting. We further explore how service employees' surface and deep acting result in emotional exhaustion and, in turn, lead to turnover intention.

This study extends the findings of previous research in several ways. First, we suggest organizational justice perception as a core component of job resources, and examine its impact on service employees' emotional labor through psychological capital. We aim to address the call for a better understanding of the psychological antecedents of emotional labor. Second, although a number of studies have explored the construct of psychological capital (Luthans, 2002; Luthans & Youssef, 2007), little has been discovered regarding its impact on emotional labor. We attempt to fill this gap by examining the importance of cultivating employee psychological capital in service contexts. Finally, we respond to the need for a deeper understanding of the psychological mechanisms involved in the JD-R model by empirically showing the effects of organizational justice perception as a job resource on service employees' psychological capital as a personal resource. In doing so, we hope to shed light on ways to nurture the psychological capital of employees in the workplace.

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Literature review and hypotheses development

The impact of job characteristics on job incumbents' affective, cognitive and behavioral responses has long been a key research question for management researchers. In line with this research stream, the JD-R model suggests that job demands such as high work pressure and role ambiguity may lead to burnout, while job resources such as social support and autonomy can promote motivation and work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001). Job resources have also been found to moderate the relationship between job demands and burnout by buffering the negative effects of job demands (Bakker, Demerouti, & Euwema, 2005; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). The JD-R model defines job resources as 'those physical, psychological, social, organizational aspects of the job that are either/or: functional in achieving work goals, reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs, and stimulate personal growth, learning, and development' (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, p. 312). Resources that employees can find on the job are composed of diverse components, including materials (e.g., compensation), interpersonal relationships (e.g., supervisor support), job characteristics (e.g., autonomy) and organization (e.g., career development opportunities). This model further contends that job resources motivate employees to focus on positivity in the workplace, which can result in an enhanced quality of work life and individual well-being (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Several recent studies have extended the JD-R model by emphasizing the interrelationships between job demands, job resources and personal resources (Boudrias et al., 2011; Karatepe & Olugbade, 2009; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). In particular, a few

studies show that through the motivational and personal growth effects of job resources, individuals can build and strengthen personal resources such as self-esteem, optimism and self-efficacy (Karatepe & Olugbade, 2009; Llorens, Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2007; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007).

The literature on positive work environment as a job resource also highlights its positive effect on the development of psychological resources including self-efficacy, proactivity and desire for learning (Roberts, 2007; Roberts et al., 2005). A core component of positive work environment involves positive relationships in which individuals experience mutual caring and safety in times of distress (Roberts, 2007). The experience of mutual understanding, affirmation, relational satisfaction and positive expectations on the job and in the overall work environment can heighten the sense of self-efficacy, competence and strength (Cohen, Steele, & Ross, 1999; Fernet et al., 2012), thus creating reservoirs of psychological resources in individuals in the workplace. Besides positive relationships, positive work environment includes, among many others, development opportunities, cooperative work routines, cultures of trust and fair systems (Dutton & Ragins, 2007), which taken together are expected to create job resources and nurture individuals' psychological resources.

We first explore the construct of psychological capital as a psychological resource and examine how it can be nurtured through organizational justice perception as a job resource. We further construct our argument on how service employees' psychological capital can influence the extent to which they engage in surface or deep acting and how the different types of emotional labor, in turn, lead to emotional exhaustion and intention to leave the organization.

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Positive psychological capital

The construct of psychological capital is largely drawn from the theory and research of positive psychology (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) and positive organizational scholarship (Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn 2003). Psychological capital refers to individuals' psychological resources and capacities that are positive and enduring to some extent (Luthans & Youssef, 2007; Youssef & Luthans, 2007). It enables individuals to exert self-directed motivation toward goals and has an impact on job performance and desired work attitudes. For example, psychological capital has been found to increase extra-role behaviors, satisfaction and commitment (Luthans, Norman, Avolio, & Avey, 2008) and decrease organizational cynicism, intention to quit, counterproductive workplace behaviors (Avey, Luthans, & Youssef, 2010) and perceived symptoms of job stress (Avey, Luthans, & Jensen, 2009). It is 'state-like' because it is subject to change and development, but is more stable and enduring than momentary affective or cognitive states (Luthans & Youssef, 2007; Youssef & Luthans, 2007).

Psychological capital is characterized by four types of capacity and psychological resources individuals can possess: efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience. First, efficacy is a subjective belief in one's competence and ability to mobilize motivation, cognitive resources and courses of action to successfully execute a specific task (Bandura, 1997; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Individuals with efficacy belief tend to set challenging goals and show motivation and energy in pursuing these goals. They perceive hurdles and obstacles as challenges that can be overcome based on their belief in competencies.

Second, optimism is defined as an explanatory style that attributes positive events to internal, permanent and pervasive causes and negative events to external, temporary and situation-specific ones (Seligman, 1998). Optimism as a psychological capacity enables

individuals to be lenient regarding past negative events, to appreciate the present and to seek opportunities for the future using a positive and flexible lens (Luthans, Avey, Avolio, Norman, & Combs, 2006).

Third, hope is a positive motivational state that involves a sense of agency and an active search for pathways toward goal achievement. The agency or willpower component provides energy and motivation to pursue goals, and the pathways component promotes the search for and creation of alternative paths toward goals, even when faced with obstruction (Snyder, 2000). Through the discovery or creation of breakthroughs, individuals are likely to experience boosted willpower and enhanced motivation to search for further alternate pathways, thus creating a positive spiral.

Finally, resilience refers to the capacity to recover from adversity, conflict or failure, and to learn and grow through the experience of overcoming challenges (Luthans, 2002). It is reactive because the capacity for resilience promotes recognition of setbacks, failures and threats, and facilitates the investment of time, energy and resources to recover from the hardship. However, it is proactive as well by framing the setbacks as opportunities for learning and growth, thus placing a positive value on challenges, setbacks and threats (Sutcliffe & Vogus, 2003; Youssef & Luthans, 2005).

The four types of positive capacity are likely to function as personal resources that enable better coping, positive perspectives, proactivity, growth and learning in the workplace (Karatepe & Olugbade, 2009; Roberts, 2007; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). In the present context, service employees with psychological capital are likely to have positive perspectives on their job. Even workers engaged in repetitive, low-skilled jobs may find positive meaning in their work (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001), such as through making a contribution to customers' happiness. Service employees with high psychological capital may have self-directed motivation regardless of their pay grade or prospects for promotion. They may have strong belief in their capacities to fulfill their duties successfully. During a service encounter with a difficult customer, employees with high psychological capital may try diverse pathways to satisfy the customer, and view the challenging experience as a learning opportunity.

In particular, we build on the findings in the literature on positive work environment and the recent extension of the JD-R model, and suggest that the resources employees find in the course of their work (i.e., social support, autonomy, development opportunities, etc.) can build and strengthen their psychological capital (e.g., Karatepe & Olugbade, 2009; Roberts et al., 2005; Roberts, 2007; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). More specifically, we focus on service employees' organizational justice perception as a key component of job resources, and propose that positive aspects and resources on the job may strengthen employees' psychological capacities and resources for customer service. Past research reveals that employees' perceived fairness of treatment at work enhances the overall evaluation of their job, the level of motivation and the sense of growth and learning in the organization (Folger & Konovsky, 1989; Greenberg, 1990), thus having a profound effect on employee cognition, emotion and behaviour. We elaborate our argument on the link between service employees' organizational justice perception and their psychological capital in the following section.

Service employees' distributive and procedural justice perception and psychological capital

Organizational justice perception refers to employees' evaluation of how fair or just the organization's practices, policies and decisions are (Folger & Konovsky, 1989;

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Greenberg, 1990). A vast body of literature indicates that individuals make unique judgments about the fairness of outcomes and procedures, and that these justice perceptions predict emotions, cognitions and behaviors. For example, organizational justice perception has been linked to diverse and important job-related behaviors and attitudes, such as job satisfaction (Folger & Konovsky, 1989), organizational citizenship behaviors (Moorman, 1991) and turnover intention (Daileyl & Kirk, 1992).

The construct of organizational justice is often divided into two types depending on the target of justice evaluation (Cropanzano & Greenberg, 1997; Folger & Konovsky, 1989). Distributive justice represents employees' fairness evaluation of outcome allocations or resource distributions. For example, an evaluation of whether one's compensation is fair pertains to distributive justice perception in an organization. The other type is procedural justice, which refers to employees' fairness judgment of the decision processes or rules used to determine outcomes (Cohen-Charash & Spector 2001; Schminke, Ambrose, & Cropanzano, 2000).

We argue that both distributive and procedural justice perception as job resources are likely to strengthen service employees' psychological capital. The effort–reward imbalance model focuses on the 'absence' of distributive justice and how it can drain personal resources (Siegrist, 1996). It posits that job strain is the result of an imbalance between effort and reward (e.g., salary, promotion opportunities), thus suggesting the importance of distributive justice perception in reducing job stress and burnout and possibly promoting work motivation and psychological well-being.

There are two important ways through which distributive justice perception can strengthen service employees' psychological capital. The first involves enhanced cognitive flexibility via positive emotion, whereby perceived distributive justice triggers positive emotion (Chebat & Slusarczyk, 2005; Schoefer & Ennew, 2005) which fosters cognitive flexibility through a broadened scope of attention, cognition and action (Fredrickson, 2001). For example, people experiencing positive emotion tend to use broader categories (Isen & Daubman, 1984), find links between seemingly irrelevant stimuli (Isen, Johnson, Mertz, & Robinson, 1985) and propose creative solutions (Baron, 1990). Such cognitive flexibility is the core characteristic of psychological capital.

More specifically, optimism refers to a flexible, positive explanatory style that is lenient for past negative events and savors the present (Luthans et al., 2006), thus exhibiting flexibility in cognition and interpretation. It even involves using a flexible, positive lens to seek opportunities for the future. The positive state of hope also requires cognitive flexibility in searching for or creating alternative paths toward goals when faced with setbacks (Carlsen, Hagen, & Mortensen, 2012). Cognitive flexibility is additionally relevant to the construct of resilience which includes the cognitive capacity to frame setbacks as opportunities for learning and growth (e.g., Sutcliffe & Vogus, 2003).

The other path linking distributive justice perception and service employees' psychological capital is related to a sense of belonging and the resultant confidence this brings. The fair allocation of rewards or outcomes can communicate that the employee is a valued member of the organization and that the organization cares about how he or she is treated (Rego & Pina e Cunha, 2008). Such a sense of belonging can strengthen employees' confidence and efficacy belief. The perception of being a valued member of an organization or the sense of belonging to one's community has been found to increase the development of an optimistic outlook through opening up to new possibilities (Wise, 2005). The internalized motivation and energy with positive expectation of success is the core of feelings of efficacy and hope (Carlsen et al., 2012; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Such positive psychological connections between an organization and its employees may

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fuel energy and proactive motivation and resilience under challenges and setbacks. Thus, we hypothesize as follows:

H1a: Perceived distributive justice will be positively associated with service employees' psychological capital.

Perception of procedural justice is largely influenced by the extent to which employees feel that they have opportunities to participate in decision processes (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Schminke et al., 2000). Thibaut and Walker (1975) proposed two different means to take part in decision processes. Process control pertains to the extent to which one has opportunities to voice opinions on decision processes and work procedures or policies. Decision control involves whether one has the power to make decisions regarding one's own work.

Service employees' perceived procedural justice is expected to build their psychological capital in two ways. The first route involves feelings of autonomy and empowerment on the job. Clearly defined and established decision procedures can strengthen service employees' efficacy beliefs by providing guidelines for desired work behaviors and attitudes (Rego & Pina e Cunha, 2008). A sense of hope can be strengthened by the presence of opportunities to control decision processes and make decisions regarding one's own work (e.g., Carlsen et al., 2012). The sense of autonomy and empowerment can fuel service employees' energy and motivation to pursue job goals through agency feeling and willpower, the key aspects of efficacy and hope feelings (e.g., Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998).

The other route through which perceived procedural justice fosters psychological capital involves perception of a supportive climate. Luthans et al. (2008) reported that support from peers and supervisors strengthen employee psychological capital and work performance. Having the opportunity to participate in the decision processes and the power to control one's own job clearly indicates that the organization supports and trusts an employee's judgments. When employees feel supported, they become confident in exploring new territories and alternative pathways to achieve goals (Edmondson, 1999), which indicates the feeling of hope. A supportive climate can foster resilience by strengthening the willpower to recover from failure and adversity (Luthans et al., 2008). Service employees in a supportive work environment may feel safe disclosing their failures and reframing such occasions as learning opportunities, which indicates a sense of optimism. Hence, we hypothesize as follows:

H1b: Perceived procedural justice will be positively associated with service employees' psychological capital.

Service employees' psychological capital and emotional labor

Deep acting involves service employees' modification of cognitions and eventually their inner emotional state to match organizationally desired emotions (Grandey, 2003; Hochschild, 1983). We anticipate that service employees equipped with psychological capital may have sufficient motivation and psychological capabilities to invest the necessary effort and resources in fulfilling job requirements (e.g., Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Moreover, positive perspectives and cognitive flexibility may enable them to readily alter their cognitions and inner emotional state and, as a result, engage in deep acting rather than surface acting. Positive, flexible thinking and proactive psychological capacities are likely to motivate service employees to internalize service norms and values and to serve customers with authenticity instead of superficially faking emotions.

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More specifically, we believe that service employees' psychological capital can foster deep acting but not surface acting for two reasons. First, psychological capital tends to fuel individuals with the motivation and energy to pursue goals through agentic thinking (Snyder et al., 1991), which may lead to deep acting rather than surface acting. For instance, feelings of efficacy and hope are known to be associated with self-directed motivation, energy and positive expectations of success based on the belief in one's competence and abilities (Avey et al., 2010; Hannah & Luthans, 2008). Psychological capital's agentic thinking motivates service employees to take charge, and fosters willpower and determination to internalize normative emotion for deep acting instead of giving up and retreating to surface acting.

Second, psychological capital helps service employees maintain positive perspectives on their job and the environment through cognitive flexibility. Optimistic and resilient individuals tend to perceive job demands as challenging rather than depleting (Scheier, Carver, & Bridges, 1994). Service employees with optimism are characterized by a positive and flexible explanatory style, and such cognitive flexibility is a prerequisite for cognitive modification and the internalization of organizational values and norms (e.g., Joormann, Siemer, & Gotlib, 2007; Larsen, 2000). Additionally, resilience helps employees frame job demands positively as opportunities for learning and growth. Moreover, resilient individuals expand the scope of resources so that they rely not only on their own resources but also on social support and other organizational resources (Luthans, 2002; Youssef & Luthans, 2005). The aforementioned positivity and cognitive flexibility can facilitate the modification processes needed for deep acting. Hence, service employees equipped with psychological capital are likely to exhibit more deep acting and less surface acting, presenting the following hypotheses:

H2a: Service employees' psychological capital will be positively associated with deep acting.

H2b: Service employees' psychological capital will be negatively associated with surface acting.

Service employees' emotional labor and emotional exhaustion

Emotional labor has been associated with occupational stress and emotional exhaustion (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Grandey, 2003), and researchers suggest that the consequences may differ between surface and deep acting (Bono & Vey, 2005; Philipp & Schüpbach, 2010). For instance, service employees' surface acting has been found to increase psychological strain, emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (Hülsheger & Schewe, 2011). On the other hand, the relationship between deep acting and emotional exhaustion has been rather tenuous (Bono & Vey, 2005; Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Grandey, 2003).

Surface acting involves emotional discrepancies between what is genuinely felt and what needs to be displayed during service interactions. Such emotional dissonance is likely to lead to burnout over time (Grandey, 2003; Hochschild, 1983). Deep acting requires service employees to internalize service norms and values and to modify their emotional state accordingly. Despite a certain degree of effort and attention required for deep acting, it is less likely to result in emotional exhaustion and burnout. This is partly because the draining effect of deep acting may be counteracted by the uplifting experience of inner feelings being aligned with normative feelings (Goldberg & Grandey, 2007). An enhanced feeling of authenticity (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002) and customers' positive

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reactions to employees' deep acting (Côté, 2005) contribute to the uplifting experience as well. Hence, we hypothesize as follows:

H3a: Service employees' deep acting will be negatively associated with their level of emotional exhaustion.

H3b: Service employees' surface acting will be positively associated with their level of emotional exhaustion.

Service employees' emotional exhaustion and turnover intention

Past research has revealed predominantly negative outcomes of service employees' emotional exhaustion, such as decreased psychological and physical well-being, poorer job performance and heightened negative work attitudes including turnover intention (Cropanzano, Rupp, & Byrne, 2003; Firth & Britton, 1989; Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004; Lee & Ashforth, 1996). According to the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, people strive to obtain, retain and protect valued resources and that emotionally exhausted individuals are likely to strive to minimize further resource losses (Hobfoll, 2002; Shirom, 2003). However, when these attempts fail, individuals engage in withdrawal behaviors as a way to protect resources (Deery, Iverson, & Walsh, 2002; Wright & Cropanzano, 1998), thus suggesting a positive link between emotional exhaustion and turnover intention. Thus, we hypothesize as follows:

H4: Service employees' emotional exhaustion will be positively associated with turnover intention.

Methods

Data collection and participant characteristics

Flight attendants from the largest airline company in South Korea participated in the survey study by responding to a self-administered survey instrument. Focusing our sampling frame on a single firm allowed us to better control against confounding effects, such as the firm's reward/compensation strategy, firm performance, sales technology availability and control systems (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000). This approach is aligned with the relevant literature (MacKenzie, Podsakoff, & Paine, 1999). First, we contacted human resource managers of the company to obtain permission to collect data and identify teams to participate in the study. Questionnaires were given to the managers of these teams, which were then distributed to flight attendants. The team managers provided the flight attendants with a packet that contained a cover letter, a self-administered questionnaire and a stamped pre-addressed envelope. To increase the response rate, we announced that we would provide a $5 gift voucher for each completed questionnaire. In addition, we asked the human resource managers several times to encourage their employees to be sincere in their responses and return the questionnaires on time.

Of the 400 questionnaires distributed to the flight attendants, 278 questionnaires were returned by mail. After list-wise deletion, we obtained a total of 263 usable responses, corresponding to a 65.8% response rate. Based on the data from 263 flight attendants, a preliminary analysis revealed that 91.3% of the subjects were female, with an average age of 30.1 (SD = 6.24) years, ranging from 20 to 54 years. The majority of our sample (nearly 69.2%) held at least a bachelor's degree. The respondents had an average job tenure of 6.49 (SD = 5.43) years.

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Measurement scales

Following Brislin's (1970) recommendation, we first translated the original version of the questionnaire into Korean and then asked two bilingual individuals to translate it back from Korean to English. Two organizational behavior researchers reviewed this translation to ensure the validity of our measurement. All measurements of the constructs used a five-point Likert scale (see Table 1). We used three items to measure deep acting and four items to measure surface acting adapted from Diefendorff, Croyle, and Grosserand (2005). Positive psychological capital was measured using 14 items (four dimensions: efficacy, hope, resilience and optimism) adapted from Luthans, Avolio, Avey, and Norman (2007). To assess emotional exhaustion, we used four items by Maslach and Jackson (1981). Three items to measure distributive justice and three items to measure procedural justice were adapted from Lucas, Alexander, Firestone, and LeBreton (2007) and Lucas, Zhdanova, and Alexander (2011). We measured turnover intention using three items by Netemeyer, Boles, and McMurrian (1996) and Brashear, Lepkowska-White, and Chelariu (2003).

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Results

We first assessed the reliability, validity and unidimensionality of the measurement scales. First, the reliability of the constructs was estimated using Cronbach's alpha coefficients (see Table 1). The reliability coefficients for the variables range from 0.73 to 0.90, which is considered satisfactory (Nunnally, 1978). Second, we performed confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to verify the convergent and discriminant validity of the measures, using Mplus. In the CFA model, the constructs in our hypotheses represent a second-order factor (psychological capital was reflected by four dimensions: efficacy, hope, resilience and optimism), with the observed survey items representing first-order factors that in turn represent a second-order factor. The results showed an acceptable model fit ($\chi^2(470) = 874.60$, $p < 0.05$, CFI = 0.91, TLI = 0.90, RMSEA = 0.06), indicating that the measurement scales showed convergent and discriminant validity. All standardized factor loadings were significant, indicating convergent validity. Furthermore, the composite reliability and average variance extracted (AVE) of these constructs met the suggested levels of 0.70 and 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). We checked the condition for discriminant validity among the constructs suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981). All AVE were greater than the squared correlation between the construct and any others. These results provide evidence of convergent and discriminant validity (see Table 2).

Common method bias

Given that our data were collected from a single source, we followed the procedures recommended by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, and Podsakoff (2003) to rule out the influence of common method bias (Rodríguez-Pinto, Carbonell, & Rodriguez-Escudero, 2011). We applied procedural remedies to common method bias by protecting respondent anonymity, reducing evaluation apprehension, improving item wording and separating the measurement of the predictor and outcome variables. As a statistical remedy, we conducted the Harman's single-factor test, the most commonly used technique for addressing common method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003). We compared the Harman's single-factor CFA solution to the original measurement model and found that the single-factor model indicated a worse fit ($\chi^2(495) = 3295.84$, $p < 0.05$, CFI = 0.37,

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Table 1. Scale items and construct evaluation.

Construct	*Scale items*	λ^a	α	*CR*	*AVE*
Surface acting	I put on a 'show' or 'performance' when interacting with customers	0.75	0.88	0.85	0.65
	I just pretend to have the emotions I need to display for my job	0.85			
	I put on a 'mask' in order to display the emotions I need for the job	0.82			
	I show feelings to customers that are different from what I feel inside	0.76			
Deep acting	I try to actually experience the emotions that I must show to customers	0.81	0.83	0.84	0.63
	I make an effort to actually feel the emotions that I need to display toward others	0.87			
	I work hard to feel the emotions that I need to show to customers	0.70			
PsyCap1 (efficacy)	I feel confident analyzing a long-term problem to find a solution	0.71	0.86	0.86	0.61
	I feel confident in representing my work area in meetings with management	0.82			
	I feel confident contributing to discussions about the company's strategy	0.83			
	I feel confident contracting people outside the company (e.g., supplier, customers) to discuss problem	0.76			
PsyCap2 (hope)	At the present time, I am energetically pursuing my work goals	0.63	0.81	0.83	0.54
	Right now I see myself as being pretty successful at work	0.72			
	I can think of many ways to reach my current work goals	0.77			
	At this time, I am meeting the work goals that I have set for myself	0.80			
PsyCap3 (resilience)	I can be 'on my own', so to speak, at work if I have to	0.67	0.73	0.75	0.50
	I usually take stressful things at work in stride	0.75			
	I can get through difficult times at work because I've experienced difficulty before	0.69			
PsyCap4 (optimism)	I always look on the bright side of things regarding my job	0.73	0.80	0.82	0.60
	I'm optimistic about what will happen to me in the future as it pertains to work	0.88			
	I approach this job as if 'every cloud has a silver lining'	0.70			
Emotional exhaustion	I feel emotionally drained from my work	0.78	0.76	0.77	0.53
	I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job	0.76			
	I feel burned out from my work	0.64			
Turnover intention	I have searched for a new job	0.85	0.90	0.91	0.77
	I intend to quit my present job	0.91			
	During the next 12 months, I intend to search for an alternative role to my present job	0.87			
Distributive justice	I feel that I generally earn the rewards and punishments I get in this world	0.83	0.86	0.86	0.66
	I usually receive the outcomes that I deserve	0.87			
	I generally deserve the things I am accorded	0.74			

(*Continued*)

Table 1 – *continued*

Construct	*Scale items*	λ^a	α	*CR*	*AVE*
Procedural justice	People usually use fair procedures in dealing with me	0.80	0.83	0.83	0.62
	I feel that people generally use methods that are fair in their evaluations of me	0.78			
	Regardless of the specific outcomes I receive, I am generally subjected to fair procedures	0.78			
Goodness-of-fit: $\chi^2(470) = 894.60$, $p < 0.05$; CFI = 0.9; TLI = 0.90; RMSEA = 0.06, SRMR = 0.06					

Note: CR, composite reliability; AVE, average variance extracted.
[a] All factor loadings are significant ($p < 0.01$).

TLI = 0.32, RMSEA = 0.15). Therefore, we concluded that our results were not seriously compromised by common method bias.

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Hypothesis testing

We conducted structural equation modelling to test the hypotheses. Overall, the hypothesized model produced an adequate fit with the data (χ^2 (483) = 976.60, $p < 0.05$, CFI = 0.90, TLI = 0.90, RMSEA = 0.06). All parameter estimates are shown in Figure 1. Hypotheses 1a and 1b predicted that the perception of distributive and procedural justice would increase service employees' psychological capital. As shown in Figure 1, both hypotheses were supported. Distributive justice ($\beta = 0.24$, $p < 0.05$) and procedural justice ($\beta = 0.38$, $p < 0.01$) were significant predictors of psychological capital.

Hypotheses 2a and 2b predicted that service employees' psychological capital would be positively related to deep acting and negatively related to surface acting. Hypothesis 2a was supported, as psychological capital was positively associated with deep acting ($\beta = 0.43$, $p < 0.01$). However, the relationship between psychological capital and surface acting was not significant ($\beta = 0.06$, $p > 0.05$); thus, Hypothesis 2b was not supported. Hypotheses 3a and 3b predicted that service employees' deep acting would decrease emotional exhaustion, whereas surface acting would increase emotional exhaustion. Both hypotheses were supported, as deep acting was negatively associated with emotional exhaustion ($\beta = -0.33$, $p < 0.01$) and surface acting was positively associated with emotional exhaustion ($\beta = 0.59$, $p < 0.01$). Finally, Hypothesis 4

Table 2. Means, standard deviations and correlations among variables.

	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*
1. Distributive justice	**0.66**						
2. Procedural justice	0.80**	**0.62**					
3. Psychological capital	0.58**	0.55**	**0.54**				
4. Deep acting	0.30**	0.27**	0.41**	**0.63**			
5. Surface acting	−0.01	−0.20**	0.08	0.21**	**0.65**		
6. Emotional exhaustion	−0.23**	−0.29**	−0.23**	−0.20**	0.55**	**0.53**	
7. Turnover intention	−0.47**	−0.37**	−0.35**	−0.28**	0.00	0.20**	**0.77**
Mean	3.22	2.87	3.77	3.79	3.50	2.06	2.20
SD	0.92	0.84	0.65	0.68	0.90	0.76	1.03

Note: Numbers along the diagonal (in bold) are the AVE.
*$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$.

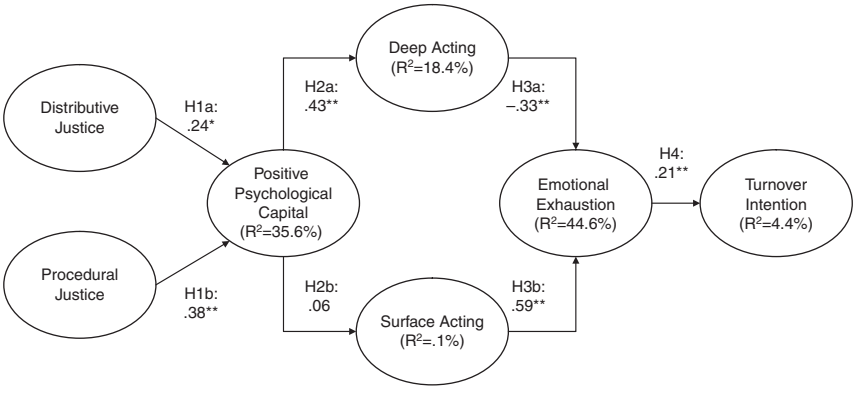


Figure 1. Research model. Note: $*p < 0.05$; $**p < 0.01$.

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predicted that service employees' emotional exhaustion would increase their turnover intention. A significant, positive relationship between emotional exhaustion and turnover intention provided support for this hypothesis ($\beta = 0.21$, $p < 0.01$). Overall, our hypothesized structural model explained 35.6% of the variance in psychological capital, 0.1% in surface acting, 18.4% in deep acting, 44.6% in emotional exhaustion and 4.4% in turnover intention. Hence, the structural equation modeling generally supported the hypothesized model.

Additional analysis

As the results regarding Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2a were statistically significant, we tested the significance of the possible mediation effects of psychological capital using bootstrapping ($N = 5000$; Shrout & Bolger, 2002). Bootstrapping is a statistical resampling method that estimates the parameters of a model and their standard errors strictly from the sample (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). Although the Sobel (1982) test is powerful, it relies on the assumption that the indirect effect $a \times b$[1] is normally distributed. This assumption is tenuous because the distribution of $a \times b$ is known to be non-normal, even when the variables constituting the product ab are normally distributed (Edwards & Lambert, 2007). Therefore, bootstrapping is recommended. The use of bootstrapped confidence intervals (CIs) avoids the power problems introduced by asymmetric and other non-normal samplings of an indirect effect (MacKinnon, Lockwood, & Williams, 2004).

The indirect effect, which is of primary interest in a simple mediation model, is quantified as the product of the direct effect of distributive/procedural justice on deep acting instrumentality and the direct effect of distributive/procedural justice on deep acting while controlling for positive psychological capital. First, the indirect effect of distributive justice on deep acting via psychological capital was moderate ($b = 0.11$), but a 95% CI around the standardized, bootstrapped estimate of the indirect effect confirmed that it was statistically significant (95% CI [0.03, 0.28]). Second, the indirect effect of procedural justice on deep acting via positive psychological capital was weak ($b = 0.08$), and a bootstrapped estimate of indirect effect confirmed that it was not statistically significant at 95% CI [−0.01, 0.26], but significant at 90% CI [0.01, 0.22]. Specifically, our result is on the 95% confidence line.

These results show that service employees' perceived distributive justice influenced deep acting through their enhanced psychological capital. The mediating effect of positive

psychological capital was marginal for perceived procedural justice on deep acting. Therefore, future research needs to conduct a replicated study to validate and clarify the mediation effect of psychological capital between perceived procedural justice and emotional labor.

Alternative model

Given that the JD-R model (Demerouti et al., 2001) and the COR model (Hobfoll, 2002) address a combination of resources and their collective effect on employee well-being and work engagement, it was considered worthwhile testing the interaction effect of job resources and psychological or personal resources on emotional labor. Therefore, an alternative model was proposed to test the possible interaction effects of organizational justice perception and psychological capital on emotional labor.

We decided to introduce SEM using Mplus software to test moderation with latent variables. In recent years, Mplus has provided the module to estimate moderation by using the function of 'ALGORITHM = INTERACTION' (Muthén & Muthén, 2008). Mplus utilizes the quasi-maximum likelihood approach in computing interaction between latent variables (Klein & Muthén, 2007), an approach which has recently been favorably compared to other methods for estimating latent variable interactions (Marsh, Wen, & Hau, 2004). Our results showed that the interaction effect of distributive justice and psychological capital on emotional labor was not significant, as was the interaction effect of procedural justice and psychological capital on emotional labor (see Table 3). Hence, we concluded that the alternative model with interaction effect was not superior to our research model. However, the question of how job and person-based resources exert interactive effects on service employees' emotional labor warrants further exploration if we are to gain a deeper understanding of the interplay between resources and work engagement.

Discussion and conclusions

The purpose of the present study was to explore the impact of perceived organizational justice on service employees' psychological capital. We further examined how service

Table 3. Parameter estimates for alternative model.

Path	b	*SE*	t
Distributive justice → deep acting	0.14	0.14	1.01
Procedual justice → deep acting	−0.08	0.15	0.49
Distributive justice → suface acting	0.35	0.18	1.96*
Procedual justice → surface acting	−0.66	0.19	3.54**
PsyCap → deep acting	0.39	0.12	3.16**
PsyCap → suface acting	0.32	0.15	2.09*
Distributive justice × PsyCap → deep acting	− 0.22	0.26	0.86
Procedual Justice × PsyCap → deep acting	0.30	0.26	1.17
Distributive justice × PsyCap → Surface Acting	0.31	0.28	1.10
Procedual Justice × PsyCap → surface acting	− 0.19	0.29	0.65
Deep acting → emotional exhaustion	−0.45	0.11	4.25**
Suface acting → emotional exhaustion	0.62	0.08	7.74**
Emotional exhaustion → turnover intention	0.22	0.08	2.60**

Note: Tests of path coefficients are two-tailed tests.
*$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$.

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employees' psychological capital led to deep acting or surface acting and then to emotional exhaustion and turnover intention. Both perceived distributive justice and perceived procedural justice had positive effects on service employees' psychological capital. We also found that psychological capital facilitated service employees' deep acting but not surface acting. Deep acting had negative effects on emotional exhaustion, while surface acting had positive effects on emotional exhaustion, which further led to higher turnover intention. Through additional analysis, we revealed that service employees' psychological capital plays a mediating role in the relationship between perceived distributive justice and deep acting.

Theoretical implications and future research directions

This research offers contributions to our understanding of organizational justice perception and psychological capital and has implications for the service management and emotional labor literature. First, our findings reveal the importance of cultivating service employees' psychological capital in the emotional labor context. Although a number of studies have explored the construct of psychological capital (Luthans, 2002; Luthans & Youssef, 2007; Youssef & Luthans, 2007), little has been theoretically developed or empirically tested regarding the impact that psychological capital may have on service employees' deep or surface acting. This research takes a step toward filling this gap by demonstrating that service employees equipped with psychological capital engage in deep acting but not surface acting. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study to empirically show a direct link between psychological capital and emotional labor.

The four elements of psychological capital – efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience – are likely to build psychological resource reservoirs that motivate service employees to engage in deep acting and overcome challenges during the service encounter. Collectively, these four components reflect a full spectrum of psychological resources, including individuals' ability to overcome and advance through adversities and challenges by adopting a positive perspective and learning from new experiences. The synergistic effect of the four components working together has been found to be stronger than the total effect of each component separately (Luthans et al., 2007). Such a focus on the collective effects of psychological capital produces relatively little understanding of the boundary conditions that may prefer one component over others (i.e., the nature of customers, the location of service encounters, service employees' personality traits, etc.). This opens up an interesting avenue for future research.

Unexpectedly, the negative relationship between service employees' psychological capital and surface acting was insignificant. Psychological capital may have triggered agentic thinking to take charge in providing quality customer service instead of remaining reactive and retreating to surface acting. We suspect that psychological resources and capacities built through psychological capital may have provided service employees with sufficient willpower and energy to sustain the draining work of surface acting. In addition, the optimism and resilience components of psychological capital tend to facilitate cognitive flexibility, which helps service employees to modify and internalize behavioral norms. Cognitive flexibility tends to broaden individuals' scope of attention and cognition, and several researchers have revealed that cognitive flexibility enabled individuals to perceive outgroup members similarly to the way they perceive ingroup members (Dovidio, Gaertner, Isen, & Lowrance, 1995; Johnson & Fredrickson, 2005). This broadened sense of self to include others and the associated feelings of oneness may facilitate the process of internalizing organizational values and norms, thus leading to deep

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acting rather than surface acting. Future research will be necessary to examine further the different effects of psychological capital on deep and surface acting and its underlying psychological mechanisms.

Second, this research extends our general understanding of psychological capital and psychological resources by uncovering the relationship between perceived organizational justice as a job resource and service employees' psychological capital as a psychological resource. Previous studies have mainly shown the outcomes of psychological capital such as extra-role behaviors, commitment (Luthans et al., 2008), job stress (Avey et al., 2009), counterproductive workplace behaviors and intentions to quit (Avey et al., 2010). To our knowledge, this is the first study to provide empirical evidence of the effects of perceived distributive and procedural justice on service employees' psychological capital. Furthermore, our findings corroborate recent studies based on the expanded JD-R model which suggest that job resources promote personal and psychological resources such as self-efficacy, optimism and self-esteem (Karatepe & Olugbade, 2009; Llorens et al., 2007; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). Our focus on psychological resources addresses the call for research that contributes to a better understanding of the psychological mechanism underlying the JD-R model (Fernet et al., 2012, 2013). The current study additionally suggests ways to cultivate employee psychological capital in service contexts.

Finally, this research attempts to advance our understanding of emotional labor by addressing the call for research on its psychological antecedents such as perceptions, cognitions and emotions (Lam & Chen, 2012; Spencer & Rupp, 2009). Existing studies have mainly focused on the outcomes of emotional labor, including psychological and physical strain, emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Bono & Vey, 2005; Grandey, 2003). The present research shows service employees' perceived organizational justice and psychological capital as important antecedents of deep acting, thus putting emphasis on both job resources and psychological resources as ways to foster deep acting.

Our additional findings further support the mediating effect of psychological capital. We found sequential relationships among perception of distributive justice (e.g., payment, promotion and incentives), psychological capital and deep acting. Although marginally significant, we also found a mediating effect for psychological capital on the relationship between perceived procedural justice and deep acting. According to Tyler (1989), perception of procedural justice tends to be influenced by issues one cannot easily control, such as neutrality in decision-making procedures, trust in the decision-maker and evidence about social standing. The uncontrollability of these issues is likely to result in a perception of low procedural fairness, which may naturally lead employees to focus more on issues related to distributive justice. We encourage researchers to further investigate the underlying mechanisms that may lead to different outcomes between distributive and procedural justice perception.

In addition, we focused on distributive and procedural justice perception and did not examine how interactional justice perception may influence service employees' psychological capital due to the potential confounding effects of procedural and interactional justice perception (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). Although the distinction between the two constructs remains unclear, future research may directly explore how perceived interpersonal justice as a job resource impacts psychological capital. The findings by Luthans et al. (2008) that psychological capital can be nurtured through supportive work relationships and organizational climate also encourage further exploration in this domain. These findings and future directions underscore the importance

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of understanding the effect of service employees' work-related cognitions and emotional resources on their work engagement and well-being.

Practical implications

The current research has practical implications for strengthening the psychological resources of customer-service representatives and improving service qualities to benefit service organizations at large. Our findings suggest that service employees' psychological capital can be developed, nurtured and cultivated through the perception of organizational justice (i.e., Luthans, 2002). To ensure that service employees can build sufficient psychological capital required for deep acting, it may be important for leaders and managers to pay attention to the factors that shape employees' fairness perceptions.

One option pertains to providing sufficient and transparent explanations of the decision procedures that lead to pay or promotion decisions. Because the job roles of frontline service employees are relatively well defined, another way to ensure justice perception may be to offer a fair amount of compensation with adequate intervals between pay raises and promotions. In addition, supervisor-training programs can be an effective way to build a justice climate throughout the organization. Such programs can potentially increase organization-wide awareness regarding the negative effects of injustice and can convey the importance of fair procedures and treatment of employees.

In addition, the results suggest organizational strategies for improving service qualities. We found a direct positive relationship between service employees' psychological capital and deep acting. Given the positive outcomes associated with deep acting such as improved customer satisfaction (Côté, 2005), it is critical for leaders and managers to ensure that frontline service employees are equipped with the psychological capital sufficient for deep acting. One strategy may involve hiring job candidates who already possess positive psychological resources and capacities. For instance, human resources departments may assess individual job candidates' level of psychological capital as a part of standard written tests (e.g., Psychological Capital Questionnaire by Luthans et al., 2007).

The notion of service employees' psychological capital seems as important as ever in today's customer-oriented workplace with increasing demands for quicker and more flexible responses. Furthermore, the time and place in which service encounters occur are changing rapidly, with virtual interactions between service employees and customers taking place across different time zones and cultures (Tong, Van Der Heide, Langwell, & Walther, 2008). These changing conditions pose enormous challenges to businesses attempting to provide high quality customer service due to the difficulty of transferring positive, friendly emotion to customers via electronic communication (Belkin, 2009). Moreover, negative emotion tends to be more easily transmitted electronically than positive emotion due to the fact negative expressions are more noticeable. Accordingly, the changing workplace and service encounters warrant deeper understanding of service employees' psychological capital and its effect on emotional labor, service quality and employee well-being.

Limitations

Our research contributions should be qualified in light of the following limitations, several of which suggest directions for future research. First, although our theoretical model implies causal effects among the variables, our data are correlated and were surveyed at a

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single time point, thereby making it difficult to assume causal relationships and rule out alternative explanations for the observed relationships. We applied procedural and statistical remedies to address the common method variance in the self-reported variables (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Yet, the findings still need to be interpreted with caution since self-reported data from a single source can inflate the relationship between predictor and dependent variables. Future research might attempt to avoid the common method bias problem by collecting data from different sources or by using longitudinal designs. On the other hand, there is an interesting counterview on the common method bias problem. The study by Bozionelos, Bozionelos, Polychroniou, and Kostopoulos (2014) reported that self-reported personality, compared to the peer-assessed personality, was less likely to explain the variance in the dependent variable (receipt of mentoring service). Further exploration is warranted in redefining and weighing the impact of common method bias.

Second, our study participants were recruited from one organization, which reduces external validity. Given that the contact organization is the largest airline company in South Korea, we believe that our study participants are most likely representative of flight attendants in South Korea. However, it remains unclear whether the study findings could be generalized to other service settings, including retail, financial, educational and medical contexts. Subsequent studies should test the relationships among perceived organizational justice, employee psychological capital and emotional labor in diverse service settings to ensure the external validity of the current findings.

Finally, our sample was predominantly female. This is a fairly typical phenomenon across the airline industry in general, and similar female-dominant samples have been used in other studies on emotional labor in the airline industry (e.g., Fu, 2013; Hur, Moon, & Jeon, 2013; Lee, An, & Noh 2014). However, past research has reported a significant gender difference in the emotional labor context. For instance, female service employees tend to display greater empathy and social competence (Costa, Terracciano, & McCrae, 2001; Wellman & Wortley, 1990), are better at suppressing negative feelings (Simpson & Stroh, 2004) and display more authenticity in their emotional expression during service encounters than male employees (Grandey, 2000; Grandey et al., 2005). Given these findings, future research would benefit by confirming the findings of the current study with a more balanced gender sample.

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Note

1. a: coefficient of the relationship between the independent variable and the mediator; b: coefficient of the relationship between the mediator and the dependent variable.

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