The effects of authentic leadership on trust in leaders, organizational citizenship behavior, and service quality in the Chinese hospitality industry

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A R T I C L E   I N F O

A B S T R A C T

The purposes of these studies are twofold. One was to confirm the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire originally developed and validated by Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, and Peterson (2008) in the Chinese hospitality industry. The second purpose was to test whether authentic leadership influences employee's trust in leaders, customer-oriented organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), and service quality in the Chinese hospitality context and to examine the mediating role of trust in leaders. Data were collected in two stages from five-star hotels in all parts of China. It was discovered that authentic leadership is confirmed to be a higher-order factor construct with 4 first-order factors and 16 items in China. The relationship between authentic leadership and customer-oriented OCB was partially mediated by trust in leaders. Implications and limitation were also addressed in the conclusion.

1. Introduction

In response to the pervasive corporate and government malfeasance early in the twenty-first century, a large number of leadership scholars and practitioners have called for a new type of genuine and value-based leadership to restore hope, confidence, integrity, and honor in business and institution paradigms (Gardner, Cogliser, Davis, & Dickens, 2011). Considering the ethical misconduct and resultant business failures across industries worldwide, Copeland (2016) claims authentic leadership is urgently needed in the twenty-first century. This increasing demand for a leadership paradigm shift was paralleled by a strong interest among scholars who sought to define, construct, and refine authentic leadership theory. Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, and Peterson (2008) explicitly conceptualized authentic leadership as a high-order construct and defined it as "a pattern of leader behavior that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate" (p. 94). They also proposed a higher order Authentic Leadership Model. According to Walumbwa et al. (2008), authentic leadership is essentially displayed through self-awareness, balanced processing, internalized moral perspective, and rational transparency. Self-awareness refers to knowing one's own strengths and weaknesses and the social impact on other people (Kernis, 2003). Balanced processing refers to leaders challenging their deeply held positions and objectively evaluating all relevant information when making a decision (Walumbwa et al., 2008). Internalized moral perspective

refers to self-regulation based on internal moral standards and values, as opposed to behavior guided by external pressures (Walumbwa, Luthans, & Oke, 2011). Relational transparency refers to leader behaviors that openly show one's authentic self, true thoughts, and feelings to followers to promote mutual trust (Wei, Li, Zhang, & Liu, 2018).

Yammarino, Dionne, Schriesheim, and Dansereau (2008) added to the discussion and called for better understanding of the nomological network of authentic leadership and the underlying mechanism by which authentic leadership affects effective organization outcomes. Subsequently, there have been theoretical advances in the authentic leadership field. A large number of studies have been conducted, mostly in the Western context, examining the effects of authentic leadership on several proximal and distal constructs, such as organizational commitment (Gatling, Kang, & Kim, 2016; Walumbwa et al., 2008), turnover intention (Azanza, Moriano, Molero, & Mangin, 2015; Gatling et al., 2016), employee satisfaction (Giallonardo, Wong, & Iwasiw, 2010), organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) (Walumbwa et al., 2008; Walumbwa, Wang, Schaubroeck, & Avolio, 2010), trust in leaders (Clapp-Smith, Vogelgesang, & Avey. 2009; Wong & Cummings, 2009; Wong, Spence Laschinger, & Cummings, 2010), and organizational performance (Clapp-Smith, Vogelgesang, & Avey. 2009; Walumbwa et al., 2008; Wong & Cummings, 2009).

Authentic leadership is especially promising in the hospitality industry (Jacques, Garger, Lee, & Ko, 2015; Ling, Liu, & Wu, 2017). As opposed to other industries such as manufacturing, the hospitality

sector is characterized by its employees facing low pay, heavy workload, routine and monotonous jobs, and role stress (Burke, Koyuncu, Fiksenbaum, & Tekin, 2013). However, provision of excellent service is the most vital element of hospitality. The nature of guest contact work requires hospitality employees to be upbeat, positive, and enthusiastic and are expected to maintain such social and interpersonal skills (Gatling et al., 2016). Hospitality staff must show respect, courtesy, and sincerity to every guest they meet. Most often, they are required to provide customized services and resolve complaints quickly to gain customers' satisfaction. Given the unique nature of hospitality, emotional labor and extra effort requirement, employees working in hospitality organizations need to be emotionally, psychologically and even spiritually strong. Authentic leaders display authenticity and are able to foster respect, credibility, and trust among employees (Bamford, Wong, & Laschinger, 2013). They can focus on positive psychological capacity and positive ethical behaviors, develop harmonious leader-follower relationships, and promote followers' self-development climate in the workplace (Walumbwa et al., 2008). Thus, authentic leadership fits the nature of the hospitality industry.

It also can be argued that the tenets of authentic leadership align with and are well supported by traditional Chinese culture (Whitehead & Brown, 2011). Confucianism, as the kernel of Chinese culture, profoundly shapes Chinese thinking and behavior (Lin & Ho, 2009), and still plays a fundamental role in contemporary Chinese management and leadership (Warner, 2010). Confucius held that authenticity is a basic and primary virtue manifested as self-esteem and humane feelings towards others (Li, Yu, Yang, & Fu, 2014). In the Chinese culture, people are encouraged to focus on their own existence and become an authentic being. It is believed in Confucianism, that morality and leadership are integrated with each other, and therefore cannot be separated individually (Tu, 1993). For Confucians, conformity to morality and virtue is the core principle that governs both social values and human beliefs (Cheung & Chan, 2008; Zhang, Everett, Elkin, & Cone, 2012). People are also encouraged to gain self-awareness through daily examination of their actions against moral principles, reflections on mistakes, and correction of wrong behaviors (Yang, Peng, & Lee, 2008).

In addition, China is traditionally a collectivist country with high power distance (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). Chinese leaders value cooperation, Guanxi (relationship), interpersonal interactions, and participation, and are more willing to subordinate their own objectives to a common goal than their Western counterparts (Rawwas, 2003). They have strong familial networks and maintain reciprocal relationships with subordinates. They also encourage people to cooperate with each other to achieve organizations' goals. Therefore, Chinese leaders tend to demonstrate both high relationship-orientation and high task-orientation compared to their American counterparts (Mujtaba, Chen, & Yunshan, 2010). Whitehead and Brown (2011) cogently argued that when it comes to authentic leadership, Chinese culture has two advantages. One is that collectivism may favor Chinese leaders in authentic concepts because authenticity requires self-abandonment. The other advantage is that Chinese leaders possess an ability to harbor both belief and doubt in their skills and knowledge which promote lower levels of egoism and seeds of humility as opposed to their American counterparts. Therefore, Chinese leaders are more likely to demonstrate authentic leadership behaviors than their Western counterparts in the workplace.

To date, as penetrating corruption and immorality among public and private leaders in China pose a huge threat to social stability and nation's prosperity, authentic leadership is desperately needed to replace the old leadership paradigms. In the leadership research field, however, only a few empirical studies were conducted in China on this topic (e.g. Hu et al., 2018; Li, Yu, Yang,; Qi, & Fu, 2014; Wei et al., 2018; Xiong & Fang, 2014). Little research emphatically examined the relationship between authentic leadership and above constructs in the Chinese hospitality context. To respond to the call made by Yammarino et al. (2008) and to advance the knowledge on authentic leadership in
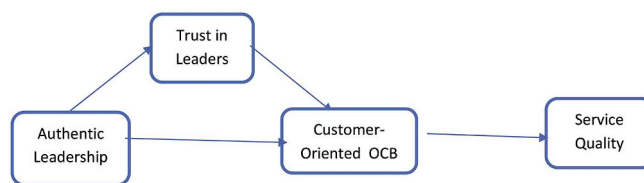

Fig. 1. Conceptual model.

the Chinese context, we conducted this study to confirm the dimensions of authentic leadership in the Chinese hospitality industry and examine the effects of authentic leadership on trust in leaders, customer-oriented OCB, and service quality.

2. Purpose

To reiterate, the purposes of these studies were twofold. One was to confirm the ALQ model proposed and validated by Walumbwa et al. (2008) in the Chinese hospitality industry. The other purpose was to test whether authentic leadership predicts employee's trust in leaders, customer-oriented OCB, and service quality in the Chinese hospitality context and to examine the mediating role of trust in leaders. The conceptual model is presented in Fig. 1

3. Literature review and hypotheses

3.1. Relationship between authentic leadership and customer-oriented OCB

OCB is conceptualized as individual behavior that is "discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and in the aggregate promotes the efficient and effective functioning of the organization" (Organ, Podsakoff, & MacKenzie, 2005, p. 3). OCB is such a broad construct that it is impossible to cover all the nuances across different types of organizations and positions (Bettencourt, Gwinner, & Meuter, 2001). Given the service industry has special requirements on dimensions with respect to customer service, some researchers suggested extending the focus of OCB to incorporate customer-oriented citizenship behaviors of customer-contact employees (Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1997). Customer-Oriented OCB is referred to as employees' voluntary commitment towards customers within an organization that goes above and beyond job description, and is performed by the employee as a result of personal choice (Organ et al., 2005). Customer-oriented OCB differs from general OCB in that the former is a special type of the latter and focuses specially on the customer-contact employees, therefore more appropriate for the hospitality industry. These behaviors include helping customers to solve certain problems using creative methods when customers unexpectedly encounter personal difficulties. For example, technology savvy floor attendants help guests to fix a computer problem when guests desperately need it to be fixed. Or hotel employees help a customer by playing with his or her children when he or she is presenting company proposal at a conference. These behaviors are not officially mandatory but they lead to customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Authentic leaders promote followers' OCB for the following reasons. First, authentic leaders lead by example as they demonstrate confidence, hope, and optimism in the workplace (Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa, 2005). These positive attitudes and emotions may be contagious and create positive trickle-down effect through the organizations to foster positive emotional and cognitive development among their followers, resulting in more citizenship behaviors (Frederickson, 2003). Second, authentic leaders objectively evaluate all relevant information when making a decision; they create a fair and open environment in the workplace. In such a workplace, employees are more aware of the importance of helping other people and encouraged to do so (Walumbwa, Wang, Wang, Schaubroeck, &

Avolio, 2010), thus they tend to engage in behaviors that benefit the organization, customers, and other members in organizations (Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005). Third, authentic leaders have high internal moral standards and values, they represent role models to provide behavioral cues and guidance for followers to emulate (Bandura, 1997). In the leadership literature, several scholarly studies have found there is a positive relationship between authentic leadership and OCB across various cultures and differing sectors (Banks, McCauley, Gardner, & Guler, 2016; Edu, Moriano, Molero, & Topa, 2012; Khan & Zubair, 2018; Min & Ko, 2016; Tonkin, 2013; Yesilkaya & Aydin, 2016; Yohana, 2017).

For example, Tonkin (2013) conducted a study in a software company in the United States. It was found there is a positive correlation between all four dimensions of authentic leadership dimensions and OCB by using job satisfaction as a mediator. The study results showed leadership behaviors have a positive effect on follower characteristics such as employee citizenship behavior and satisfaction. Edu, Moriano, Molero, and Topa (2012) surveyed 227 employees from 22 different companies in Spain and suggested authentic leadership is a better predictor of employees' OCB when transparency and moral behaviors are directed toward the organizations. Yesilkaya and Aydin (2016) also found a positive and significant relationship exists between perceived authentic leadership and OCB in Turkish public sector. By comparing authentic leadership and transformational leadership in a Meta- Analysis review, Banks et al. (2016) concluded authentic leadership had a stronger relationship with employees OCB. Wei et al. (2018) conducted a study in a large Chinese company and reported that authentic leadership significantly predicts OCB. On the basis of the above literature, it can be hypothesized that.

H1. Authentic leadership has a positive effect on customer-oriented OCB in the Chinese hospitality industry.

3.2. Relationship between OCB and employees' service quality

One of the greater challenges in the hospitality industry is maintaining the same level of service quality in all units. Customer service determines the success of any service provider. Customer purchase behaviors are based on their satisfaction with the service provided by service providers, and customer satisfaction and loyalty are highly related to hospitality service quality (Wilkins, Merrilees, & Herington, 2007). Service quality is defined as a comparison of perceived expectations of a service with perceived performance by customers (Grönroos, 2007). According to Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988), there are five dimensions that influence customer's perceptions of service quality: reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy and responsiveness. Employees' service quality, however, is "employees' ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately, their willingness to help customers and provide prompt service, their knowledge and courtesy towards customers and their ability to foster trust and confidence in their customers" (Redda & Van Deventer, 2017). While service quality is a comparison of perceived expectation with experience of a service by customers, employees' service quality is behavior displayed by employees in service-providing organizations. Examples of employees' service quality may include delivering food to the table in a timely manner, avoiding keeping customers waiting for no apparent reason, being polite and showing respect for customers, and keeping hotel rooms clean and tidy.

Research has shown frontline employees who are committed to their jobs, provide an excellent level of service quality (Clark, Hartline, & Jones, 2009). Hospitality is a very competitive industry and service quality is the key competitive advantage for hotels, because competition seems to be more on non-price factors (Wu & Liao, 2016). Yohana, (2017) studied the relationship between OCB and employee service quality in Indonesian universities and the results of the study indicated that OCB has a direct and positive effect on service quality in higher education. Husin, Chelladurai, and Musa (2012) surveyed 325 golf club employees in Malaysia and derived the same result. Studies conducted in the hospitality industry provide additional evidence to support the direct and positive association between OCB and service quality. For example, Bienstock and Demoranvillez (2006)'s research in a fast food franchise in the US suggested that higher levels of OCBs among restaurant employees are associated with higher levels of service quality perceptions among the customers. Similarly, Wu and Liao (2016)'s study at a hospitality company demonstrated that conducted service-oriented OCB has a positive effect on perceived service quality. Another study in hotel industry was conducted by Kwak and Kim (2015) who found that customers' perception of service quality was positively and significantly related to employee OCB both in individual and group levels. Based on the literature reviewed above, the following research hypothesis is proposed.

H2. customer-oriented OCB has a positive effect on employees' service quality in the Chinese hospitality industry.

3.3. Relationship between authentic leadership and trust in leaders

"Trust is an expectancy that the word, promise, or statement of another can be relied upon" (Poon, 2006, p, 520). Trust is also defined as a psychological state that includes individual's vulnerability based on positive prediction of the intention of another person (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Gardner, Avolio, and Walumbwa (2005) argued that authentic leadership "focuses on the formation of authentic relationships between the leader and followers that are characterized by trust and integrity" (p. 389). Followers' trust in the leader can be accounted as one of the most significant factors which mediate leadership effectiveness (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990). Authentic leaders know their own strengths and weaknesses, and openly show one's authentic self, true thoughts, and feelings to followers to promote mutual trust in the workplace (Wei et al., 2018). In addition, authentic leaders' values are based on high moral principles and ethical standards; they are transparent and openly share information (Avolio & Wernsing, 2008). Authentic leaders also care about their followers and have high level of integrity and credibility. All these attributes and behaviors can help authentic leaders to build followers' trust (Agote, Aramburu, & Lines, 2016). Actually, a great amount of empirical research has investigated the effect of authentic leadership on employee trust and identified the positive correlation between them (e.g. Clapp-Smith, Vogelgesang, & Avey, 2009; Hassan & Ahmed, 2011; Peus, Wesche, Streicher, Bruan, & Frey, 2012; Wang & Hsieh, 2013; Wong & Cummings, 2009; Wong & Giallonardo, 2013).

Clapp-Smith et al. (2009) defined leaders' trustworthy behaviors and found that open communication and concern for employees affect trust in leaders among the followers. Ilies, Morgeson, and Nahrgang (2005) argued that leader's interaction with openness and truthfulness creates unconditional trust from followers. Authentic leaders can elicit trust from their followers when they are aware of their followers. Moreover, when authentic leaders make their decisions fairly and ethically, their followers will have more trust in their leader's future actions (Gardner et al., 2005). Jeong, Lee, and Kim (2017) examined the effects of four dimensions of authentic leadership (self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing of information, and internalized moral perspective) on two types of trust (trust in supervisor and trust in organization) in the hotel industry. The results revealed three dimensions of authentic leadership have an impact on trust in the leader and relational transparency does not have any effect on trust in the supervisor. Levesque-Côté, Fernet, Austin, and Morin (2018)'s study provided additional support with positive associations between authentic leadership perceptions and trust in leaders. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3. Authentic leadership has a positive effect on trust in leaders in the

Chinese hospitality industry.

3.4. Relationship between trust in leaders and OCB

Several studies across different industries have confirmed the positive effects of trust in leader on OCB (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Min & Ko, 2016; Wat & Shaffer, 2005). A meta-analysis study conducted by Dirks and Ferrin (2002) suggested that trust in leadership has a positive impact on both employee commitment and OCB. These authors asserted that leaders' behavior and characteristics affect how followers build trust. Quite obviously, followers who trust their leaders would seek a high-quality relationship with them (Blau, 1964). Consequently, followers would reciprocate the favor by performing extra tasks above and beyond their routine jobs to help others (Poon, 2006). Liu, Huang, Huang, & Chen, (2013) studied hotel industry in Taiwan, and they reported that there is a positive and significant relationship between organizational trust and OCB. This positive relationship was further confirmed by a recent study conducted by Barzoki and Rezaei (2017) who surveyed 158 employees in a National oil and gas company in Iran. Therefore, it can be assumed.

H4. Trust in leaders has a positive effect on customer-oriented OCB in the Chinese hospitality industry.

3.5. Mediating effect of trust in leaders between authentic leadership and OCB

Podsakoff et al. (1990) presented one of the earliest studies that claimed the impact of leader's behaviors on OCB are indirect, and the relationship is mediated by followers' trust in their leaders. Essential role of trust as a mediator between leadership styles and OCB have been proven in the subsequent studies (Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, & May 2004; Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). In the existing literature, there have been two studies that specifically examined the effects of authentic leadership and trust in leaders on OCBs (Coxen, van der Vaart, & Stander, 2016; Min & Ko, 2016). Coxen et al. (2016) surveyed 633 public health care employees in South Africa and the results indicated that while both of trust in the organization and trust in coworkers partially mediate the relationships between authentic leadership and OCB, trust in leaders did not significantly indirectly affect OCB. Min and Ko (2016) studied 210 flight attendants and ground service employees of an airline in Korea. Although they did not identify the full or partial mediating effects of trust in leaders, their study clearly showed that authentic leadership has a significant impact on trust in leaders, and trust in leaders, in turn, impacts employees' OCB. Based on the extant literature, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5. Trust in leaders mediates the relationship between authentic leadership and customer-oriented OCB in the Chinese hospitality industry.

4. Methodology

This study consisted of two stages. Accordingly, there were two rounds of sampling. Data were obtained from frontline employees in Chinese five-star hotels using both hard copy and online surveys. The surveys were performed from June 2018 to August 2018. We collected the first round of data to confirm the higher order Authentic Leadership Model, and used the second round of data to examine the hypothesized relationships. The two rounds were one month apart simply because participants at the first stage were slow to complete the survey. After the data were collected, we performed analysis to confirm the Authentic Leadership Model. Then, we conducted the second-round data collection.

Hotel human resource managers or general managers were

contacted prior to the surveys. Also, prior to the surveys, a pilot study was conducted at a polytechnic college in south part of China. Eighty questionnaires were distributed to students who had at least 6 months hotel work experience. They were asked to check the items of the questionnaires concerning its wording and layout. A total of 67 questionnaires were returned, of which 5 had missing responses, resulting in 62 useable data. In addition, three teachers at the college and one human resources manager were invited to evaluate the questionnaires. On the basis of all the feedbacks, some modifications were subsequently made to ensure the questionnaires are clear to study participants.

5. Stage 1

The purpose of stage 1 study was to confirm an Authentic Leadership Model proposed and validated by Walumbwa et al. (2008). For these authors, authentic leadership is a higher-order multidimensional construct, with the first order comprising of four factors: self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing, and internalized moral perspective, the second order is conveniently named authentic leadership.

5.1. Data

In this first-round study, data were collected by utilizing two distributing methods. Only authentic leadership questionnaire was used. First, a total of 300 hard copy questionnaires were distributed to employees of 6 five-star hotels in central and southern parts of China. A number of contacted human resource managers were asked to help distribute the questionnaires. One hundred and eighty-four useable responses were obtained with a response rate of 61.33%. Second, almost at the same time, Wechat (a popular social media software among Chinese people) was used to send the questionnaires to 205 employees of 10 five-star hotels in north, west, and east parts of China. Participants were asked to complete the survey in one month. After one month, the survey was expired, and 142 responses were received with a response rate of 69.27%. The Wechat survey produced 121 valid data. In the first round of data collection, there were 39 missing values (0.38%) with 9 missing cases (2.87%). Little's Missing Completely At Random (MCAR) was used to test the patterns of these missing data. Since the result was not statistically significant ($p > .05$), it could be concluded from this omnibus missing value assessment test that the missing data were probably MCAR. Following a recommendation made by Meyers, Gamst, and Guarino (2013), a list-wise deletion method was adopted to handle the missing data.

Altogether, 305 useable data were obtained in the first round of sampling. Among all the 305 frontline employees, 244 (80.0%) were female participants while there were only 61 (20%) male employees. This sample represents the hotel gender distribution, as many more female employees work in the Chinese hotels. Almost 60% of the participants were in the age range 25–44. In terms of education, 51.5% of the respondents graduated from middle school, 26.6% had a high school diploma, while 18% of them held associate degree. With respect to monthly income, 31.3% earned RMB 2000–2999 per month whereas 40.7% had monthly salary of RMB 4000–4999. A vast majority of most participants (94.1%) were full time employees.

5.2. Measure

There was only one measure in this round of study: Authentic Leadership Questionnaire. Back-translations were conducted prior to administrating the surveys. Five–point Likert scales were adopted ranging from 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. This questionnaire was initially developed by Walumbwa et al. (2008). Two sample items were: "My immediate supervisor can list his/her three greatest weaknesses." and "My immediate supervisor lets others know who he/she truly is as a person." To measure authentic leadership, a

five–point Likert scale was adopted ranging from 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients was 0.967.

5.3. Data analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was adopted to confirm the higher-order factor authentic leadership model. Mplus 7 was employed to analyze the data collected. In the first-round data, the largest absolute values of skewness and kurtosis for all items are 1.432 and 2.634, respectively, a vast majority of them are within -1 and $+1$. There was no significant skewness or kurtosis. The data was largely normally distributed.

5.4. Empirical results

5.4.1. Measurement invariance test

In the first stage of the study, we used two sampling strategies: hard copy and online Wechat. We conducted measurement invariance test to examine whether there were any differences between these two sampling methods. First, configural invariance was examined using a baseline model to test whether the same items measured the same factors across the two sampling strategies. The fit indices suggested acceptable model fit, χ^2 (196) = 352.82, $p < .01$, RMSEA = 0.072, CFI = 0.936, TLI = 0.922, SRMR = 0.042, indicating that configural invariance held. We proceeded to test metric invariance to examine whether the factor loadings of the items were equivalent across the two sampling strategies. Again, this constrained model showed acceptable model fit, χ^2 (208) = 370.09, $p < .01$, RMSEA = 0.071, CFI = 0.934, TLI = 0.924, SRMR = 0.064. The chi-square difference test between the above two models showed factor loadings were invariant across sampling strategies, χ^2 (12) = 16.01, $p > .05$. Therefore, we continued to examine scalar invariance to test whether the like items' intercepts were invariant across the two sampling strategies. The results showed that model fit was also acceptable, χ^2 (220) = 385.40, $p < .01$, RMSEA = 0.070, CFI = 0.933, TLI = 0.927, SRMR = 0.065. The result of the chi-square difference test between metric and scalar models suggested items' intercepts were invariant across sampling strategies, χ^2 (12) = 12.05, $p > .01$. However, when we tested strict invariance, the model did not fit the data well, χ^2 (236) = 507.64, $p < .01$, RMSEA = 0.087, CFI = 0.890, TLI = 0.888, SRMR = 0.108. Since configural, metric, and scalar invariances all held, we have confidence to say that the two sampling strategies yielded the same results. There were no differences between these two sampling strategies in terms of patterns, factor loadings, and intercepts.

5.4.2. Factor model fit

Table 1 provided the fit indices of authentic leadership factor model. It can be clearly seen that the model fits the data perfectly (χ^2 (100) = 185.58, p < .01, RMSEA = 0.053, CFI = 0.958, TLI = 0.950, SRMR = 0.031). The fit indices indicated authentic leadership is a higher-order factor construct with the first order factor consisting of self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing, and internalized moral perspective.

5.4.3. Reliability and construct validity

For reliability, the overall Cronbach's alpha for authentic leadership construct was .967. The Cronbach's alpha for four factors were 0.860, 0.889, 0.920, and 0.910, respectively. All values exceeded the suggested threshold of 0.7, indicating sufficient reliability. Table 2

Table 1
CFA fit indices for the higher-order authentic leadership model.

Model	χ^2 (df)	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	SRMR
Higher order factor model	185.581 (100)	.053	.958	.950	.031

Table 2
Factor loadings, AVE, and CR for four factors of authentic leadership and other three constructs.

First order factors	Items	SFL[a]	AVE[b]	CR[c]
A1(Self-awareness)	Al1	.731	.608	.861
	Al5	.797		
	Al9	.795		
	Al13	.797		
A2 (Relational transparency)	Al2	.843	.671	.891
	Al6	.793		
	Al10	.830		
	Al14	.809		
A3 (Balanced processing)	Al3	.841	.749	.923
	Al7	.894		
	Al11	.852		
	Al15	.874		
A4 (Internalized moral perspective)	Al4	.859	.719	.911
	Al8	.844		
	Al12	.823		
	Al16	.864		
Trust in Leaders	TIL1	.760	.586	.774
	TIL2	.779		
	TIL3	.738		
	TIL4	.785		
	TIL5	.764		
	TIL6	.782		
OCB	OCB1	.761		
	OCB2	.741		
	OCB3	.760	.572	.757
	OCB4	.762		
	OCB5	.805		
	OCB6	.747		
Service Quality	SQ1	.845	.633	.824
	SQ2	.778		
	SQ3	.790		
	SQ4	.767		
	SQ5	.783		

Note.
[a] SFL indicates the estimate of standardized factors loadings.
[b] AVE denotes the average variance extracted.
[c] CR is the composite reliability.

presented factor loadings, AVE, and CR for the 4 factors. It can be seen that all CR values were much greater than 0.70. In addition, all AVE values were moderately larger than 0.50 and all the factor loadings were significantly over 0.7. According to the criterion of He and Li (2011), this model has strong convergent validity. Further, the square root of the AVE for all factors exceeded the inter-corrections as shown in Table 3, indicating good discriminant validity. From all the analyses above, it can be concluded that ALQ has good reliability and validity, and can be used in the Chinese hospitality industry.

6. Stage 2

6.1. Data

Approximately a month after the first round of sampling, the second-round data collection was completed. Managers of twenty hotels across all parts of China were contacted and asked to send the questionnaires via Wechat to their respective frontline staff. Five hundred and six hotel employees were initially contacted; a follow-up was

Table 3
The square root of AVE and the inter-factors correlations.

Factor	1	2	3	4
1.Self-awareness	.780			
2.Relational transparency	.477	.820		
3.Balanced processing	.469	.502	.865	
4.Internalized moral perspective	.507	.579	.586	.848

conducted one week later. This round of data collection had 48 missing values (0.38%) with 15 missing cases (3.92%) detected. Since the result of Little's MCAR was not statistically significant ($p > .05$), 15 missing cases were deleted. A total of valid 368 data were collected and the demographic information was as follows. The number of indicator variables in this round of study was 33. According to Nunnally, (1967), we needed at least a sample size of 330. Two hundred and seventy-four (74.5%) female and only 94 (25.5%) male participants provided valid data. As for age, 63.9% of the participants were in the range 25–44. In terms of education, 39.1% of the respondents graduated from middle school, 32.1% had a high school diploma, while 18.8% of them held an associate degree. With respect to monthly income, 37.0% earned RMB 2000–2999 per month while 32.6% of them earned RMB 3000–3999. Again, most participants (92.7%) were full time hotel employees.

6.2. Measures

The purpose of this round of study was to examine relationships among authentic leadership, trust in leaders, OCB, and service quality, and to test the mediating effect of trust in leaders. There were four constructs in this study. All of them were measured using validated instruments in prior studies. Since all surveys would be administered in Chinese, back-translations were previously conducted to guarantee their accuracy in meaning. Five–point Likert scales were adopted ranging from 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree.

Authentic Leadership. The first stage of the study confirmed the authentic leadership scale developed by Walumbwa et al. (2008). Since it was indicated this scale possessed good reliability and validity, it was used in the second stage of study. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients was 0.942.

Trust in Leaders. Six-item McAllister's (1995) scale was selected to measure trust in leaders. A sample item was "I can talk freely to my immediate supervisor about the difficulties I am having at work and know that (s) he will want to listen." The Cronbach's alpha coefficients was 0.896.

Customer-oriented OCB. Customer-oriented OCB was measured by utilizing six-item scale adapted from Dimitriades's (2007) scale. A sample item was "I exchange ideas with colleagues on how to improve customer service." The Cronbach's alpha coefficients was 0.890.

Employees' Service Quality. Ling et al.'s (2016,2017) 5-item scale was used to measure employees' service quality. A sample item was "The employee is highly communicative with customers." The Cronbach's alpha coefficients was 0.894.

6.3. Data analysis

Structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed to examine relationships among authentic leadership, trust in leaders, OCB, and service quality, particularly to test the mediating effect of trust in leaders. Second round of data was used to test the proposed hypotheses. Again, Mplus 7 was employed to analyze the data collected. Considering measurement error, the indicators of all four constructs were included in the analysis to produce unbiased estimates of strengths associations among the constructs. For the second-round data, the largest absolute values of skewness and kurtosis for the items were 1.329 and 2.229, respectively. A vast majority of them are also within −1 and +1. Therefore, the data distributions were liberally symmetrical and not peaked.

The descriptive statistics (i.e. means and standard deviations) and the zero-order correlations between these four constructs are presented in Table 4.

6.4. Common method bias and collinearity test

Because self-reported method and cross-sectional research design with the same questionnaires were used to collect data in this stage,

Table 4
Descriptive statistics and zero-order correlations between these four constructs.

Construct	M	SD	1	2	3
1. Authentic Leadership	3.917	.645			
2.Trust in Leaders	4.032	.668	.771**		
3.Customer-oriented OCB	4.014	.666	.631**	.678**	
4.Service Quality	4.129	.660	.541**	.582**	.772**

Note. N = 368; M = mean; SD = standard deviation.
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

common method variance is possible which may cause systematic measurement error and further bias the estimates of the relationships among the four constructs of interest. Harman's (1960) single factor test, CFA, and Kock and Lynn's (2012) full collinearity test were employed to detect the occurrence of common method bias. When all 33 items of the 4 construct measurements were constrained to be loaded on one single common factor, the variance explained by the general latent factor is less than the Harmin's threshold of 50%, suggesting that the model can be considered free of common method bias. Moreover, all VIFs in a full collinearity test were lower than 3.3, indicating no sign of the existence of pathological collinearity.

6.5. Validity of measures

CFA was conducted to ensure all the variables were distinct constructs using Mplus 7.4. Factor loadings, AVE, and CR were provided in Table 2. First, the fit of four-factor model was examined (authentic leadership, trust in leaders, customer-oriented OCB, and service quality). This model had an adequate fit with the data (χ^2 (109) = 925.811, $p < .01$; RMSEA = 0.050, SRMR = 0.041; CFI = 0.920, TLI = 0.913). Then, this four-factor model was compared with a two-factor model (servant leadership and trust in leaders were combined as a factor as they were strongly correlated and OCB and service quality were combined for the same reason) and a one-factor model (all combined). Neither the two-factor model (χ^2 (100) = 1644.989, $p < .01$; RMSEA = 0.086, SRMR = 0.053; CFI = 0.857, TLI = 0.847) nor one-factor model (χ^2 (99) = 6050.172, $p < .01$; RMSEA = 0.086, SRMR = 0.080; CFI = 0.755, TLI = 0.738) fit the data well. The four-factor model fit the data better than either the two-factor model ($\Delta \chi^2$ = 719.178, df = 9, $p < .001$) or the one-factor model ($\Delta \chi^2$ = 5124.361, df = 10, $p < .001$). Therefore, authentic leadership, trust in leaders, OCB, and service quality are four distinct constructs.

6.6. Hypothesis testing

After confirming the higher order model of authentic leadership construct and verifying its reliability and validity, the proposed hypotheses were tested to examine the relationships among authentic leadership, trust in leaders, customer-oriented OCB, and service quality, as well as also to investigate the mediating effect of trust in leaders between authentic leadership and customer-oriented OCB. According to the goodness-of-fit indices, this model all provided good fit to the data (See Table 5). χ^2 (487) = 924.931, RMSEA = 0.049, CFI = 0.921, TLI = 0.914, SRMR = 0.041.

Fig. 2 showed the Mplus results for testing the hypotheses. It was indicated that authentic leadership had a significantly positive effect on trust in leaders (β = 0.840, p < .001). Therefore, H3 was supported. Additionally, trust in leaders also had significantly positive effects on

Table 5
Fit indices for the model.

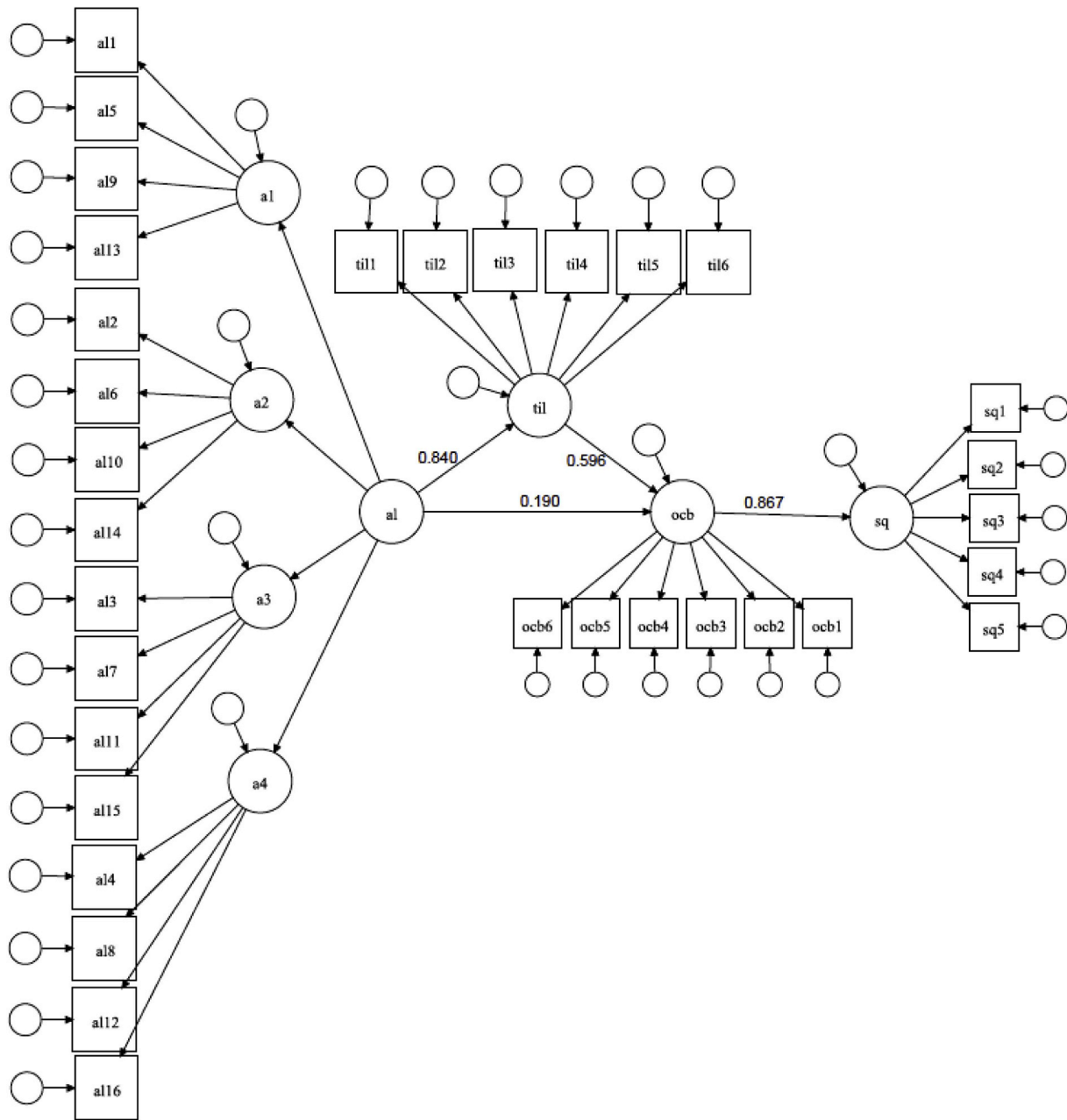| Model	X^2 (*df*)	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	SRMR
Mediation model	924.931 (487)	.049	.921	.914	.041

Fig. 2. Results for the mediation model.

customer-oriented OCB (β = 0.596, p < .001), providing support for H4. The effect of customer-oriented OCB on service quality was significantly positive (β = 0.867, p < .001), providing support for H2 in the model. Additional attention should be given to the indirect and direct mediation effects. Result showed that the total effect (β = 0.691, p < .001), indirect effect (β = 0.501, p < .001), and direct effect (β = 0.190, p = .034). This is to say a large proportion of variance was accounted for by indirect path. Direct effect from authentic leadership to OCB is small and only significant at 0.05 level. Therefore, it was only suggested the relationship between authentic leadership and customer-oriented OCB was partially mediated by trust in leaders, providing partial support for H5.

7. Discussion

The purposes of this study were to confirm the ALQ instrument in the Chinese hospitality industry and to ascertain whether authentic

leadership is correlated to employees' trust in leaders, organizational citizenship behavior, and service quality in China's hospitality context. CFA result indicated that ALQ, as an instrument to measure authentic leadership, can be applicable in the Chinese hotel industry. The study also showed that authentic leadership behavior exhibited in leaders can evoke trust in leaders from followers, resulting in employees going the 'extra mile' to serve customers, which in turn, can translate into quality service. Authentic leaders also empower followers to make decisions when appropriate, even outside their span of control.

ALQ instrument has been confirmed and validated in different cultures (Bakari & Hunjra, 2017; Cervo et al., 2016), and is being frequently employed to operationalize authentic leadership in leadership studies (Avolio, Wernsing, & Gardner, 2018). Even Walumbwa et al. (2008) initially used samples from China, Kenya, and the United States to develop and validate this higher-order multidimensional ALQ. Our studies suggest that ALQ might be a general instrument that can be applicable in measuring authentic leadership behaviors in the Chinese

cultural contexts.

Management and leadership styles in China are profoundly shaped by Confucianism (Zhang et al., 2012). Authentic leaders embrace self-awareness and self-regulation with a positive moral perspective characterized by high ethical standards (Gardner et al., 2005; Luthans & Avolio, 2003). They are aware of their own knowledge, capabilities, values, and motives, and ensure their intentions, actions, and leadership align with their inner values (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Sparrowe, 2005). As discussed previously, these distinguishing features are inherently congruent with Confucius thinking. In Confucianism, "the ethical self naturally develops from consciously empathetic relationships" (Keith, 2009, p. 75). Self-awareness is gained through 'a ceaseless process of inner moral and spiritual transformation' (Tu, 1985, p. 22). Daily examination is absolutely essential for one to know oneself, to check actions going against one's moral principles, and to make ensuing correction if mistakes have been committed (Yang, Peng, & Li. 2008). Because of its root compatibility with the Chinese soil, authentic leadership may function well as espoused and most hoped leadership philosophy to combat corruption and misconduct in contemporary Chinese businesses. This is also the possible reason that ALQ, with its 4 dimensions, can be used to measure authentic leadership in the Chinese hospitality context.

The studies' results indicated that authentic leadership influences trust in leaders from their followers. Relational authenticity and transparency displayed in authentic leaders produce high level of employee trust (Gardner et al., 2005). In the Chinese context, leaders perceived as being authentic, transparent, and congruent in their beliefs and actions are more likely to gain trust and support from their employees in the hospitality companies. It could be intuitively argued the rationale is that authentic leaders are considered to be trustworthy, genuine, and reliable. It was also demonstrated that trust in leaders is associated with customer-oriented OCB. If followers trust their leaders, they are less likely to doubt the intentions and behaviors of the leaders (Jung & Avolio, 2000). When followers are asked to perform certain tasks beyond their own job descriptions, they are prone to "go the extra mile" to serve their customers without reluctance. Or they may voluntarily do additional work to help and satisfy their guests without any order from their supervisors. Most of the hospitality work by nature is hard to monitor, and willingness to assume tasks by heart is critical for hotels to serve customers.

Further, it was found authentic leadership not only has a significant indirect effect on customer-oriented OCB via trust in leaders, it but also directly influences customer-oriented OCB. However, these two effects don't have the same weights in accounting for the variance in OCB. Despite both effects being statistically significant, most of variance is explained by indirect effect through trust in leaders. That is to say authentic leadership influences OCB because of followers trusting their supervisors. If followers' trust partials out, the effect of authentic leadership would greatly decrease. Employees' perception of a leader as authentic and reliable can contribute to their trust in leaders, which in turn, would result in them exerting additional effort to serve customers. This finding is not surprising. According to social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960), reciprocity is a norm whereby two parties tend to engage in mutual beneficial behaviors in exchange for the resources and support provided to them. Authentic leaders always listen to their subordinates and share information when processing information and before making decisions. Also, servant leaders build an organizational culture in which followers feel trusted (Luthans & Avolio, 2009). Followers will show trust towards their leaders and go the extra mile to serve their customers without expecting anything in return. It is indicated the direct effect from authentic leadership to OCB, although small, is still statistically significant.

Lastly, the study results indicated that employees' customer-oriented OCB had a stronger effect on their service quality. If employees are willing to "go the extra mile" in helping customers, the perceived service quality would improve. The possible explanation is when employees try hard to do extra work for their guests, their behavior would be rewarded both physically and psychologically by their supervisor and customers, leading them to gain a positive self-image and further perceive of their best work performance. Alternatively, doing extra work for customers would enhance followers' skills and confidence to serve, resulting in better service quality.

8. Theoretical implications

The studies contribute to the literature on authentic leadership and OCB. Firstly, although ALQ instrument has been confirmed and validated in different cultures and has been frequently used in leadership studies, there are only a few empirical studies conducted in China (e.g. Hu et al., 2018; Li, Yu, Yang, Qi, & Fu, 2014; Wei et al., 2018; Xiong & Fang, 2014). This research confirmed authentic leadership as a higher-order factor construct in the context of the Chinese hospitality industry, thus providing more evidence to demonstrate that the core components of authentic leadership can be generalized across cultural contexts (Walumbwa et al., 2008). This may encourage more scholars in the leadership field to adopt this instrument scale to verify its utility and validity in their own cultures.

Secondly, this research contributes to leadership literature by advancing the knowledge of authentic leadership and its nomological links with other consequence constructs. Authentic leadership, as an antecedent construct, can enhance followers' trust in leaders, resulting in followers' OCB behaviors. OCB behaviors, in turn, lead to heightened service quality in the Chinese hospitality contexts. The effect of authentic leadership on OCB is transmitted more through trust in leaders than direct impact. This study distinguished between the direct and indirect effects of authentic leadership on customer-oriented OCB, thus expanding the research agenda on authentic leadership by addressing the role of trust in leaders in the relationship between authentic leadership and OCB.

Thirdly, this research provides support for the assertion that the tenets of authentic leadership naturally fits the Chinese Confucius culture (Zhang et al., (2012)).

The model of authentic leadership was confirmed to fit the Chinese data well. Self-awareness and self-regulation are typical behaviors that characterize authenticity (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Confucianism advocates self-examination on daily basis and against moral principles, recognition of faults and mistakes in one's behaviors, and correction of these faults and mistakes (Yang et al., 2008). In a sense, authenticity is imbedded in the Confucianism.

9. Practical implications

This study also has some practical implications. Firstly, this study supports the application of ALQ scale in the Chinese hospitality context. Authentic leaders in China display self-awareness, balanced processing, internalized moral perspective, and relational transparency in the workplace. Hospitality organizations can utilize this scale as a criterion to measure and assess their managers' authentic leadership behaviors. Additionally, hospitality organizations can use this scale to recruit and select managers that potentially possess authentic leadership attributes. Furthermore, ALQ scale can be used to provide some training programs to help managers to become effective leaders in the hospitality industry. This scale may also be generalized and used in other industries for the same purposes as well.

Secondly, the results of this study support the utility and effectiveness of authentic leadership behaviors in the Chinese hospitality industry. The more authentic leadership behaviors managers demonstrate in their firms, the higher level of trust they receive from their employees, and more likely the subordinates show OCB to serve the customers. Such voluntary behaviors ultimately result in enhanced customer service. Therefore, hospitality organizations are encouraged to highlight the importance of authentic leadership behavior in their

leaders so that followers are willing to do more voluntary tasks to serve in order to achieve organization goals.

Finally, this study also suggests that trust in leader functions as a mediator between authentic leader and OCB. Authentic leaders trickle down their influences through trust to achieve high-levels of organizational citizenship behaviors and heightened customer service. Followers' trust towards their leaders are predicated on some contingent conditions. If for some reasons, followers do not trust their leaders, the effort of authentic leader would fail. Therefore, while hospitality firms need to pay attention to authenticity, the importance of gaining trust from employees cannot be ignored and should be emphasized.

10. Limitations and future studies

There are some limitations in this study. First, the general research approach for this study was quantitative and we collected our data from different hotels in various parts of China. However, the results for this study may not be applicable to the whole hotel industry because our main focus was only five-star hotels. Future research is encouraged to be conducted to generalize the research results in one lower-star hotels,

or in other industries. Second, our data were collected during the summer which is high season as opposed to other times of the year. During busy seasons, frontline employees may work under more pressure. This may affect their perceptions about the leaders. Future study can avoid this limitation by collecting data during different seasons or year-round.

The third limitation of the study was related to the nature of the survey technique. Common method bias might be an issue because of the self-report technique utilized in this study, which may threaten construct validity and obscure the relationships among four variables examined in this study (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012). The self-reported method used in this study might lead the participants to respond in the way that would be viewed more favorably by others. Future studies might find more unbiased results by obtaining data of predictors and criterion variables from different sources. Lastly, we applied cross-sectional research design to identify the relationships between our variables in the model. However, our study did not examine the relationship between authentic leadership and service quality. It would be valuable if future researchers can conduct longitudinal studies to test causal relationships among these variables.

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2019.06.004.

Appendix

Table 1
Authentic Leadership Questionnaire

Number	Item	Response Category				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	My leader can list his/her three greatest weaknesses.					
2	My leader's actions reflect his/her core values.					
3	My leader seeks others' opinions before making up his/her own mind.					
4	My leader openly shares his/her feelings with others.					
5	My leader can list his/her three greatest strengths.					
6	My leader does not allow group pressure to control him/her.					
7	My leader listens closely to the ideas of those who disagree with him/her.					
8	My leader lets others know who he/she truly am as a person.					
9	My leader seeks feedback as a way of understanding who he/she really am as a person.					
10	Other people know where my leader stand on controversial issues.					
11	My leader does not emphasize his/her own point of view at the expense of others.					
12	My leader rarely presents a "false" front to others.					
13	My leader accepts the feelings he/she has about himself/herself.					
14	My leader's morals guide what he/she does as a leader					
15	My leader listens very carefully to the ideas of others before making decisions					
16	My leader admits my mistakes to others.					

Table 2
Trust in Leaders Questionnaire

Number	Item	Response Category				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	My leader and I can both freely share our ideas, feelings, and hopes					
2	I can talk freely to my leader about difficulties I am having at work and know that (s) he will want to listen.					
3	If I shared my problems with my leader, I know (s) he would respond constructively and caringly					
4	Given my leader's track record, I see no reason to doubt his/her competence and preparation for the job.					
5	Most people, even those who aren't close friends of my leader, trust and respect him/her as a coworker.					
6	Other work associates of mine who must interact with my leader consider him/her to be trustworthy.					

Table 3
Customer-Oriented OCB Questionnaire

Number	Item	Response Category				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	I am assisting co-workers to deliver high-quality customer oriented services.					
2	To serve my customers, I volunteer for things that are not required.					
3	I make innovative suggestions to improve customer service.					
4	I expend considerable energy to come up with creative ways to assist customers facing problems.					
5	I exchange ideas with colleagues on how to improve customer service.					
6	I deal restlessly with customer problems until they are resolved.					

Table 4
Employee Service Quality Questionnaire

Number	Item	Response Category				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	The employee is always helpful with customers.					
2	The employee is very concerned about the needs of customer.					
3	The employee is highly dedicated to his/her job.					
4	The employee is highly communicative with customers.					
5	The employee is very flexibility to provide service to customers.					

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