

THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT & MARKETING
DEPARTMENTAL RESEARCH SEMINAR

**Invisible Hands in Service Creativity:
Joint Effects of Customer Empowering
Behaviors and Empowering Leadership**

By

**Prof. Hui LIAO
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Date: Friday, 7 June 2013

Time: 2:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Venue: M802

All interested are welcome

Invisible Hands in Service Creativity: Joint Effects of Customer Empowering Behaviors and Empowering Leadership

Abstract

This study integrates theories on empowering leadership and regulatory focus theory to develop a model of customer influence on encounter-level service creativity. We propose that customer empowering behaviors enhance front-line service employees' creativity through fostering employee state promotion focus during service encounters. In addition, we propose that empowering leadership moderates the mediated relationships between customer empowering behaviors, employee state promotion focus, and creativity. Using multilevel, multi-source, experience sampling data that involved 380 hairstylists matched with 3550 customers, we found that employee state promotion focus mediated the positive relationship between customer empowering behaviors and employee creativity. We also found a synergy of empowerment from different agents as invisible hands in shaping employee service creativity: empowering leadership strengthened the indirect effect of customer empowering behaviors on employee creativity via state promotion focus.

Professor Hui Liao is the Smith Dean's Professor in Leadership and Management in the Department of Management and Organization at the University of Maryland's Robert H. Smith School of Business. Before joining Maryland, she was on the faculties of the Rutgers University and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She received her PhD with concentrations in Organizational Behavior and Human Resources from the University of Minnesota's Carlson School of Management, and her BA in International Economics from the Renmin University of China.

Professor Liao's current research interests include leadership, service quality, strategic human capital management, and workforce diversity and inclusion. She has conducted field research in various cultural settings including the United States, Mainland China, Hong Kong, Korea, Taiwan, Japan, Europe, the UAE, and other cultural contexts, involving both small business and multinational companies' worldwide operations. Her work received the Academy of Management's Dorothy Harlow Distinguished Paper Award, was featured in the American Psychological Association's Press Releases, and has appeared in the field's top journals such as the *Academy of Management Journal*, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *Organization Science*, and *Personnel Psychology*.