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HR practice, organisational commitment & citizenship behaviour: A study of primary school teachers in Taiwan

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HR practice, organisational commitment & citizenship behaviour

A study of
primary school
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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to examine the relationships between HR practice (four aspects), organisational commitment and citizenship behaviour at primary schools in Taiwan. The four human resource (HR) aspects include: recruitment and placement (RP), teaching, education and career (TEC) development, support, communication and retention (SCR), and performance and appraisal (PA).

Design/methodology/approach – With the assistance from the school HR managers and using an anti-common method variance strategy, research data from 568 incumbent teachers in Taiwan are collected, analysed and evaluated.

Findings – Different from prior studies, highlighting the merits of HR practice, the study discovers that HR practice may not necessarily contribute to citizenship behaviour. Teachers with positive perceptions of RP and TEC are more likely to demonstrate citizenship behaviour, whereas teachers with positive perceptions of SCR and PA are not. In addition, the study finds three moderators: affective organisational commitment (AOC), rank of positions, and campus size. The analysis shows that teachers with more AOC, higher positions and from smaller campus are more likely to demonstrate organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB).

Originality/value – The study provides a closer look at the HR-OCB relationship in Taiwan. It reveals that a positive perception of HR practice may not necessarily contribute to OCB occurrence. In addition, the results indicate that teachers have different views about varying HR aspects. Specifically, aspects of RP and TEC development receive relatively higher levels of positive perception, whereas aspects of SCR and PA receive relatively lower levels of positive perception. Questions arise as to whether HR practice may lead to more OCB at primary schools. If this statement is true, school managers shall think further of how to promote OCB using other policies, rather than relying on the HR practice investigated here.

Keywords Public sector organizations, Taiwan, Human resource management, Commitment, Organizational commitment, Organizational citizenship behaviour, School teachers, HR practice

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Introduction

The term human resource (HR) describes a group of people who make up an organisation and/or business' workforce (Lin and Lamond, 2014). HR practices is particularly important nowadays, as both organisations and managers are eager to improve managerial efficacy, reduce resource attrition and enhance organisational identification and performance during the economic recession (Chang *et al.*, 2013; Li *et al.*, 2011; Martin and Epitropaki, 2001). Researchers are studying the associations between HR practice and performance in order to improve employee commitment, reduce staff turnover, increase productivity and enhance quality and efficiency (Dalal, 2005; Zhao, 2014). While prior studies examine diverse factors pertinent to the efficacy of HR practice, the majority of these studies adopt business sectors and industries as research samples, leading to more commercial – performance and profits – oriented implications (Combs *et al.*, 2006; Guest, 2011). Despite prior studies' value and contribution to HR practice, their findings may not necessarily apply to general schools, such as the management of primary school teachers.

Primary school teachers play an influential and fundamental role in the academic system and are widely recognised by society for their contribution to educate younger generations (HMI, 2011). However, scholars have little understanding in the HR practice at primary schools (with the exception of: Lu, 2006; Nguni *et al.*, 2006). We find that studies using school teachers (as survey samples) are either general performance, appraisal or evaluation based (e.g. Smeenk *et al.*, 2006; Wright *et al.*, 1997), providing limited information to explain how teachers respond to different aspects of HR practice. Additionally, we note that most research comes from countries such as USA and Europe (Hoel *et al.*, 2010; Liden *et al.*, 1993), and it is imperative that contributions to the HR management knowledge arise from an international perspective (Clugston *et al.*, 2000). Taken together, we note that there is a need to conduct a new research to closely observe and analyse teachers' HR experience and its influence at work in an Asian context. In the present study, we increase our understanding of school HR practice in Taiwan, using the context of incumbent teacher recruitment at Taiwanese primary schools. Our research findings help to clarify teachers' HR experience and offer practical implications for principals and HR practitioners involved in managing the school HR with some implications for human resource management (HRM or HR) in the region.

Literature review and theoretical framing

HRM or HR is a function in organisations, or typically a department, designed to maximise employee performance as part of an employer's strategic objectives (Johnason, 2009). HR is primarily concerned with the management of employees within organisations, focusing on policies and on systems, to for instance, encounter victimisation (Kim and Glomb, 2014) or abusive supervision (Tepper *et al.*, 2011). HR departments in organisations characteristically undertake a number of people-related activities, including employee recruitment, training and development, performance appraisal, employee benefits designing, and rewarding (e.g. managing pay and benefit systems).

HR practice at primary schools

Since the early 1990s, the educational system in the USA has been influenced by social, economic and political developments, such as democratisation, diversification, decentralisation and budget constraints (Chan, 2001; Potocki-Malicet *et al.*, 1999). These developments have reinforced the trend in academic institutions to adopt organisational forms, technologies, management instruments and values that are

commonly found in the private sectors (Deem, 1998; Spreitzer, 1995). Following this trend, the concept of HR practice has spread vividly to the schools, aiming to promote school dynamics, enhance administration efficacy and contribute to the staff management (Chan, 2001). HR practice at schools has also drawn some academic attention, but more research is needed that specifically relates to the HR efforts of public sector organisations, including non-profit colleges, public and private institutions (Kuo *et al.*, 2015; Melewar and Nguyen, 2015). Armstrong (2006) defines HR as a strategic and coherent approach to the management of an organisation's most valued asset: "the people working there who individually and collectively contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the business and organisations". Based on an extensive review of the literature, we identify aspects of HR practice at school to include: recruitment and placement (RP), teaching, education and career (TEC) development, support, communication and retention (SCR), and performance and appraisal (PA) (Lu, 2006; Paauwe, 2009; Smeenk *et al.*, 2009). These four aspects have different roles and functions during the process of school management and development, as explained next.

RP. RP is the first and foremost aspect of HR practice at schools, as it involves vacancy advertisement, candidate selection, verification, negotiation, placement and other pertinent HR tasks (Freitas *et al.*, 2011). Candidate selection, for example, is a complex and critical process for the school. Locating teachers with required qualifications is straightforward, but finding candidates who are proactive at work and accept organisational/school values is not (Selden *et al.*, 2001). Freitas *et al.* (2011) explain that RP is fundamental to the organisational maintenance and often considered very time-consuming and high cost. Thus, external assistance (e.g. head-hunter) is sometimes also required.

TEC. Organisations and their employees are constantly changing. To cope with changes and to ensure that employees are capable of performing their tasks at the right levels, organisations are obligated to offer training and education programmes. Schools and primary school teachers are no exception, as both schools and teachers are aware of the importance and necessity of continuous training and education. Guest (2011) indicates that managerial and development programmes help employees prepare for work in leadership positions. These programmes not only facilitate the acquisition of new skills and knowledge, but also contribute to organisational performance and managerial efficacy.

SCR. Building a sound communication channel between principals, team leaders and general teachers is extremely important to the workforce dynamics (Hobman and Bordia, 2006). Lu (2006) suggests that when the communication channel is smooth and views shared equally, teachers feel respected and positive towards the workplace. Such attitudes gradually contribute to the efficacy of school management. Cheng (2004) indicates that positive atmosphere at work is related to teachers' job satisfaction and willingness to work for the school. DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2001) also discover that positive atmosphere facilitates citizenship behaviour and collaboration. In contrast, without a suitable workplace condition (e.g. poor communication/support), teachers lose motivation to support their colleagues, reduce personal performance and are very likely to leave the school in the long run.

PA. PA aids in understanding the levels and progress of individual employee's achievement, monitoring the overall service and quality provided by the entire organisation (Armstrong, 2006; Smeenk *et al.*, 2009). From a similar perspective, Lu (2006) claims that PA identifies the gap between HR policies and the progress in the reality.

PA helps school managers recognise the efficacy and limitation of their policies' implementation. In other words, school managers and general teachers estimate what they have (or have not) achieved, and what action(s) they need to take in order to meet their HR targets.

Other elements also influence employees' commitment towards an organisation, such as the brand identity, reputation, and image of the organisation (Hemsley-Brown *et al.*, 2016). For example, Sujchaphong *et al.* (2016a, b) note from an internal branding perspective that developing an organisation's identity starts with the employees, as organisations with consistent, unique and deeply held values are likely to create more committed employees than the organisations with a less clear and articulated ethos. This is due the unique identity or image that the organisation projects that generate employees' identification with the organisation and its status (Tran *et al.*, 2015). Specifically, such identification can be an integral part of the sense of satisfaction in being an employee of a successful organisation (Kim *et al.*, 2001) and a measurement of loyalty (Mael and Tetrick, 1992). Thus, when a person identifies with an organisation's identity or image, they become more committed (Melewar *et al.*, 2013). For a deeper understanding of the brand identity and image literature, please see Hemsley-Brown *et al.* (2016) and Sujchaphong *et al.* (2016a, b).

In this research, we analyse HR practice and its influence at Taiwanese primary schools. In line with previous empirical studies, we identify and discuss four specific aspects of HR practice. We note, however, that these four aspects and how they influence teachers' behaviour at work still remain unclear. Next, we discuss the HR-behaviour relationship and develop our hypotheses.

Hypothesis development

HR practice and organisational citizenship behaviour

HR practice contributes to positive outcomes such as better performance, more job satisfaction, lower turnover/absence and higher cost-effectiveness through the full utilisation of employees (Guest, 2011). Contemporary studies evaluate HR practice and its impact on performance (i.e. HR-performance nexus), placing emphasis on the impact of different HR practices on performance outcomes at both individual and organisational levels (e.g. Chang and Smithikrai, 2010; Paauwe, 2009). Consistent with these studies, our research is particularly interested in organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB), which is suggested to relate to performance (Hui *et al.*, 2000), organisational commitment (Gautam *et al.*, 2005) and counter-productive behaviour at work (Dalal, 2005). In other words, OCB is a major performance facilitator and helps to evaluate the efficacy and influences of HR practice (Organ *et al.*, 2006).

Scholars define OCB as behaviour that goes beyond formal requirements of the job and is beneficial to the organisation (Chang and Smithikrai, 2010). Examples include: assisting colleagues with their tasks, devoting time to assist new entrants to the organisation, defending their organisational reputation, or even taking voluntary salary-cut. However, there are different opinions about causes to OCB. On the one hand, Organ and Konovsky (1989) suggest that OCB is an altruistic act in which individuals contribute their efforts to colleagues and organisations for self-less reasons. Such altruistic behaviours are interpreted using either cognitive determinants (e.g. "doing this task brings long-term interests to the department") or affective determinants (e.g. "I belong to the organization", or "I am willing to help my colleagues, as they are important to me and the company"). On the other hand, Hui *et al.* (2000)

suggest that OCB is a simple tactic for seeking a desired outcome, and once the outcome is achieved, the occurrence of OCB decreases immediately. Hence, by demonstrating OCB, individuals benefiting the long term.

From an organisational perspective, OCB is crucial as it contributes to the overall organisational effectiveness. Podsakoff *et al.* (1997) discover that higher levels of OCB among employees are associated with overall productivity and fewer defects. Spector (2006) claims that OCB occurs when employees are satisfied with their jobs, have high levels of affective commitment, have good interpersonal relations, or feel being treated fairly. Bommer *et al.* (2003) indicate that OCB is contagious, as people who work in groups where people tend to demonstrate OCB are more likely to perform OCB themselves. Diefendorff *et al.* (2002) also indicates that OCB is predicted by the roles of job involvement and work centrality. Thus, OCB is favourable to both managers and organisations, as it helps to contribute to the organisational effectiveness and dynamics.

Prior studies confirm the merits of OCB and its influence at work. However, we wonder whether these prior findings are still applicable to primary school settings in Taiwan, considering the variance between OCB at primary schools and commercial organisations. For instance, unlike private business sectors, primary schools do not operate on the principles of obtaining profits nor competition. Hence, employees from different organisations (primary school vs business company) gain different views regarding OCB. From a managerial perspective, it is meaningful to explore the relationship between HR practice and OCB occurrence at primary schools. Because if such relationship exists, school managers (e.g. head teachers, HR managers or governing body) are able to intervene OCB in a timely manner, leading to improved school performance. To further understand the relationship between HR practice and OCB at primary schools, pertinent theories and empirical have been studied and developed.

For example, scholars find that HR practice is related to leadership and management, that is, how managers lead their organisations. Nguni *et al.* (2006) indicate that when teachers receive more autonomy, they are positive and feel satisfied about their job, leading to more OCB. Cheng (2004) note that teachers are more likely to engage with OCB when they feel treated fairly and professionally, they are able to participate in the decision-making process, and they express their views freely. Good-quality HR practice not only promotes school dynamics, but also makes the workplace more enjoyable (DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran, 2001). Researchers identify a multi-correlation across management, organisational climate and OCB, suggesting that when the school is properly administered, the staff are more likely to identify and affiliate with the school and its mission. This phenomenon not only affects teachers' mentality (working morale), but also facilitates proactive behaviours at schools.

Further, Smoech and Drach-Zahavy (2004) find a relationship between organisational learning and OCB. Specifically, with the provision of on-site learning opportunity (e.g. continuous education and skills training), teachers feel more positive about their career development, increasing the likelihood of demonstrating OCB. Smoech and Drach-Zahavy (2004) indicate that learning plays an irreplaceable role in the organisational development. They suggest that teachers' OCB benefits both individuals and the school as a whole.

Finally, researchers show that HR practice influences employees' performance. Meyer and Allen (1997) indicate that HR practice relates to organisational commitment, suggesting good management practice leads to increased commitment in the workplace. These findings jointly imply that, with proper HR practice at school, teachers shall feel more positive about their workplace and hence generate higher

commitment towards their organisations. Lu (2006) discovers that, when HR practice is coherent with personal expectation, teachers are willing to cooperate with their line managers, leading to more positive outcomes of organisational innovations. In contrast, when HR practice deviates from their expectation, teachers become more reserved and withheld their effort and commitment towards the innovations. In summary, previous studies offer preliminary support and suggest a HR practice-OCB relationship. Based on the above discussion, the first research hypothesis is:

H1. HR practice is positively related to OCB, at Taiwanese primary schools.

Potential moderators to the HR practice-OCB relationship

Prior studies provide different clues to support the HR practice-OCB relationship at school. These studies suggest that, when teachers perceive their HR practice positively, they are more likely to demonstrate OCB, as noted above. However, this relationship may not be straightforward, as the workplace's nature has changed drastically in the last decade (Combs *et al.*, 2006), e.g. the appearance of contracted employees and popularity of outsourcing jobs (Guest, 2011). The relationship between HR practice and its efficacy also depends on the characteristics of both organisations and employees (Smoech and Drach-Zahavy, 2004; Spector, 2006). Thus, the HR practice-OCB relationship is affected by varying factors. In this research, we discuss three potential factors: affective organisational commitment (AOC), rank of teachers and school size. Details follow.

AOC. To achieve quality personnel, researchers identify several characteristics of ideal employees including AOC. AOC describes employees' psychological and spiritual attachment towards their organisation, which includes employees' recognition, participation and dedication towards achieving organisational goals (Gautam *et al.*, 2005; Kwantes, 2003). Allen and Meyer (1990) identify three distinct themes embedded within the AOC: affective attachment to the organisation (affective commitment), perceived cost associated with leaving the organisation (continuance commitment), and commitment as an obligation to remain in the organisation (normative commitment). Researchers note that individuals with higher AOC are more likely to show OCB (Gautam *et al.*, 2005; Kwantes, 2003), to perform working morale (Meyer and Allen, 1997) and to facilitate interaction at work (Smeenk *et al.*, 2006). In addition, the AOC-OCB relationship may be explained by social exchange theory (Homans, 1958). This theory suggests that an employee develops and maintains a transactional psychological contract by exchanging transactional resources such as work productivity (performance) for a certain amount of payment (reward). An employee also develops and maintains a relational contract by exchanging relational resources. These relational resources include proactive work behaviour and loyalty for higher quality leader relations (Dulac *et al.*, 2008). Hence, when AOC improves (a sign of organisational commitment), individuals are more likely to feel satisfied and willing to support their organisations. Following this logic, we posit that when HR practice is perceived as positive, teachers with higher AOC shall perform more OCB. Accordingly, the second research hypothesis is:

H2. HR practice-OCB relationship is moderated by AOC, at Taiwanese primary schools.

Rank of teachers. Spector (2006) indicates that the function of HR practice and its efficacy partially depends on the employees' characteristics. Lu (2006) indicates that the rank of positions is related to the perception of HR practice at primary schools. Compared to the teachers with lower positions, teachers with higher positions generally value the

implementation of HR practice at school and are more willing to follow the HR policies (e.g. school regulations and proposals). Higher positions include, e.g. principals, head teachers and teachers with managerial roles. Lu (2006) further discovers that teachers with a better perception of HR practice are associated with better performance, indicating that the perception of HR practice is indeed related to behaviour at work. We note that school administrations and HR policies are usually managed by the higher-position holders, thus, it seems unsurprising that they evaluate their HR practice more positively (e.g. these holders back up their own policies). Hence, the third research hypothesis is:

H3. HR practice-OCB relationship is moderated by the rank of positions, at Taiwanese primary schools.

Campus size. The organisations' welfare and performance depend to a large extent on the amount and quality contribution from their members. Although everyone recognises the mechanism of such dependence, people may still take advantage of organisational functions and services regardless of their personal contribution, i.e. some members may act as free-riders. This phenomenon is interpreted via two social-psycho concepts: diffusion of responsibility. An individual is less likely to demonstrate necessary or prosocial behaviours when others are present than when s/he is alone (Haley and Fessler, 2005). In an example of emergency situation, if someone was stabbed and lying on the street, bystanders may assume that someone else is going (or responsible) to intervene and so they each individually refrain from doing so; social loafing. People make less effort to achieve a goal when they work in a group than when they work alone (Darley and Latané, 1968). For example, if a person is the target of social forces, increasing the number of people diminishes the relative social pressure on each person. When individual inputs are not identifiable the person may work less hard. Thus, if the person is dividing up the work to be performed or the amount of reward she/he expects to receive, s/he will work less hard in groups. Based on these two points, referring to the sizes of campuses – assuming larger campuses meaning more members – the final research hypothesis is:

H4. HR practice-OCB relationship is moderated by the campus size, at Taiwanese primary schools.

Figure 1 depicts the research constructs and their relationships to the OCB, under the moderating effect of organisational commitment, rank of position, and campus size, as hypothesised above.

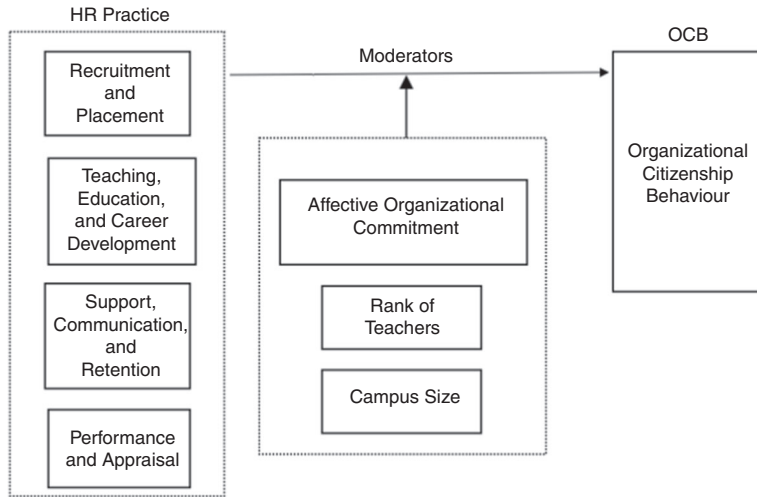
Method

Research sample and data collection

Primary school teachers are of interest to the study and hence recruited for a questionnaire survey, due to several reasons: little attention has been given to primary schools, despite a common belief that OCB is fundamental to school success. Primary school teachers often go beyond the explicit demands of their role in a voluntary capacity in order to enrich the teaching and learning environment, which a typical OCB characteristic. Primary school teachers' contribution towards teaching the young and their development is also widely recognised and a different trait than the business setting.

Specifically, all participants (teachers) were recruited from 33 primary schools in Hsin-Chu District, Taiwan (as per grant criterion), which are regulated by the same municipal education bureau. These teachers work in different schools but have exactly

Figure 1.
Conceptual model of
the HR-OCB
relationship



the same management practice, i.e. the same government body and HR policies, which implies that internal heterogeneity between schools is trivial. Although there are two private schools in the same district, both rejected our research proposal and hence no data were collected. It is salient that school ranking and reputation are of importance to the pupils' recruitment strategies and parents (e.g. main carers and family members), who may evaluate a school's ranking and related issues prior to the school applications. However, school ranking is not necessarily a crucial factor to the recruitment of primary school teachers in Taiwan, due to the saturated employment market (Kuo, 2013). The phenomenon of "stray teachers" has dwindled the employment market of primary school teachers, as there are simply too many qualified teachers competing for limited places (Chang, 2012), implying that the recruiting of primary school teachers is more related to the demand of employment market, rather than the reputation of schools *per se*. Based on these conditions, the recruitment of sample (i.e. primary school teachers) in the current research did not consider school ranking as selection criterion.

With the assistance from the school HR managers, we targeted the incumbent primary school teachers in the district. As the HR managers are involved in the teachers' PDR and annual assessment, they are keen to keep a good relationship with the teachers. Because of this close relationship, the HR managers not only facilitated the questionnaire distribution but also contributed to the response rate. We included a covering letter to assure anonymity and voluntary participation. Seven days after the initial contact, we asked the HR managers to e-mail the participants a reminder to boost the response rate. Questionnaires were then e-mailed back to the researchers directly. Due to the confidentiality policy, however, we were unable to trace back the school of e-mail senders so we could not tell which questionnaire copies came from which school(s). Of the 651 copies of questionnaires initially distributed, 588 were returned, of which 568 are useable (response rate = 87.25 per cent).

In total, 76.40 per cent of these teachers were female, with four age bands: 13.26 per cent (30 yrs and younger), 48.80 per cent (31-40 yrs), 33.50 per cent (41-50 yrs) and 4.25 per cent (51 and older). In total, 76.87 per cent of all teachers were graduates, having earned a bachelor degree. Four ranks of job positions included: 11.39 per cent (principals, head teachers with managerial roles), 19.39 per cent (senior teachers with

administrative roles), 55.27 per cent (senior teachers without administrative roles, or with class tutorship only), and 13.78 per cent (junior and subject teachers). Four groups of school sizes categorised: 23.13 per cent (49 classes and more), 46.77 per cent (48-25 classes), 11.90 per cent (24-13 classes), and 18.02 per cent (12 classes and less). Each class had approximately 30 students.

Measurement

We adopted three standardised scales to measure the research variables. Details follow: school HR practice scale (Lu, 2006) was used to measure how teachers perceive the HR practice at their schools. The scale comprises of 20 items, assessing four different aspects of HR practice, including: RP (five items; $\alpha = 0.90$), TEC (five items; $\alpha = 0.88$), CSR (six items; $\alpha = 0.93$), and PA (four items; $\alpha = 0.95$). All items were preceded by the stem: please rate the truth of each statement as it applies to you at your campus. Sample items include: the selection of new teachers is based on school's demands (RP), my school offers workshop opportunities to meet teachers' professional needs (TEC), my school values the information exchange and communication between teachers and admin staff (CSR), and the appraisal policies and procedure are clear and fair (PA). Responses were recorded using a six-point Likert scale (completely agree = 6, completely disagree = 1). Higher scores represent higher levels of agreement, indicating that participants felt more positive about this specific aspect of HR practice at their schools.

AOC scale (Allen and Meyer, 1990) was adopted to measure the levels of teachers' affective commitment towards their schools. The scale comprises of eight items ($\alpha = 0.93$). All items were preceded by the stem: please rate the truth of each statement as it applies to you at your school. Sample items include: I enjoy talking about my school with outsiders and my school is greatly meaningful to me. Responses were anchored using a six-point Likert scale (completely agree = 6, completely disagree = 1). Higher scores represent higher levels of commitment, indicating that participants have stronger psychological attachment towards their schools.

OCB was assessed by the teachers OCB scale (Cheng, 2004). This scale is composed of 23 items ($\alpha = 0.89$), assessing the occurrence of teachers' OCB at school. All items were preceded by the stem: please rate the truth of each statement as it applies to you at your school. Sample items include: I often come to school earlier to deal with administrative issues and I am willing to support school activities, with all efforts, even using my private time. Responses were recorded using a six-point Likert scale (completely agree = 6, completely disagree = 1). Higher scores represent higher occurrence of OCB, indicated that teachers are more likely to engage with OCB at school.

Back-translation procedure

Both school HR practice scale and teachers OCB scale are validated and written in traditional Chinese (official language in Taiwan), which is also the language used by the research sample. The third scale (AOC scale) is originally developed and written in English, so the questions (scale items) were translated into traditional Chinese for the survey, with a back-translation procedure to ensure language equivalence and appropriateness. We invited three bilingual experts in management studies to examine the validity and clarity of scale items, and revisions were made accordingly.

Control variables

Initially, we decided to control for gender, age, job tenure and educational level. In general, the association between demographic characteristics and our hypothesised

outcomes has been weak or inconsistent (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2000, pp. 530-531; Meyer and Allen, 1997, pp. 43-44). Consistent with this, our initial analyses showed these to be generally non-significant, and including them did not affect the conclusions. For the sake of parsimony and clarity, the control variables are therefore omitted from the analyses reported below.

Anti-CMV strategies

Due to our cross-sectional research design, we note that there is an increased probability of common method variance (CMV) bias (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). One proposed strategy to combat this bias is to use a temporal separation strategy, i.e. collecting variables at different times. We discussed this strategy with the HR managers, but they all declined our strategy, arguing that it would increase their administrative burden. Consequently, we adopted an alternative strategy. We embedded an additional social desirability scale (SES; Reynolds, 1982) in the survey, in which the Pearson formula applies, to examine the correlation coefficients between SES and all variables. Results show that the correlation coefficients (r) are: 0.09-0.17 for the items in school HR practice scale, 0.06-0.21 for the items in affective commitment scale, and 0.15-0.29 for the items in teachers OCB scale. As none of these coefficients are close or higher than 0.70, we indicate that the CMV bias is less likely to occur here (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). In addition, the Harman's single factor test was used to analyse the potential CMV bias (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2012). All variables were merged into one factor, and the results showed poor fit, suggesting that one single factor of merging all variable was inappropriate for data analysis (χ^2 (350) = 6,330.78, $p < 0.001$, RMSEA = 0.243, NFI = 0.66, CFI = 0.68, IFI = 0.68, SRMR = 0.198). We then adopted an unmeasured latent construct method to examine the potential influence of CMV as recommended by Podsakoff *et al.* (2012). χ^2 difference test was not significant ($\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 3.64, $p > 0.05$). Results were consistent with the findings of Harman's single factor test. Hence, we concluded that the influence of CMV was slim and the research data set were acceptable for further hypothesis testing.

Results and analysis

Preliminary analyses suggest correlations across variables. For example, OCB is correlated with AOC ($r = 0.26$, $p < 0.01$) and four aspects of HR practice ($r = 0.41$ - 0.51 , $p < 0.01$ - 0.001) (see Table I). These initial findings affirm associations between different variables, serving as sound foundation for further advanced statistical analyses. Moreover, teachers show different perceptions about the aspects of HR practice (F (1, 575) = 5.65, $p < 0.02$). Specifically, teachers indicate the highest (positive) perception of HR practice RP ($M = 5.11$, $SD = 0.63$), followed by HR practice TEC ($M = 4.78$, $SD = 0.69$), HR practice PA ($M = 4.52$, $SD = 0.89$) and HR practice SCR ($M = 4.44$, $SD = 0.88$). To examine the inter-relations across variables and research hypotheses, we conduct further statistical analyses.

H1: relevant variables (predictors) are entered into the equation for multiple regression analysis, by which we analyse demographical variables and four aspects of HR practice both separately and jointly (see Table II). OCB is predicted by the aspects of RP ($\beta = 0.29$, $p < 0.001$), TEC ($\beta = 0.20$, $p < 0.001$) but not SCR and PA (β s = 0.07, 0.04, respectively). Interestingly, when all four aspects of HR practice are merged together, the predicting effect re-emerges, with less significance ($\beta = 0.09$, $p < 0.05$). These findings indicate two messages: positive perception of HR practice may not necessarily contribute to OCB; teachers with positive perception of RP and TEC are

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α	1	2	3	4	5
1. Organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB)	5.01	0.52	0.89					
2. HR practice RP (recruitment and placement)	5.11	0.63	0.90	0.51***				
3. HR practice TEC (training, education and career development)	4.78	0.69	0.88	0.50***	0.70***			
4. HR practice SCR (support, communication and retention)	4.44	0.88	0.93	0.44***	0.61***	0.71***		
6. HR practice PA (performance and appraisal)	4.52	0.89	0.95	0.41***	0.59***	0.69***	0.73***	
6. Affective organisational commitment (AOC)	3.82	0.46	0.93	0.26**	0.25**	0.36***	0.42***	0.41***

Notes: ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Table I.
Analysis of
correlation between
research variables

Predictors	Organisational citizenship behaviour β	ΔR^2
<i>Step 1: control variables</i>		0.02**
1. Gender	0.02	
2. Age	0.07	
3. Educational levels	0.00	
4. Rank of positions	-0.10*	
5. Campus size	-0.11**	
<i>Step 2: independent variables</i>		0.32***
6. Affective organisational commitment	0.08*	
7. HR practice RP ^a	0.29***	
8. HR practice TEC	0.20***	
9. HR practice SCR	0.07	
10. HR practice PA	0.04	
11. HR practice (four aspects together)	0.09*	
<i>Step 3: two-way interaction</i>		0.28***
6 × 7	0.33***	
6 × 8	0.20**	
11 × 4	0.09*	
11 × 5	0.08*	
Adjusted R^2	0.62	
<i>F</i>	36.46***	

Notes: ^aHR practice RP, recruitment and placement; HR practice TEC, training, education and career development; HR practice SCR, support, communication and retention; HR practice PA, performance and appraisal. * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Table II.
Predictors of
organisational
citizenship behaviour

more likely to show OCB, but teachers with positive perception of SCR and PA are not. Thus, the *H1* is partially supported.

H2: regression analysis shows that AOC predicts OCB ($\beta = 0.08$, $p < 0.05$). To further estimate the variance of AOC, we re-coded participants into three groups, subject to their scores on the scale (see Table III). These new groups include: low commitment group ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 0.21$), medium commitment group ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 0.06$), and high commitment group ($M = 4.32$, $SD = 0.44$). These groups stand for 38, 30 and 31 per cent of the whole sample, respectively. The means differences (M_{diff})

across three groups was significant ($F(2, 580) = 49.31, p < 0.001$), indicating that the re-grouping process is sensible. To examine the moderating effect, we analyse the interactions between all aspects of HR practice and AOC, using Baron and Kenny (1986)'s formula. Yet, as previous analyses affirms that HR practice SCR and PA do not predict OCB, these two aspects are thus omitted from the analysis. Outcomes are outlined below: OCB is predicted by AOC ($\beta = 0.08, p < 0.05$), aspect RP ($\beta = 0.29, p < 0.001$), aspect TEC ($\beta = 0.20, p < 0.001$), the interaction between AOC and aspect RP ($\beta = 0.33, p < 0.001$), the interaction between AOC and aspect TEC ($\beta = 0.20, p < 0.01$). These figures support the existence of moderating effect; we further analyse group differences to understand the direction of such effect on OCB, as follows.

In terms of aspect RP, the group differences are: low commitment group ($M = 4.93, SD = 0.61$), medium commitment group ($M = 5.18, SD = 0.59$), and high commitment group ($M = 5.28, SD = 0.64$). Between-group differences are significant ($F(2, 578) = 17.38, p < 0.001$). These figures convey two messages: teachers with positive perception of aspect RP are more likely to show OCB; teachers with higher commitment are also more likely to show OCB (see Figure 2). In terms of aspect TEC, the group differences are: low commitment group ($M = 4.52, SD = 0.71$), medium commitment group ($M = 4.86, SD = 0.57$) and high commitment group ($M = 5.03, SD = 0.64$). Between-group differences are significant ($F(2, 577) = 32.65, p < 0.001$). These figures convey two messages: teachers with positive perception of aspect TEC are more likely to show OCB; teachers with higher commitment are also more likely to show OCB. Hence, the $H2$ is supported (see Figure 3).

$H3$: to examine the moderating effect of rank of positions, the same analytic procedure is applied. First, we predict OCB by rank of positions ($\beta = -0.10, p < 0.05$), overall HR practice ($\beta = 0.09, p < 0.05$), and the interaction between rank of positions and overall HR practice ($\beta = 0.09, p < 0.05$). These figures support the existence of

Table III.
Moderating effect of affective organisational commitment

(% of sample)	Affective organisational commitment			$F/(df)/p$
	Low (38%)	Medium (30%)	High (31%)	
HR practice RP ^a	4.93 (0.61)	5.18 (0.59)	5.28 (0.64)	$F(2,578) = 17.38^{***}$
HR practice TEC ^b	4.52 (0.71)	4.86 (0.57)	5.03 (0.64)	$F(2,577) = 32.65^{***}$

Notes: ^aHR practice RP, recruitment and placement; ^bHR practice TEC, training, education and career development. $^{***}p < 0.001$

Figure 2.
Moderating effect of AOC on OCB (HR practice RP)

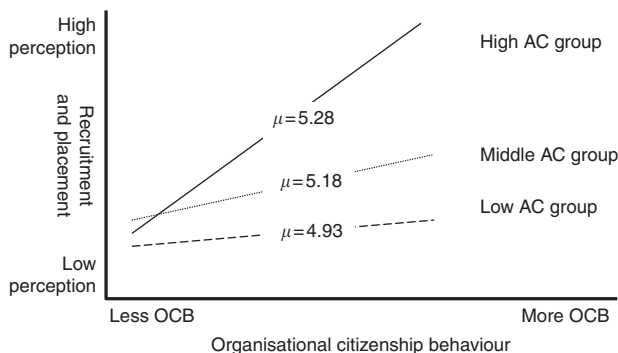
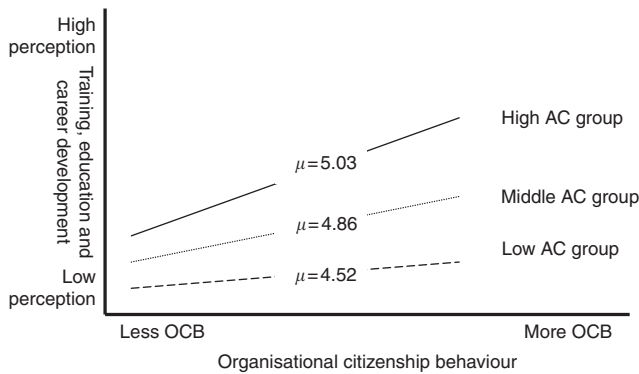


Figure 3.
Moderating effect of
AOC on OCB (HR
practice TEC)



moderating effect. Second, we further analyse group differences to understand the direction of such effect on OCB. To be exact, teachers with higher rank of positions show more OCB ($M = 5.14$, $SD = 0.46$), including: principals, head teachers with managerial roles, and senior teachers with administrative roles. Teachers with lower rank of positions show less OCB ($M = 4.95$, $SD = 0.54$), including: senior teachers without administrative roles (or with class tutorship only), junior teachers and subject teachers. Between-group differences are significant ($t(578) = 3.99$, $p < 0.001$; Levene's $F = 3.00$, $p = 0.08$). These figures convey two messages: teachers with positive perception of overall HR practice are more likely to show OCB; teachers with higher positions are also more likely to show OCB. Hence, the $H3$ is supported (see Figure 4).

$H4$: to examine the moderating effect of campus size, we apply the same analytic procedure as above. First, we predict OCB by campus size ($\beta = -0.11$, $p < 0.01$), overall HR practice ($\beta = 0.09$, $p < 0.05$), and the interaction between school size and overall HR practice ($\beta = 0.08$, $p < 0.05$). These figures support the existence of moderating effect. Second, we further analyse group differences to understand the direction of such effect on OCB. Specifically, teachers from smaller schools (24 classes or less) show more OCB ($M = 5.08$, $SD = 0.50$), whereas teachers from larger schools (25 classes or more) show less OCB ($M = 4.98$, $SD = 0.53$). Between-group differences are significant ($t(578) = 2.18$, $p < 0.05$; Levene's $F = 0.07$, $p = 0.80$). These figures convey two messages: teachers with positive perception of overall HR practice are more likely to show OCB; teachers from smaller schools are also more likely to show OCB. Hence, the $H4$ is supported (see Figure 5).

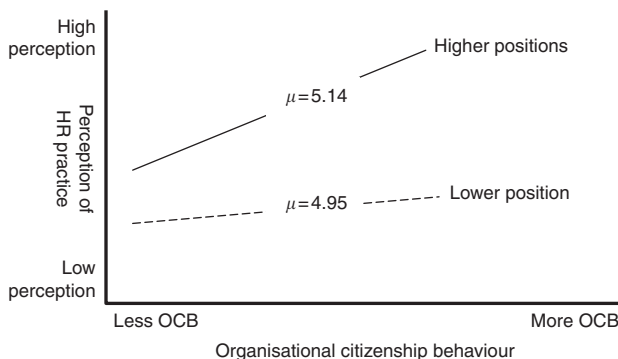
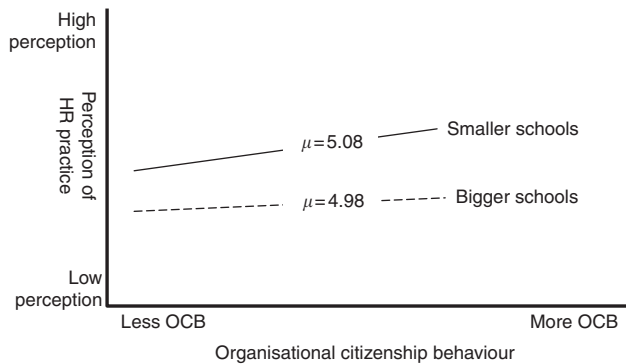


Figure 4.
Moderating effect of
positions on OCB

Figure 5.
Moderating effect of
campus size on OCB



Discussion

Our research aims to analyse teachers' HR experience and its influence at work. We discover new findings, which challenge the efficacy of HR practice at workplace. Specifically, we show that not all HR practice contributes to positive behaviour in the workplace (e.g. OCB in the current research). Our research also finds statistical evidence to support the moderating effect of three factors on the HR-OCB relationship. These factors are: AOC, rank of position and campus size. Overall, our findings contribute to the knowledge of HR-OCB relationship, which are meaningful and useful to scholars and HR practitioners in several ways.

First, our research focuses four specific aspects of HR practice, namely: RP, TEC development, SCR, and PA. Scholars note that these aspects have different roles and functions during the process of school management and development (Freitas *et al.*, 2011; Lu, 2006; Paauwe, 2009; Smeenk *et al.*, 2009). However, interestingly, we find that teachers seem to have different views about these aspects. Specifically, aspects of RP and TEC receive relatively higher levels of positive perception, whereas aspects of SCR and PA receive relatively lower levels of positive perception. This is an interesting finding and may be explained by two reasons. First, compared to other organisations (e.g. banking industries and manufacturers), primary schools do not operate on the principles of financial incentives. Unlike private business sectors in the market (e.g. Kim and Glomb, 2014), the interaction between colleagues at school is probably more collaboration rather than competition oriented (e.g. working together to enhance students learning efficacy and school activities). Hence, teachers may put more weight on HR aspects that involve education training and career development (Spreitzer, 1995) and therefore perceive these aspects more important than other aspects at schools. Second, there may be some other underlying factors differentiating the influences of these HR aspects, but they are not investigated here, such as organisational culture and student characteristics and differences. Certainly, these two reasons may require further examination.

Second, effective HR practice leads the full utilisation of employees, which in turn, leads to better performance, more job satisfaction, lower turnover, less absence, and higher cost-effectiveness (Guest, 2011). Different from prior studies, affirming the merits of HR practice (e.g. Hui *et al.*, 2000; Gautam *et al.*, 2005), we reveal that positive perception of HR practice may not necessarily contribute to OCB occurrence. Teachers with positive perception of recruitment, placement, training, education and career development are more likely to show OCB, whereas teachers with positive perception of support,

communication, retention, PA are not. These findings are not merely interesting, but also contain important implications to HR practitioners at primary schools: school managers (e.g. head teachers and principals) should not assume that all aspects of HR practice may work and/or work in the same way. We show that not all HR aspects are valued positively (or importantly) by the teachers (e.g. in the current research, teachers value aspects of RP and TEC). School managers shall therefore endeavour to investigate what causes these differences, e.g. why some aspects work better, whereas others do not. Questions arise as to why teachers are more willing (or reluctant) to value some aspects than others. There is a possibility that the HR-OCB relationship is more complicated at schools. Alternatively, one may state that positive perception of HR practice may not necessarily lead to more OCB at primary schools. If this statement is true, school managers shall think further of how to promote OCB using other policies, rather than relying on the HR practice investigated here; Finally, one may question, controversially, whether OCB an appropriate variable to measure the performance of primary schools, with its distinct differences from profit-oriented enterprises and companies. The issue is complicated, and we encourage future studies to address this question.

Third, we show three potential moderators: AOC, rank of positions, and campus size. Our analyses show that teachers with more AOC, higher positions and from smaller campus are more likely to demonstrate OCB. These findings have important implications to school managers, especially when they implement HR strategies to enhance organisational performance such as OCB. In order to promote OCB, school managers (e.g. head teachers and principals) should consider the influence of AOC. Rather than continuously implementing different HR policies, we propose that more emphasis on the psychological perception and experience of employees should be addressed, e.g. what do teachers expect from the organisations, what are their needs, etc. After all, healthy, energetic and fully committed teachers are the most valuable assets to the school (e.g. Tepper *et al.*, 2011). Without care and support to the teachers, any HR practice may not reach their maximum effect. In terms of campus size, school managers should bear in mind of such moderating impact. Scholars recognise that bigger organisations offers higher chance of social loafing and diffusion of responsibilities (Darley and Latané, 1968). Hence, managers from the larger schools may wish to assign the tasks to several sub-managers (or groups), so each group receives a certain amount of tasks and responsibility. By doing so, hopefully, the schools alleviate the negative influences of social loafing effect on the organisational performance (e.g. decreasing the efficacy of HR practice). In terms of rank of positions, school managers may wish to enhance the dynamics of workplace through informal activities and congregations. Employees from different rank of positions will have more opportunities to mingle, exchange views and build up better interpersonal relationships, which naturally feeds into the organisational dynamic and promotes better performance.

Managerial implications

There are several implications for management theory and practice in not only primary schools, but also other education institutions and to management knowledge more generally and other service sectors. First, we demonstrate that the four specific aspects of HR practice, namely: RP, TEC development, SCR, and PA are important to the occurrence of OCB. Thus, we suggest that HR managers and school principals should consider the individual effects and impacts of these important elements in their management. In particular, we find that these aspects have different roles and functions during the process of management and school development. The rationale is

that by using these nuanced aspects more systematically, when employees have certain expectations of the school and job duties, the managers can apply a specific HR dimension appropriate to their employees' perceptions, such that they are more likely to have higher levels of OCB. As such the full utilisation of employees will be evidenced.

Second, we also found that some HR aspects do not play a crucial role in facilitating OCB. Therefore, we suggest, in the first instance, that HR managers and school principals should look at the perceptions of employees and their own leadership style. For example, employees with positive perception of recruitment, placement, training, education and career development are more likely to demonstrate OCB, whereas teachers with positive perception of support, communication, retention, PA are not. Hence, the critical knowledge here is that managers should not assume that all aspects of HR practice may work and/or work in the same way. Rather, for the effective management of employees, continuous learning of their behaviour is required.

Third, the study further found that affective commitment, rank and campus size moderated the HR practice-OCB relationship and that these were highly relevant to the occurrence of OCB. More specifically, the study demonstrates different HR strategies to promote commitment and OCB. We highlight the important role of employees' psychological perceptions and experience, which should be researched and measured frequently in order to learn what teachers expect from the organisations, what their needs are, etc. so that their needs can be met. Such measurement requires monitoring and a scale needs to be developed for the interviewing procedures and subsequent analysis. In such case, the adaption of popular employee well-being scales can be utilised to great effect.

Finally, the study has major implications for the future of the Taiwanese primary schools and education sector as a whole. According to *The Economist* (2015), the fertility rate in Taiwan is considered "ultra low", which suggests that in the next 10-20 years, the school population will fall dramatically. This study has implications for the sector in that good OCB would promote a school's reputation as a brand, thus giving the school a unique brand identity and overall better image and reputation (Melewar *et al.*, 2013). As the issue of decreasing young population endures throughout the education system, the study's implications may also impact on the higher education sector.

Research limitations and directions for future studies

We acknowledge some research limitations. This research only focuses on four aspects of HR practice at schools (identified by prior studies). Although this focus seems expedient for the current research, other aspects of HR practice are neither investigated nor analysed. Thus, without previous support, the value of our research findings here may be compromised. Future studies are encouraged to enlarge the research scope to examine and evaluate different aspects of HR practice at schools, so a full picture of HR-performance relationship can be further observed and understood. Ideally, behaviour assessment (e.g. OCB) should be conducted via a third party to ensure the objectiveness and completeness of data set. Yet, due to ethical concerns, this research does not adopt a third-party assessment procedure, as it may breach confidentiality policy and put the participants into discomfort. In addition, the findings reported here are all based on Taiwanese primary school teachers, which may not apply to the populations from other organisations, cultures and countries. The generalisability of our research findings may require further desalinisation using samples from different sectors and locations.

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