

# The Organizational Justice-Citizenship Behavior Link in Hotels: Does Customer Orientation Matter?

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**Abstract**—The goal of the present paper is to model two classic lines of research in which employees starred, organizational justice and citizenship behavior (OCB), but that have never been studied together when targeting customers. The suggestion is made that a hotel's fair treatment (in terms of distributive, procedural, and interactional justice) toward customers will be appreciated by the employees, who will reciprocate in kind by favoring the hotel with increased customer-oriented behaviors (COBs). Data were collected from 204 employees at eight upscale hotels in the Canary Islands (Spain). Unlike in the case of perceptions of distributive justice, results of structural equation modeling demonstrate that employees substantively react to interactional and procedural justice toward guests by engaging in customer-oriented behaviors (COBs). The findings offer new reasons why employees decide to engage in COBs, and they highlight potentially beneficial effects of fair treatment toward guests bring to hospitality through promoting COBs.

**Keywords**—Hotel guests' (mis) treatment, customer-oriented behaviors, employee citizenship, organizational justice, third-party observers, third-party intervention.

## I. INTRODUCTION

**D**UE to the intense competition in the hospitality industry sector, it is not enough for employees today to merely fulfill their required duties. For this reason, behaviors that exceed job descriptions, such as organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), have increasingly received attention in hospitality settings in recent years [1]-[4]. Organizational citizenship behavior (hereinafter, OCB) is a prevalent and beneficial employee performance for hospitality organizations, and it includes allowing employees to proactively assist coworkers, offering ways to achieve a high level of quality services, and increasing operational efficiency [5]. This dynamic and vital construct has been the subject of several definitions [6], [7] and multiples delineations [6], [8]. Despite the apparent malleability and polyhedral character of these behaviors, few studies have dealt with their boundaries when the targets of these behaviors exist outside the organization.

Podsakoff and MacKenzie [9] and Podsakoff et al [10] suggested the idea of OCBs aimed at customers or, as they refer to them, customer-oriented behaviors (COBs). As such, Borman and Motowidlo [11:90] stated that "service organizations have special requirements on dimensions related to dealing with customers and representing the organization

outsiders." Organ, Podsakoff and MacKenzie [12:221] defined COBs as those "extra-role behaviors aimed at the customer, including serving as an interface between the customer and others in the organization, providing referrals for products or services from other companies, and giving the customer information about the industry." Although conventional OCB itself can enhance customer satisfaction [13], customer-oriented behaviors (COBs) seem to be valuable in achieving customer satisfaction with service, particularly in hospitality organizations where customers are lodged over time, interacting with the employees. As Oliver [14] states, a key element in service excellence is employee behavior that goes above and beyond their job descriptions to fulfill or even exceed customer expectations.

Despite the apparent relevance of the role of customer-oriented behaviors (COBs) in the hospitality industry, only a limited number of studies in prior OCB research have paid attention to these behaviors. Exceptions include the study by Ma et al. [2], which supports the uniqueness of customer-oriented behaviors (COBs) as compared with conventional dimensions of OCB. Probably due to this scarce attention, the causes of customer-oriented behaviors (COBs) have also been under-examined [15], [16]. The confirmed impact of conventional OCB on positive measures of organizational effectiveness found in previous research [17]-[19], [9], [20], [21] appears to be a justifiable reason to identify the causes of COBs. Since conventional OCB and customer-oriented behaviors (COBs) share the same starting point [22], it might be assumed that both types of OCB perform and occur following similar patterns [9]. However, in reality this assumption is speculative and risky, so that there is an urgent need to extend the OCB framework by further investigating the causes of customer-oriented behaviors (COBs), particularly within the service and hospitality industry context.

One of the most frequently cited factors in explaining why employees decide to engage in conventional OCB consists of the perceptions of organizational justice or the fairness of the treatment received from the organization (for meta-analytic reviews see, e.g., [23]-[25], [10], [13]). Organizational justice, rooted in the equity theory is a multi-faceted concept comprising three dimensions (distributive, procedural, and interactional justices), and it is the most frequently cited cause of conventional OCB. These organizational justice effects on conventional OCB are usually explained using social exchange theory [26]. Prior theory and research have argued that employees who perceive fair treatment develop a personal obligation to promote the well-being of the organization [27], [28], and conventional OCB is an obvious outcome in this

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respect. Since they are also helpful for the organization, customer-oriented behaviors (COBs) could form a part of this reciprocity with organizational justice.

Although the organizational justice literature has generally focused on the victim's perspective, some prior research suggests that third-party employees who observe how individuals are treated in an organization may also make fairness judgments and react accordingly [29]. This same third-party literature also suggests that employees' reactions to (in)justice for others are similar to their reactions to justice for the self; that is, there is a similarity in the responses of the observers of injustice for others and those of the victims in the situation (see for a review, [30]). If employees who observe acts of injustice toward customers can react in a manner similar to that of the victims of mistreatment, distributive, procedural and interactional justice toward guests in a hotel could also lead employees to feel a personal obligation and engage in helping behaviors directed at the organization. This study argues that in an attempt to help the hotel, employees may help guests as well and, hence, perform customer-oriented behaviors (COBs).

In sum, the present study aims to examine whether customer-oriented behaviors (hereinafter, COBs) are third-party reactions by employees to guests' perceptions of (un)just treatment by a hotel. Before the paper examines the predicted main effects of the three dimensions of justice toward guests (distributive, procedural, and interactional) on COBs, it will first provide evidence that the three justice dimensions are separate. Finally, the authors will discuss theoretical and managerial implications of the findings.

## II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESIS

Dennis Organ [6] defined OCB as voluntary and discretionary individual behavior that is expected to promote overall organizational effectiveness. In 1997, however, in congruence with Borman and Motowidlo's [11] concept of contextual performance, Organ [7:95] changed his definition to say that OCB is "performance that supports the social and psychological environment in which task performance takes place." These shifts in its conception have also included its multidimensional nature. As such, numerous delineations have identified multiple facets of the OCB construct. Organ [6] identified conscientiousness, sportsmanship, civic virtue, courtesy and altruism as five well-established dimensions of OCB. A few years later, however, Williams and Anderson [8] divided OCB into only two types: behavior directed mainly at individuals within the organization (OCB-I), and behavior that is more concerned with helping the organization as a whole (OCB-O). An example of this citizenship behavior directed at the organization (OCB-O) would be defending the organization when other employees criticize it, while in the case of interpersonal citizenship behavior (OCB-I), an example would be assisting co-workers with their duties. Although COBs were suggested as an additional OCB dimension more than a decade [9], [10], these behaviors are hardly found in the extant OCB literature.

Customer orientation has been described in the marketing

literature by using various terms, such as the customer mindset [31] or SOCO (sales orientation—customer orientation) [32]. Saxe and Weitz [32] and others believe that customer orientation is just a willingness of individual service providers to customize their service delivery according to the customer's situation (e.g., needs, problems, special circumstances, among others). Other scholars conceptualize customer orientation in terms that refer to employee behavior in delivering excellent customer service: prosocial behavior and extra-role customer service [33], [34], as well as organizational loyalty, service delivery, and participation [15]. The present study will model COBs by drawing on the latter conceptualization, that is, rather than willingness of individual service providers, the employees' orientation will be referred to as reported behavior displayed by service personnel during service encounters. In other words, COBs are studied as extra-role behaviors aimed at the customer that lead to satisfied customers by serving as an interface between the customer and others in the organization [12]. Examples of COBs operationalized in this way include: 'Go out of your way to help guests who are lost in corridors, even though this is not required by the job' and 'Willingly spend time helping guests who have personal problems, even though this is not your responsibility,' among others.

How would justice toward guests lead employees to engage in increased COBs? There is a broad consensus that motivation in a service encounter is indicative of the forces that drive an employee's behavior to serve [35], [36]. Three motivational elements are considered essential for achieving employees' customer-orientation in a service encounter and, hence, COBs: (1) a positive valence of COBs and the consequences the employees associate with such behavior; (2) the employees' self-perception of being able to behave in a customer-oriented way; and (3) employees' expectations of reaching the desired outcome through engaging in such behavior (e.g., happy customers, rewards from the employer [37]). To the extent that the staff members perceive justice toward guests, it is likely that they will have a greater positive sense that COBs are a valuable way to express their gratitude at work. Therefore, justice toward guests can become a motivational element of COBs, since it allows the staff to maintain positive social exchange dynamics with their 'fair hotel' [37].

On the other hand, the motivation for COBs in organizations not only depends on the positive valence of COBs and its consequences, but also on the means and opportunities the work context provides to act in a particular manner [37]. For example, Puccinelli [68] found that a staff that has the ability to assess customers' moods is better able to match customer emotions, thus increasing COBs (see also, [38]). However, how are these circumstances expected to occur in the case of justice toward guests? Staff perceptions of guests' treatment by hotel management may provide them with means and opportunities to engage in COBs. As COBs contribute to the aims and desires of their 'fair hotel,' justice toward guests leads to COBs as a way to reciprocate in kind toward the hotel. Not only hotel managers and staff, but also

guests as co-producers [39], can be present in positive social exchange dynamics [26]. Although the primary motivation may lead employees to target the organization as a whole [8], COBs broaden the possible outcomes at different stages of the service delivery chain in the hotel [40], making it easier, in light of the hotel's fair treatment of guests, for the hotel staff to consider COBs as a way of expressing their gratitude toward the fair organization. Moreover, research on organizational behavior suggests that the targets for help and the entities helped may diverge [41], [42]. Thus, employees may displace their helping behaviors, or in helping the hotel as the source of fairness, they may also help guests by performing COBs.

In sum, justice toward guests creates conditions that make it easier for hotel staff to engage in COBs. If hotel guests are fairly treated, it is reasonable to predict that an ethical climate at work will lead to the appearance of COBs by providing staff with the motivation, means and opportunity to behave in this way. In the end, in an attempt to favor the hotel as the cause of fairness in the service encounter, the staff could consider reciprocating toward the hotel organization with increased COBs.

*Hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 1c:* Employees' perceptions of distributive (1a), procedural (1b), and interactional justice (1c) toward guests will be positively associated with higher levels of COBs.

### III. METHOD

#### A. Customers/ Respondents

The hypotheses were examined by collecting data from employees at eight upscale hotels in the Canary Islands, Spain. The researchers chose upscale hotels for the sample because successful customer service is a high priority for luxury hotel managers in maintaining long-term guest relationships. The four- to five-star differentiation in the Canary Islands stems from Hotelstars' criteria (set by HOTREC—Hospitality Europe; www.hotelstars.eu), which are primarily based on the quality and quantity of facilities, communications, customer area, general service and staff area (e.g., the minimum size for the rooms and bathrooms is 15% higher in 5- star hotels than in 4-star hotels). Employees were chosen who met the criteria of working six months or more, so that they had a socialization period at the hotel. The sample is comprised of 45.6% men and 54.4% women. 44.6% were 35 years of age or younger, and 3.4% were 55 years of age or older. In addition, 55.4% were permanent employees, and the remainder was temporary staff. Finally, 19.6% of the respondents had only finished primary school.

#### B. Questionnaire Design and Procedure

The Canary Islands is a leading sun-and-beach tourism destination in Spain. The importance of tourism to Spain is unquestionable; with 56.7 million international tourists and tourism revenue of \$59.9 billion a year, Spain is fourth in the destination rankings, behind France, the United States, and China, but only behind the United States in international

tourism revenue [43]. Gran Canaria receives about 3.23 million foreign tourists a year, with European countries being its principal markets: British and German tourists jointly represent 41% of the total, Scandinavians 28%, and other nationalities the remaining 31%. There are 56,841 hotel beds and 72,758 non-hotel beds in the tourism municipalities in Gran Canaria [44]. Four- and five-star hotels represent 50% of the hotels in Gran Canaria. Specifically in the sample, the number of hotel rooms ranges from 88 to 676, with an average of 343 rooms per hotel. According to type of property, of the eight sampled hotels, four are owned by international chains.

#### C. Research Settings

In constructing the assessment scale of justice toward guests for this study, the Hinkin [45] guidelines for adequately developing measures for use in survey questionnaires were followed. Although justice toward guests is generally missing in the existing hospitality research, item generation was first deductively undertaken based on the strong theoretical and empirical base available in prior literature on justice for the self (for meta-analytic reviews see, for example, [23] [24]). The number of items per scale was 4 to 6 and the item scaling used matched requirements for 'content adequacy' [46]. Also, recommendations for item-to-response (range from 1:4 [47] to at least 1:10 [48]) were also fulfilled. The resulting measures comprise the final questionnaire used in this paper, once a small number of questionnaires had been pretested.

In all, 218 questionnaires were distributed personally in five sampled four-star hotels and three sampled five-star hotels in very similar percentages (from 16% to 22%). The research project received official approval. Fieldwork was performed with random respondents during their time at work, and surveyors asked them to fill out the questionnaires in different places and situations within the hotel, in order to avoid response biases due to uncontrolled contextual conditions. The fieldwork was conducted in the summer of 2012. Questionnaires were self-completed following the surveyor's face-to-face advice, when necessary. The respondents were not offered an incentive to participate. Eventually, after six were rejected due to incorrect completion, and eight due to incoherent information, 204 valid responses were retained for further data analysis.

#### D. Measures

All items were scored on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree)—and in the case of COBs, from 1 (never) to 7 (constantly). The items are presented in Table I. Cronbach's alpha values appear on the main diagonal of the correlations matrix (Table II).

##### 1. Perceived Justice toward Guests

Distributive justice toward guests was measured with a 5-item scale constructed by the authors, adapting scales from the literature on perceived justice for the self to customers [49]; [50]. Distributive justice for guests pertains to employees' perceptions of the extent to which guests have been fairly rewarded by their hotels, based on items such as: 'I have observed that the outcome guests receive from the hotel is

equitable and fair', 'Customers receive what they deserve from the hotel.'

Procedural justice toward guests was assessed by a 4-item scale adapted from scales of procedural justice for the self developed by Blodgett et al. [66] and Karatepe [49]. Procedural justice for guests pertains to respondents' perceptions of the fairness of organizational procedures for guests. Examples of items include: 'Guests' suggestions and troubles are handled in a very timely manner,' 'Customers can safely make complaints, in writing, and of any type.'

Interpersonal justice toward guests was assessed with a 4-item measure constructed by the authors. After a review of the literature, items from Severt [69] and Smith et al. [50] were combined. Items include: 'I have observed how my hotel has been honest with guests,' 'The hotel deals with guests in a truthful and open manner.'

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) cannot be recommended here because there is no strong theory or empirical base available to confirm the structure of the items of the justice variables a priori. Therefore, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was carried out to ascertain the underlying factor structure for the 13 newly developed 'justice toward guests' items, using a principle components analysis with varimax rotation. Three factors, accounting for about 76 percent of the variance, were retained. The cut-off for including the items in each factor was established as a loading of .20. The first factor, interactional justice toward guests, consisted of four items ( $\alpha=.933$ ). The second factor, procedural justice toward guests, included three items ( $\alpha=.859$ ), and the third factor, distributive justice toward guests, had three items ( $\alpha=.786$ ). EFA results, shown in Table I, suggest that justice toward guests comprises three separate justice dimensions.

## 2. Customer-Oriented Behaviors (COBs)

COBs were measured using a 4-item scale ( $\alpha=.708$ ) constructed by the authors, based on the one used by Lee and Allen [27] to assess interpersonal citizenship behavior (OCB-I). Since Lee and Allen [27] studied OCB-I directed at coworkers, some items were first reworded by just changing 'coworkers' to 'guests.' For example, 'Willingly give time to help guests who have personal problems.' Other items, however, were more difficult to adapt by merely changing the target. Also drawing on Lee and Allen's [27] OCBI-scale, we generated three new items, such as 'Voluntarily show a polite and sincere interest in customers, beyond what the hotel requires of me as an employee,' 'Go out of your way to help guests who are lost in corridors, even though this is not required by the job,' and 'Voluntarily take extra time to satisfy customers' needs, even though the hotel does not require me to do so.'

## 3. Control Variables

Drawing on the literature, gender (1=male, 2=female) and age (1=up to 25 years; 2=more than 25 and up to 35; 3=more than 35 and up to 45; 4=more than 55) could co-vary with our in/dependent variables. The control variables were to be

incorporated directly into a SEM model as stand-alone variables (i.e., not as cause or effect indicators). This procedure allows a structural path to all exogenous and endogenous factors within the structural, but not the measurement, portion of the model [67].

## III. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The collected data were analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS), and structural equation modeling (SEM) was performed through AMOS 19.0. After all the justice items in this study had been factor analyzed (EFA), we averaged those that loaded sufficiently and formed part of interpretable components. COB items were averaged directly. Finally, we examined the paths postulated in this study by using these calculated variables and structural equation modeling (SEM). The indices used include comparative-fit (CFI), normed-fit (NFI), Tucker-Lewis (TLI), incremental-fit (IFI), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). Table II shows the scale means, standard deviations, reliabilities and correlations ( $r$ ). Results of correlational analyses suggest that, in general, the variables in our study were significantly correlated in the expected directions.

TABLE II  
MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, CORRELATIONS AND RELIABILITIES

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	7
1. Gender	1.56	1.27	----					
2. Age	2.74	0.98	-.066	----				
3. Distributive	5.66	1.28	-.047	-.009	(.786)			
4. Procedural	5.78	1.24	.006	.008	.665**	(.859)		
5. Interactional	6.14	1.06	.035	.019	.624**	.680**	(.933)	
7. COBs	6.46	0.65	.116	.020	.218*	.335**	.374**	(.708)

Note. The numbers in parentheses on the diagonal are coefficient alphas.  
N = 204. \*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*  $p < .001$ .

SEM was used to test our predictions, as it is a powerful tool for analyzing causal relationships in non-experimental studies. Fig. 1 is a path diagram that shows relationships among the observed variables (survey answers, in rectangles).

The justice items that loaded sufficiently, according to EFA, define the independent variables of the hypothesized model shown in Fig. 1, whereas those concerning COBs define the criterion variable. As mentioned above, an average of the items for each variable/dimension was used. Given that gender and age were incorporated as stand-alone control variables (that is, not as cause or effect indicators), and the degree of freedom without control variables is zero, SEM achieved the minimum, and the probability level could not be computed for the default model (see Fig. 1). Nevertheless, the probability level of the model is non-significant ( $p=.781$ ), suggesting a good fit. Support for our expectations is shown (see Fig. 1) by the significant path between interactional justice toward guests and COBs ( $B=.305$ ;  $p<.001$ ), and between procedural justice toward guests and COBs ( $B=.196$ ;  $p<.05$ ). These patterns support Hypotheses 1b and 1c. However, a lack of support for Hypothesis 1a is shown (see Fig. 1) by the non-significant link between distributive justice toward guests and COBs ( $B=$

.103; p n.s.).

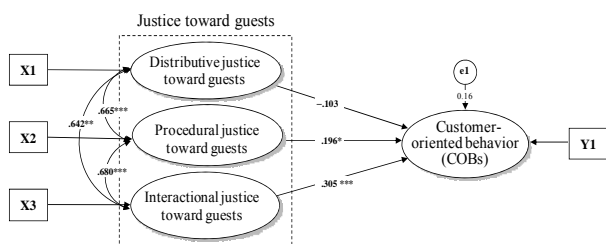


Fig. 1 SEM model of justice toward guests and customer-oriented behavior (COBs)

We incorporated gender and age as stand-alone control variables directly into the model (that is, with a structural path to all exogenous and endogenous factors)

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$   $N = 204$ ;  $Cmin = 5.585$ ;  $df = 9$ ;  $p = .781$ ;  $CFI = 1$ ;  $IFI = 1$ ;  $NFI = .98$ ;  $TLI = 1$ ;  $RMSEA = 0$

#### IV. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to test whether employees who observe acts of justice toward guests decide to respond to the hotel organization by engaging in COBs. The results indicate that favorable justice toward guests leads employees to react in the form of increased COBs: interactional and procedural (rather than distributive) justice seem to have significant effects on COBs. Overall, this study offers several theoretical implications for hospitality organizations, drawing on the way the surveyed equity context performed in predicting COBs. Equally important are the specific new courses of action that the results of this study suggest for managers in hotel organizations. Finally, the paper opens up several avenues for future research.

Given the scant empirical attention that third-party justice-based intervention has received to date in hospitality organizations (rare exceptions include [51], this paper is, first, able to present employee perceptions of justice toward guests as a “new type” of organizational justice that can lead employees to engage in COBs. Consistent with prior theory and research suggestions [52]-[55], third-party employees made fairness judgments and responded with COBs to the way employees were treated. However, these findings challenge other research suggesting that inhibitors such as fear of ‘being next in line for similar treatment’ [56] or the presence of others, as Darley and Latane’s [57] classic study on the ‘bystander effect’ suggested, can lead third parties to inaction.

Another significant aim of this research was to elaborate on the etiology of COBs. As mentioned above, the possible causes of COBs have been under-examined [16], although exceptions include the study by Bettencourt et al. [15], who found that attitude, personality, and customer knowledge are antecedents of three customer-oriented forms of OCBs: loyalty, service delivery, and participation. Accordingly, the present study seems to be quite relevant, as it is the first to link COBs with equity theory. Furthermore, extensive literature on conventional OCB has dealt fruitfully with justice constructs as antecedents. Therefore, this study seems to be a welcome addition. However, of all the forms of justice toward guests,

interactional justice toward guests (and procedural justice to a lesser extent) seems to have the ability to predict this particular form of citizenship. A reason for these distinct justice influences on COBs may lie in the fact that interactional (in)justice toward guests is the easiest to visualize (e.g., verbal (dis)respect to guests, (in)considerate manners, high pitched voice, (un)kind gestures, etc.). This idea coincides with prior work suggesting that, although third parties can view distributive and procedural justice violations as unfair [58], [59], these types of justice violations can be hard to pinpoint [30]. Furthermore, some prior work describes interactional justice as especially harmful, arguing, for example, that interactional justice transgressors are not worried about saving the other person’s “face” [60].

According to justice restoration theory, both punishment and compensation are psychologically equivalent approaches to justice restoration; that is, third party reactions may consist of punishments for offenders and/or compensations for the victims (see, e.g., [61], [62]). Therefore, an interesting question would be what kind of restoration the surveyed employees in this study chose when reacting to justice toward guests by performing COBs. According to the results, as employees observed the hotel treating guests fairly (i.e., they see guests as victims of injustice to a lesser extent), their COBs increased. Why did employees increase their COBs here if, in so doing, they were favoring the offender (i.e., the unfair hotel)? Were they trying to balance some type of injustice? In contrast, if we refer to employees witnessing guests’ mistreatment (a lack of justice), why do the results support a decrease in COBs in this case? Would it not be more logical for them to compensate guests with a COB increase? How can this decrease be interpreted? Was this decrease a way of punishing the hotel? This paper considers that COBs did not play either a compensating or a punishing role, nor staff acted seeking an eye-for-an-eye retributive response [63]. Instead, hotel staff members seem to perform COBs in a parallel manner, helping the hotel or its customers through COBs, without considering their condition as offender or victim, and for the same reason, i.e., justice toward guests. This fact supports the idea that staff reactions to injustice are generally motivated, at least in the sample examined, by a self-interest concern, i.e., based on the social exchange theory [26]. The authors believe that it is unlikely that the staff responded deontically, that is, through an automatic and affect-based process [64], since they did not compensate guests with COBs at any time: even when staff observed guests suffering mistreatment, COBs decreased (rather than increased), and vice versa. In sum, the idea that employees reacted to justice toward guests with COBs out of a moral imperative appears to lose strength. Therefore, third-party employees may respond to justice toward guests in the form of COBs based on self-interest calculations, that is, because “it is someone else’s concern, not mine.”

Based on the study results, it is clear that promoting certain perceptions of fairness is a useful strategy for strengthening healthy employee reciprocations such as COBs. However, the results seem to suggest that this strategy cannot be shaped by

using prior research on conventional OCB. The inconsistencies seen in the justice antecedents in the prior literature on conventional OCB and COBs seem to support this suggestion. In fact, only interactional justice toward guests showed a significant association with COBs (procedural justice to a much lesser extent), whereas prior literature on conventional OCB is clear in supporting all the justice facets as predictors (for meta-analytic reviews see, e.g., [23]-[25], [10], [13]). In practical terms, these findings may be useful in developing management strategies that favor hotel performance. First, justice toward guests seems to constitute an important pillar in designing strategies to encourage employees' constructive performance in the form of COBs. Addressing events that show interactional justice toward guests seems to be important, due to the role that equity theory plays in leading employees to COBs. Service areas of the hotel where guests interact daily with service providers should receive special care. Second, also taking into account the effects of justice for the self on OCBs, the way constructive performance among employees occurs is in fact two-fold: not only will employees who suffer mistreatment react against the organization, but those who witness it toward guests will do the same. Managers must discuss this fact with employees and supervisors. Moreover, if hotel managers think episodes of mistreatment toward guests are innocuous in encouraging constructive behavior in their staff, they might be using erroneous reasoning. Instead, actions designed to foster favorable justice toward guests should have a prominent place in managers' agendas.

Addressing questions raised but not responded to in our study could certainly be a basis for future research. Depending on the impact of COBs on hotel service quality, interest in eliciting these behaviors varies for organizations. Prior research in the service and sales industries seems to identify conventional OCB as a useful variable in achieving guests' service satisfaction. Some arguments appear to support this link. One is based on the expected favorable perceptions that conventional OCBs performed by front-line employees may produce in customers (see, e.g., [65]). Interestingly, as occurred with conventional OCBs, COBs could have effects on hotel effectiveness through their impact on measures of guests' service satisfaction. However, this idea falls outside the scope of this study, and the impact that COBs can have on measures of quality service should be the subject of future research. In addition, according to our assessments, a lack of justice toward guests may not exactly imply 'injustice toward guests.' Therefore, future research could examine what would have happened if unfavorable justice toward guests had been assessed as 'injustice toward guests' directly, instead of as justice toward guests. The two measures might not perform equally. The former may be able to trigger compensatory behavior towards guests. Lastly, the employee's proximity to the "mistreated" guest-victim and the likely higher identification with that guest-victim are factors that can play an important role in the results and deserve more attention. With the focus on the mistreatment of other collectives (like coworkers, suppliers, and so on), the results might differ as

well, and future research can examine this perspective.

Finally, we acknowledge that this study has several weaknesses. First, we used a cross-sectional methodology, increasing the likelihood that the study could suffer from mono-method/source bias. Next, the employees in the study have certain job conditions and norms that are often inherent to the peculiarities of workers in the hospitality sector. Consequently, the performances of the constructs used in our study, as well as their implications, could vary in other institutions in other contexts.

In conclusion, the results suggest that the characteristics of the workplace in terms of justice toward guests are important in predicting COBs among hotel staff. By describing the nature of social contexts in service encounters, interactional justice toward guests seems to constitute a useful term to explain the effects of 'a fair hotel toward guests' on COBs. Only hotel managers who build a 'just hotel', from the perspectives of employees and guests as the affected parties, will be able to deploy the full potential of equity theory in satisfactorily providing a customer-oriented performance.

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