What Do You Expect from Temporary Workers?: The Effect of Role Ambiguity of Temporary Ski Instructor on Customer Orientation

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The ski industry in Korea is expanding every year. Domestic ski consumers are increasing steadily, and international ski consumers from East Asia are also increasing in order to experience the newly developed ski related tour products. In the diversified Korean ski market, the role of the ski school has become important.

In order to meet the needs of ski school consumers, they are putting their efforts in developing diverse lesson programs, and educating their employees on service quality. It was found that such aspects have a close relationship with the sales of the ski resort (Lee, Kim, Jo, & Kim, 2001; Oh, & Byeon, 2007). Especially, the quality of ski instructors has become a critical issue. Since the instructors interact with the customers, they are asked to play a role of a highly skilled teaching staff, as well as the customer oriented service employee. Therefore, the instructor’s competency to accomplish both tasks has become an essential factor.

Even though a ski resort is a big business, because the ski school only operates in winter season, the resort is driven to rely on temporary instructors. Numerous studies on temporary workers reported that temporary workers tend to have lower job satisfaction, organization commitment, job attitude, and performance (Davis-Black, & Uzzi, 1993; Hom, 1970; Miller, & Terborg, 1979; Van Dyne, & Ang, 1998). Considering that the temporary workers have concern about their job security, and the fact that their opportunity to continue to work has been limited with their contract (Kang, & Yoon, 2006; Polivka, & Nardon, 1989), it is obvious that the temporary workers have economically and legally unstable status.

The other problem with the temporary instructor is that management of the ski resort cannot expect them to have loyalty to the organization. The majority of the ski instructors are in the first year of their career (Yang, 2007), which is a reflection of unstable employment environment. Under the circumstances, temporary instructors could face under comprehension of their role, inefficiency in performance, and this could also affect customer satisfaction. Nonetheless, this would have a negative influence on organization effectiveness.

The temporary instructors are often undergoing role ambiguity and this could directly influence the job satisfaction and job performance (Cho, Ko, & Lee, 2002; Lee, & Oh, 2005). From this notion, the current study was conducted. The purpose of the study is to examine the effect of the role ambiguity of temporal ski instructor on customer orientation with mediation effects of job satisfaction and job performance. From this study, the authors expect to find out the insights in managing temporal ski instructors. This will benefit the ski school’s organization management strategy, and human resource management planning of temporary ski instructors, which is expected to increase continuously.

The data was collected from 6 ski resorts, which hold ski schools operating with at least 5 lift facilities. Using convenient sampling, 277 data were collected from ski instructors. The instrument was consisted of four parts: role ambiguity, job satisfaction, job performance, and customer orientation. The instrument used to measure the role ambiguity was a revised 4 item from Mackenzie, Podsakoff, & Aheame (1998). For job satisfaction and job performance revised each of 4 items from Cho (1998), and Na (2006) were used. Lastly, to measure the customer orientation revised 8 items of Saxe & Weitez (1982) were used. The collected data were analyzed with SPSS 17.0 and AMOS 17. For the data analysis a descriptive analysis, Crambach’a, confirmatory factor analysis, correlation analysis, and finally structural equation modeling technique was used to test the hypotheses were tested. Crambach’a score ranged from .72 to .83, which is acceptable. The model fit indices for the confirmatory factor analysis are marginally acceptable: $\chi^2$ 320.382(df=164, p<.001) NC 1.954, RMR .049, RMSEA .059, GFI .899, NFI .863, TLI .916, CFI .927.

Correlation analysis showed a range from -.54 to .25(p<.01). Finally, structural equation modeling was performed and model fit indices showed a moderate fit: $\chi^2$ 242.424(df=130, p<.001) NC 1.865, RMR .049, RMSEA .056, GFI .912 NFI .878, TLI .928, CFI .939.
The results are as listed below.

First, the role ambiguity of the temporal instructor had a negative effect on their job performance. Second, the role ambiguity of the temporal instructor had a negative effect on their job satisfaction. Third, ski instructors’ job performance had no significant effect on job satisfaction. Fourth, ski instructors’ job performance had a positive effect on customer orientation. Lastly, ski instructors’ job satisfaction had a positive effect on customer orientation.

The results indicated that under the circumstances, which resorts had to hire temporary instructors, the management had to put their effort in diminishing instructors’ role ambiguity. That is, in order for instructors to behave in the merit of the customers and meet customers’ needs, the management of the ski resorts has to focus their effort on minimizing the gap between the expected role and perceived role.

The problems with temporary workers are a universal problem. As the role of labor unions has become powerful, the management hires temporary workers to reduce the employment burden. Under the current economic situation, it is possible that the similar result would exhibit from other industries as well as the ski industry. Further discussion and future research are provided.

Reference


