

Institut für
Marktorientierte Unternehmensführung
Universität Mannheim
Postfach 10 34 62

68131 Mannheim

Reihe:
Wissenschaftliche Arbeitspapiere
Nr.: W116

Institut für Marktorientierte Unternehmensführung

Wieseke, J. / Ullrich, J. / Christ, O. / van Dick, R.

Organizational Identification as a Determinant of Customer Orientation in Service Organizations

Mannheim 2008

ISBN 3-89333-371-1

Dr. Jan Wieseke

ist wissenschaftlicher Assistent am Lehrstuhl für Allgemeine Betriebswirtschaftslehre und Marketing I an der Universität Mannheim.

Dr. Johannes Ullrich

ist wissenschaftlicher Assistent am Lehrstuhl für Sozialpsychologie an der Johann Wolfgang Goethe Universität Frankfurt am Main.

Dr. Oliver Christ

Studienrat i.H., Arbeitsgruppe Psychologische Methodenlehre am Fachbereich Psychologie der Philipps-Universität Marburg.

Prof. Dr. Rolf van Dick

ist Inhaber des Lehrstuhls für Sozialpsychologie und Geschäftsführender Direktor des Instituts für Psychologie an der Johann Wolfgang Goethe Universität Frankfurt am Main.

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Abstract

The marketing literature suggests that frontline employees are the central determinant of how customer-oriented a service organization is perceived to be by its customers. However, little is known about the contingencies of employees' customer orientation (CO) beyond personality traits and broadly construed work-attitudes. Based on the Social Identity Approach, the present article develops a multilevel model whereby customer orientation is the result of identity-based management of frontline employees. Two empirical studies in the travel industry show that employees' CO depends on employees' organizational identification and their leaders acting as role models of CO.

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1 Introduction

The market success of service organizations crucially depends on the interaction between frontline employees and customers. This basic insight has generated a large body of research on the role of customer orientation (CO) of service employees for achieving customer satisfaction (Homburg and Stock 2005; Kelley 1992). While the value of customer-oriented frontline employees is increasingly recognized among executives and managers of service organizations, the process by which CO may be generated is far from being well understood. How is the abstract value of CO disseminated within the organization so that it may spill over from frontline employees to customers?

The present paper seeks to advance knowledge of this dissemination process. The Social Identity Approach (e.g. Haslam 2004) is used to derive specific propositions that will contribute new insights to the literature. As we will discuss below, previous research on the antecedents of CO (beyond classic HR instruments such as formal training and incentive systems) has assumed either (a) that CO is a rather stable disposition of service employees, or (b) that CO is a secondary consequence of work attitudes essentially unrelated to the concept of customer orientation (e.g., job satisfaction). In contrast, the present paper suggests that CO of service employees may best be understood as the result of identity-based social influence within groups. This reconceptualization implies two necessary and sufficient conditions for the dissemination of CO. First, the value of CO must be incorporated within the organization's identity, that is, its central, enduring, and distinctive aspects (cf. Albert and Whetten 1985). Second, the focal employees must identify with their organization so that the value of CO becomes self-defining (e.g., Pratt 1998). The key difference to previous conceptualizations of the antecedents of CO is that our model identifies the most proximal determinants of CO which are at the same time amenable to management interventions.

1.1 Literature Review

Previous research on the determinants of CO can be broadly classified according to its focus on characteristics of either the person or the situation. CO, the central dependent variable, is typically defined as a rather stable personality trait or "predisposition to meet customer needs

in an on-the-job context” (Brown et al. 2002, p. 111). It is thus unsurprising that roughly half of the previous studies tended to apply a personnel selection perspective by studying other enduring personality traits as possible antecedents of CO. This research has shown, for instance, that CO is predicted by agreeableness, emotional stability, and need for activity (Brown et al. 2002), conscientiousness and extraversion (Liao and Chuang 2004), job resourcefulness (Licata et al. 2003), cognitive style (McIntyre et al. 2000), and emotional intelligence (Rozell, Pettijohn, and Parker 2004). However, the practical usefulness of such trait research is limited for two reasons. First, personality tests have often demonstrated too low validity to be used for recruitment purposes (Guion 1998). Second, the fact that CO interventions are now widespread (Peccei and Rosenthal 2000) suggests that human resource managers tend to believe in the malleability of CO and need scientific grounding to design effective change programs.

Thus, it would appear that important practical dividends might flow from considering factors from the employees’ environment as possible situational determinants of CO. Researchers of organizational behavior generally use work attitudes to index influences of the work environment on the individual employee. For instance, previous research found correlations between CO and job satisfaction (Hartline and Ferrell 1996, Pettijohn, Pettijohn, and Taylor 2002, Stock and Hoyer 2002), and organizational commitment (Hartline, Maxham, and McKee 2000, Pettijohn, Pettijohn, and Taylor 2002, Stock and Hoyer 2002). However, the nature of these work attitudes is such that they predict a whole range of desirable outcomes (Meyer et al. 2002), which begs the question of what is their specific theoretical connection with CO. As we discuss below, this is a key issue that our model of CO generation seeks to improve on by introducing a construct (organizational identification) that explicitly links individual behavior to organizational norms and values such as CO.

A second area of research into situational causes of service employees’ CO concerns the role of their managers. In one of the most highly cited papers in the market orientation literature, Kohli and Jaworski (1990, p. 15) suggest that “senior managers must themselves be convinced of the value of a market orientation and *communicate* their commitment to junior employees. [...] Junior employees need to witness behaviors and resource allocations that reflect a commitment to a market orientation” (italics in original). In line with this contention, empirical research shows that frontline employees’ CO is crucially dependent on their

perceptions of their managers' role modeling of customer-oriented behavior (Stock and Hoyer 2002).

In light of the importance of managers' attitudes and behaviors, it would seem desirable that CO research combine the perspectives of managers and frontline employees. However, only three studies complemented measures of employee perceptions as discussed above with measures of relevant manager characteristics, demonstrating a correspondence between managers' CO and CO of frontline employees (Hartline and Ferrell 1996, Hartline, Maxham, and McKee 2000, Jones, Busch, and Dacin 2003). These studies represent the strongest support available for the link between managers' and employees' CO. Unfortunately, by aggregating data from individual employees within organizations (or business units) none of these studies adequately accounted for the hierarchical structure of their data.

Moreover, the few studies that looked at the manager and employee levels simultaneously did not consider the possibility that the effects of manager behaviors and employee work attitudes are of an interactive nature, i.e. that one may be contingent on the other. In the following, we build on the basic insights of the situational perspective discussed above and develop these into a simple multilevel model in order to better account for the dissemination of CO within organizations. The key construct in this model is organizational identification (OI). As we will explain below, this construct is different from work attitudes, because it relates to employees' self-definition. Therefore, the underlying proposition of our study is that compared to the previously focused work attitudes, OI is of a farther reaching nature with a potentially superior explanatory power concerning CO.

The key improvements implied by our model are that it (a) incorporates both work attitudes and manager behaviors as predictors but focuses on the most proximal causes of CO, and that it (b) derives hypotheses about interactions between the manager and employees level predictors. By integrating the OI construct as well as manager CO into a multilevel model of employees' CO antecedents, this paper will provide insights that are of interest for both researchers and practitioners.

For researchers, our approach introduces a new perspective on studying employees' CO by including a sound theoretical approach (social identity approach). This should help scholars to

broaden their theoretical repertoire in order to explain CO. Specifically, it introduces the notion of group belongingness as an explanation for employee actions.

For practitioners, including predictors on both the employees' as well as the superordinate managers' level should give specific insights for an identity-based CO management. Moreover, by using the social identity approach our model should help to increase the number of managerial options for action, because influencing OI requires totally different means by management compared to influencing employees work attitudes (such as job satisfaction). Because of their direct interaction with frontline employees, we focus on the influence of the immediate superordinate managers. In the following we refer to them as service managers.

1.2 The Social Identity Approach as a Framework for Managing Service Employees

The Social Identity Approach (SIA) is a multi-theory framework centering on the interplay between psychological group membership and attitudes and behaviors of group members. The core of the SIA comprises Social Identity Theory (e.g. Tajfel and Turner 1979), the more affective or "hot" component of the SIA, and Self-Categorization Theory (e.g. Turner 1985), its more cognitive or "cold" component. Although we briefly introduce these theories separately, it is important to note that we later refer back to the SIA as comprising both theories.

Social Identity Theory's main assumption relevant for present purposes is that people's self-concept is to a large part influenced by valued group-memberships, that is, by their social identity. In other words, people's self-esteem is not only determined by their unique characteristics distinguishing them from other individuals, but also by their belonging to groups that are positively distinct from other groups. To the extent that an individual's social identity is salient, he or she will think and act on the basis of shared norms and responsibilities rather than their individual interests.

One important aspect of social identification with a group is that it involves a significant affective element (Edwards 2005). As Tajfel (1981, p. 225) describes it, social identity is "that part of the individual's self concept which derives from knowledge of his membership of a

social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership”.

Self-Categorization Theory describes the cognitive processes contributing to a self-definition in terms of a given group membership, that is, social identification. First, a given social identity will more likely become active the more it helps to cognitively organize the social situation in terms of similarities and differences. For instance, in a setting where only marketing staff are (psychologically) present, the shared social identity of the marketing department is less likely to become activated than in the presence of members from other departments – simply because there is no reference category for the marketing department to be compared with. Second, a given social identity will more likely become activated the more it is cognitively accessible due to chronic activation. For instance, the social identity “marketer” may be assumed to be more accessible to a person who has a long history of working in the area of marketing.

In recent years, the SIA has been successfully applied to explain a wide range of behaviors in organizations, which are, in essence, internally structured groups (Hogg and Terry 2000, see Haslam 2004 for an overview of this research). The key variable studied in organizational contexts is organizational identification, indicating the extent to which “people engage in a process of *self-stereotyping* whereby their behavior is oriented towards, and structured by, the content of that group’s or organization’s defining characteristics, norms and values, resulting in the internalization of a particular organizational identity” (Haslam, Postmes, and Ellemers 2003, p. 360, italics in original).

As mentioned at the beginning, it is precisely this process that should be of genuine interest to modern service organizations aiming at the dissemination of the marketing concept throughout the organization, that is, from the abstract idea to concrete CO of frontline employees. On account of the self-definitional nature of OI, the more employees identify with their organization, the more their attitudes and behaviors will become consistent with the core characteristics of their organization. In this respect it is important to underline the fundamental motivational power of OI that leads employees to act on behalf of the organization. This deep-lying motivation is based on the fact that OI satisfies basic human needs (e.g., for belongingness and affiliation; see Pratt 1998).

We consider the link to employees' self-definition that is implied by OI as the key added value compared with previously studied work attitudes such as job satisfaction and commitment. Even though some authors view the constructs of OI and organizational commitment as being closely related (e.g., Miller et al. 2000), there is a consensus in recent literature that identification and commitment are distinguishable in terms of their essential meaning (Meyer, Becker, and Van Dick 2006). The key point here is that organizational identification is the "perception of oneness with or belongingness to the organization" (Ashforth and Mael, 1989, p. 34), including both a self-definitional and an emotional meaning for the individual, whereas organizational commitment – defined as "a force that binds an individual to a course of action that is of relevance to a particular target" (Meyer and Herscovitch 2001, p. 301) – merely refers to an (emotional) attachment to the organization (Allen and Meyer, 1990). The SIA assumes that by identifying with their group, group members derive meaningful answers to the question "Who am I?" with only the resulting affect overlapping with the notion of commitment (cf. Van Dick 2001). Moreover, meta-analytical evidence demonstrates that OI is empirically distinct from commitment and produces very different results with respect to outcome variables (Riketta, 2005).

1.3 A Heuristic Model of the Dissemination of CO

Based on the insight that employees who are strongly identified with their organization will act in terms of the organization's identity, we propose that employees will act in customer-oriented ways to the extent that (a) the organization's identity incorporates the value of CO, and (b) employees identify with their organization. The added value of the SIA is that it helps to understand the dissemination of organizational norms across the multiple levels of the organization within a single framework. Importantly, the SIA suggests that managers can develop their frontline employees' potential for CO by shaping the organization's identity in terms of customer-oriented norms.

----- Insert Figure 1 about here -----

As depicted in Figure 1, our model suggests that the content of organizational identity determines to what extent OI translates into CO. Assuming that CO is included in the identity of many modern service organizations, we can predict a direct effect of OI on CO. This

should be the case for organizations that rely on a high quality service to customers. Such organizations can be found in areas such as banks, financial service providers, supplier firms in B2B-industries and travel industries. Accordingly, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 1: The higher frontline employees' OI, the higher their CO.

However, it is clear that organizational identity is not unidimensional. It is important to allow for the possibility of idiosyncratic interpretations of the meaning of organizational identity by organizational members. For instance, some members may interpret identity as implying a selling orientation more strongly than a CO. In this regard, the SIA, and especially the work on leadership by Reicher and colleagues (e.g. Reicher, Haslam, and Hopkins 2005), suggests that organizational leaders may significantly shape employees' *interpretations* of organizational identity. In fact, Reicher and colleagues view leaders as "entrepreneurs of identity" because they exert their influence on followers by defining the boundaries and the content of followers' self-categorizations. Therefore, we consider managers' behavior to be the key to service employees' interpretations of organizational identity. By actively endorsing the values and norms of the organization (e.g., CO), service managers can reinforce employees' notion of organizational identity, that is, what it means to be a member of this organization (see Van Knippenberg and Hogg 2003).

Furthermore, when service managers personally embody the norms associated with CO, they reduce the risk of irrelevant or even undesirable norms being misconstrued as constituting the organizational identity. As leadership influence decreases with increasing physical distance between leader and followers (Bass 1990) the above reasoning should especially be true for small organizations with a high degree of manager visibility. In fact, service managers of small organizations are probably the single most influential factor in shaping the internal organizational climate for customer orientation. This leads us to expect a moderator effect of service managers' CO on the relationship between employees' OI and CO:

Hypothesis 2: Service managers' CO will moderate the relationship between employees' OI and CO in such a way that the higher the service managers' CO, the stronger the relationship between employees' OI and CO.

Additionally, as discussed above, recent marketing research would seem to suggest a direct effect of managers' CO on employees' CO (e.g. Hartline, Maxham, and McKee 2000). As this research did not include OI as a predictor of CO, it appears valuable to test for a possible

influence of managers' behavior that is independent of OI. This influence could, for instance, be due to a general social learning mechanism (Bandura, 1977). Thus, we propose:

Hypothesis 3: Service managers' CO will be positively related to employees' CO.

2 Methodology

2.1 Sample

We selected travel agencies as our sampling frame because service delivery in travel agencies implies a close interaction between customers and employees. Furthermore, customer orientation is highly valued in the travel industry and the size of individual travel agencies allows for direct contact between service manager and employees.

To test our hypotheses we conducted two subsequent studies with non-overlapping samples. The sample of study 1 consisted of matched data from 125 service managers and 309 frontline employees in 125 travel agencies. The sample for study 2 included matched data from 92 service managers and 236 frontline employees.

To test for non-response bias we used Armstrong and Overton's (1977) time-trend extrapolation test. There were no systematic differences in demographics or measured constructs between early and late responders.

2.2 Measures

An overview of all items as well as scale means, standard deviation and reliabilities is shown in Appendix A. All scales had satisfactory Cronbachs alpha's values. In order to strengthen the generalizability of our study, we included a number of control variables at the employee (job satisfaction, organizational commitment, age, work experience, and gender) as well as the travel agency level (number of employees, profit before tax and annual sales growth). The measured variables were identical in studies 1 and 2, except for three control variables (job satisfaction and organizational commitment were only measured in study 2; profit before tax was only measured in study 1).

3 Results

In order to test our hypotheses, we set up a hierarchical linear model (HLM, Bryk and Raudenbush 1992) with the dependent variable, employees' CO, being an individual-level construct, and the predicting variables spanning the individual and agency levels. Analyses were conducted using MLwiN (Version 2.0).

Results are shown in Table 2. In study 1 a significant relationship was found for employees' OI and their CO ($b=.103$, $SE=.029$, $p<.01$), supporting Hypothesis 1. Contrary to Hypothesis 3, managers' CO had no direct relationship with employees' CO. Most important, however, the cross-level interaction between employees' OI and managers' CO was found to be significant ($b=.099$, $SE=.026$, $p<.01$), yielding support for Hypothesis 2. As can be seen in Figure 2, the relationship between employees' OI and CO was stronger at higher levels of managers' CO. It is also evident that OI had no effect on CO when managers' CO was low.

----- Insert Table 1 about here -----

----- Insert Figure 2 about here -----

In study 2 we obtained similar results with respect to Hypotheses 1 and 2 even after controlling for the effects of job satisfaction and commitment. The main effect of OI ($b=.100$, $SE=.028$, $p<.01$) as well as the interaction with managers' CO ($b=.080$, $SE=.026$, $p<.01$) were significant and signed in accordance with our predictions, thus replicating findings of our first study. The only divergence from the results of study 1 was a significant direct effect of managers' CO on employees' CO supporting Hypothesis 3 ($b=.052$, $SE=.026$, $p<.05$). In summary, the results largely supported our model as depicted in Figure 1.

4 Discussion

4.1 Theoretical Implications

In contrast to customers' identification with a company (e.g. Ahearne, Bhattacharya, and Gruen 2005, Lichtenstein, Drumwright, and Braig 2004), marketing research has so far neglected the role of insiders' organizational identification for promoting an organization's customer orientation. A major contribution of the present article is to connect the literature on

customer orientation of service organizations to the rich reservoir of research on employees' identification with organizations.

Our findings suggest that employees' OI serves as a powerful predictor of employees' CO that exists over and above influences of work attitudes (such as job satisfaction and commitment), which have been the focus of previous CO-related studies. Beyond the surplus predictive power of OI, the SIA also offers a functional account of OI. For instance, the SIA suggests that OI may increase CO because (1) OI leads employees to internalize the organizational norms (including CO) and experience these as intrinsically motivating (e.g. Ellemers, de Gilder, and Haslam 2004), (2) OI is generally associated with behaviors committed to collective rather than individual interests (e.g. Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail 1994, Ellemers, Spears, and Doosje 1997, Van Dick 2004). As stated above the main source for the fundamental motivational power of OI lies in the needs that are fulfilled by the self-definitional gains of identifying with an organization and acting on its behalf.

Furthermore, our results extend the scarce empirical evidence of the crucial role of service managers. Unlike previous models which propose a simple 'trickle down' effect of customer orientation (Jones, Bush, and Dacin 2003, p. 327), we did not find unequivocal support for a direct effect of managers' CO on employees' CO. It is possible that previously reported effects have been confounded with high levels of OI as suggested by our model. In this respect, we found that employees' OI more strongly translates into CO the more managers also endorse CO. This finding is consistent with a SIA view of employees' OI as *energizing* behavior and service managers' CO as *directing* behavior. Alternatively, and complementary to previous research, we may interpret this interaction as suggesting that the effects of managers' CO on employees' CO depend on high levels of employees' OI.

4.2 Managerial Implications

Our findings suggest that managerial thinking on CO may benefit from acknowledging the importance of OI. In this respect it is important to understand that means to raise OI are largely different from the classical means that are used to improve employees' job satisfaction. Whereas actions that aim at raising employee satisfaction might include a whole range of aspects, identity-based management would focus on aspects of the psychological

group membership which shapes attitudes, feelings and behavior (van Knippenberg and Hogg 2003).

For example, firms that are interested in raising employees' job satisfaction might follow the widely accepted job characteristics model (Hackman and Oldham 1975) and work on specific aspects like skill variety or task significance. On the other hand, efforts to raise employees' organizational identification would aim at raising salience of the firm as a group category, stressing favorable comparisons with other companies and so forth. For example, the ASPIRe model proposed by Haslam (2004) might serve as a roadmap with this respect. In fact, Reicher, Haslam, and Hopkins (2005) argue that defining the content of salient self-categories of their followers is the crucial process by which leaders gain social power. We view our multi-level findings as supporting these suggestions. Without managers themselves endorsing CO, the link between frontline employees' OI and CO is significantly weaker. Thus, being a dedicated role-model of CO sets the behavioral norms for frontline employees (in the sense of "directing", see above).

4.3 Conclusion

We have offered a first application of the SIA in the area of management of service employees. Although the identification construct has been researched by management and marketing scholars alike, the research streams have largely evolved separately with the marketing discipline focusing on customers and the management discipline focusing on employees (Cardador and Pratt 2006). Our model has been successful at explaining how the value of CO is transferred from management to employees. We hope that these analyses will encourage other researchers to take advantage of the SIA to better understand the power of identity-based management of marketing. One avenue for further research would be to test our model in other service categories. Even though we propose that our model will generally hold true for all organizations that rely on a high quality service (e.g., banks, financial service providers, supplier firms in B2B-industries), it would be worthwhile to test the generalizability to other settings. Second, it would be valuable to test in how far identification with different subgroups within an organization plays a role.

Third, having established that OI is significantly related to employees' self-reported customer orientation, it is a different question *how* employees actually *perform* in a way that satisfies the customer's needs. In this respect, CO trainings are certainly helpful to align employee motivation and customer needs. Ideally, organizations would internally communicate and promote their efforts and investments in CO training in order to underline the importance of CO within the organization's identity.

Another avenue of interest is to test for bottom-up effects. For instance, just like managers' CO might influence employees' CO, it is conceivable that a similar influence might be observed in the direction from employees to managers. The relative strength of bottom up vs. top down effects would ideally be tested in a longitudinal cross-level study.

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Table 1
 Results for Multilevel Analyses Explaining Frontline Employees' Customer Orientation

	Study 1	Study 2
	Coefficient (Standard Errors) ^a	Coefficient (Standard Errors) ^a
Intercept	6.547(.030)	6.676(.023)
Individual Level Variables:		
Identification (employees)	.103(.029)**	.100(.028)**
Work experience (employees; control variable)	-.045(.030)	-.012(.027)
Age (employees; control variable)	.066(.030)*	.007(.027)
Gender (employees; control variable)	.005(.025)	-.025(.023)
Job satisfaction (employees; control variable)	– ^b	.074(.031)*
Organizational commitment (employees; control variable)	– ^b	.060(.034)
Organizational Level Variables:		
Customer orientation (service manager)	.039(.029)	.052(.026)*
Profit before tax (control variable)	-.028(.031)	– ^b
Sales growth (control variable)	-.020(.028)	-.003(.023)
Number of employees (control variable)	.032(.037)	-.021(.027)
Cross-Level Interaction:		
Identification (employees) x customer orientation (service manager)	.099(.026)**	.080(.026)**

Notes:

^a unstandardized path coefficients;

^b not included in the respective study

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; two-tailed significance tests

Figure 1

Heuristic Model

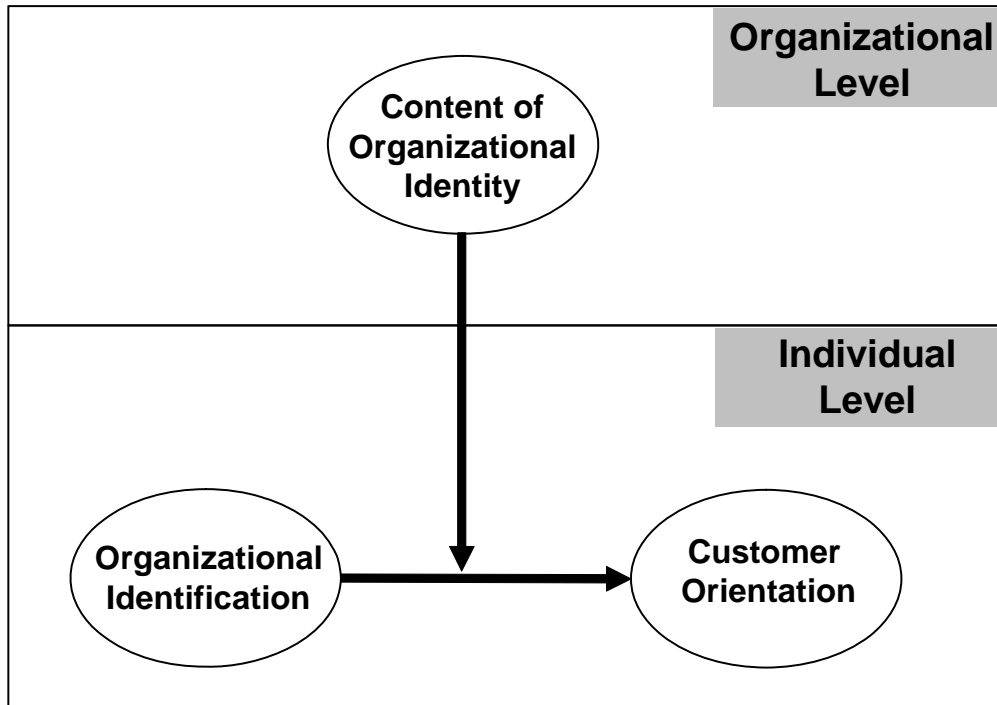
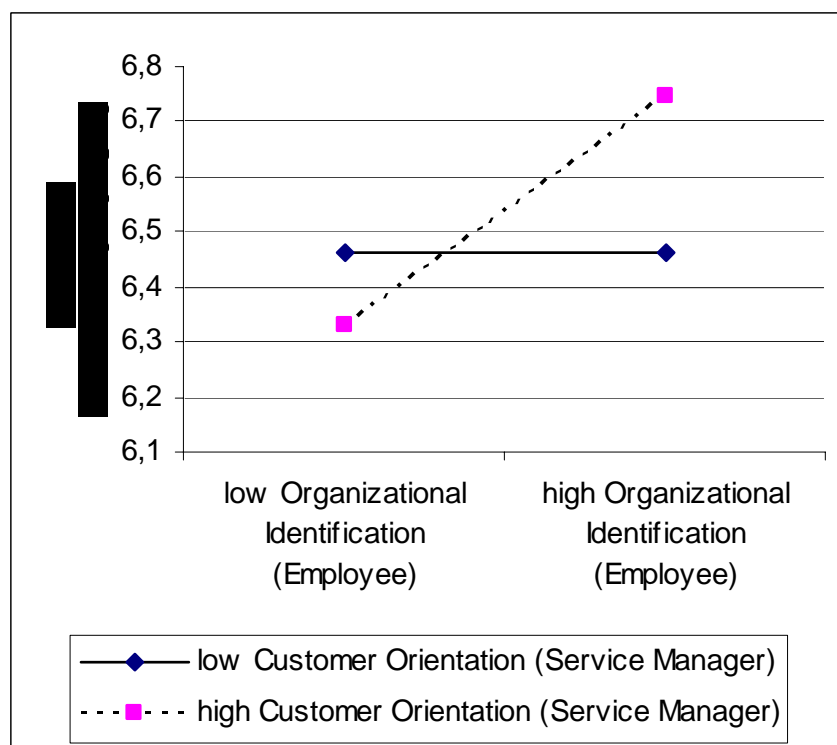


Figure 2

Cross Level Interaction Effect of Employees' OI and Service Managers' CO on Employees' CO



Appendix A: Scale Items for Construct Measurement

Measures and Items		Mean/ (SD)	Cron- bachs alpha
I. Organizational identification (seven-point scale: “totally disagree” to “totally agree”); Source: Mael and Ashforth (1992)	Study 1	6.2(.7)	.77
	Study 2	6.3(.7)	.87
1. I am very interested in what others think about this travel agency.			
2. When I talk about this travel agency, I usually say “we” rather than “they”.			
3. This travel agency’s success is my success.			
4. When someone praises this travel agency, it feels like a personal compliment.			
5. If a story in the media criticized this travel agency, I would feel embarrassed.			
II. Customer orientation (employees) (seven-point scale: “totally disagree” to “totally agree”); Source: Thomas, Soutar, and Ryan (2001)	Study 1	6.6(.4)	.76
	Study 2	6.6(.4)	.83
1. I try to figure out what a customer’s needs are.			
2. I have the customer’s best interests in mind.			
3. I take a problem solving approach in selling products or services to customers.			
4. I recommend products or services that are best suited to solving problems.			
5. I try to find out which kinds of products or services would be most helpful to customers.			
III. Customer orientation (service manager) (seven-point scale: “totally disagree” to “totally agree”); Source: Voss and Voss (2000)	Study 1	5.4(.9)	.65
	Study 2	6.0(.6)	.75
1. Customers’ preferences are a key factor in the way I arrange and design my travel agency.			
2. I frequently survey customers to find out the products and services they would like to see in the future.			
3. The way I design my travel agency is driven more by own considerations than by customer preferences. (reverse-coded)			
IV. Job satisfaction (employees) (seven-point scale: “totally disagree” to “totally agree”); Source: Hackman and Oldham (1980)	Study 1	–	–
	Study 2	5.0(.9)	.71
1. Generally speaking, I am very satisfied with this job.			
2. I am generally satisfied with the kind of work I do in this job.			
3. I frequently think of quitting this job (Reverse coded).			
V. Organizational commitment (employees) (seven-point scale: “totally disagree” to “totally agree”); Source: Allen and Meyer (1990)	Study 1	–	–
	Study 2	5.0(1.0)	.85
1. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this travel agency.			
2. I feel 'emotionally attached' to this travel agency.			
3. I feel a strong sense of belonging to my travel agency.			
VI. Profit (Before Tax) as a Percentage of Sales (Before Tax); What was the profit (before tax) as a percentage of sales (before tax) of your agency on average over the last three business years? ((seven-point scale: 1 = negative, 2 = 0%-.4%, 3 = .5%-.9%, 4 = 1%-1.4%, 5 = 1.5%-1.9%, 6 = 2%-3.9%, 7 = 4% and more).	Study 1	2.9(1.2)	–
	Study 2	–	–
VII. Sales growth comparing the last two business years (in percent)	Study 1	8.9(39.1)	–
	Study 2	-10.3(39.9)	–
VIII. Number of employees per travel agency	Study 1	5.7(4.8)	–
	Study 2	4.6(2.7)	–
IX. Employees’ work experience (in years)	Study 1	6.3(5.6)	–
	Study 2	6.0(3.7)	–
X. Employees’ age (in years)	Study 1	31.2(8.5)	–
	Study 2	32.4(9.2)	–
XI. Employees’ gender (1=female; 2=male)	Study 1	1.1(.3)	–
	Study 2	1.1(.3)	–

Notes: (1) In order to combine the items to make up our constructs, we calculated the mean of the item scores of a scale.

(2) We opted for different CO scales for employees and managers, because CO has a broader scope for management, whereas employees’ CO mainly concerns the direct interaction with the customer. Thus, employees’ CO was assessed with five items adapted from Thomas, Soutar, and Ryan’s (2001) Selling Orientation-Customer Orientation scale, which are dealing with employee behaviors that are related to customer interaction issues. Managers’ CO was measured with an adaptation of Voss and Voss’ (2000) three-item CO scale, which is focusing on more managerial aspects of CO.