



# Employer Brand, Service-Oriented Organizational Citizenship Behavior and Service Quality Perception — An Empirical Study Based on the Banking Industry

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## ABSTRACT

Employer brand is regarded as an effective new practice to address the key challenges of talent management in the market-oriented employment relationship model. At present, the focus of employer brand research has gradually shifted from the labor market to the internal organization, yet there are still few systematic empirical studies on the impact and mechanism of employer brand on the attitudes and behaviors of internal employees, and the field also faces the dilemma of explanatory theories. Research shows that an attractive employer brand exerts a significant positive impact on customers' service quality perception by influencing frontline service employees' service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior. On the basis of traditional internal influence theory, the comprehensive application of social exchange theory can effectively explain the impact relationship and mechanism among employer brand, service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior, and customer service quality perception.

## 1. Research background and problem formulation

In recent years, employer brand has become a hot topic in organizational and human resource management research, and it is deemed an effective practice to solve the key issues of talent management in the market-oriented employment relationship model. Researchers argue that employer brand can not only positively affect the attitudes and behaviors of (potential) applicants in the labor market, but also positively influence the attitudes and behaviors of current employees within the organization, which in turn affects individual employee performance and organizational performance<sup>[1]</sup>. Most existing employer brand studies take financial services, retail, medical care and other industries as research samples, focusing on the impact of employer brand on the application attitudes and behaviors of potential employees. However, there are few systematic empirical studies on the process and mechanism of how employer brand affects current employees

in the organization and further influences customers' service quality perception, and the field also faces the dilemma of explanatory theories<sup>[2]</sup>.

Most employer brand studies attempt to adopt internal marketing theory to explain the internal effects of employer brand. Internal marketing theory holds that internal marketing practices attract, develop, motivate and retain high-quality employees by creating jobs that meet employees' needs, and at the same time motivate employees to adopt a customer-oriented mindset to improve service quality<sup>[3]</sup>. Obviously, this theory fails to effectively explain how employer brand establishes an emotional connection with individual employees and further influences their behaviors. The expansion of employer brand research into the internal organization requires more empirical research on its relationship with employees' attitudes and behaviors within the organization, as well as the search for more explanatory theories.

The service industry has become an important pillar of China's economic growth. In the service industry, service

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quality is a key factor determining the economic benefits of enterprises. As a typical service enterprise, the banking industry takes customers' service quality perception as one of the key elements of market competition and a core performance requirement for employees<sup>[4]</sup>. Research shows that service quality is the main basis for customers to choose a bank. How to improve customers' service quality perception is an important strategic issue for bank operation. In the service industry, the attitudes and behaviors of employees, especially frontline service employees who interact directly with customers, are decisive factors affecting customers' service quality perception<sup>[5]</sup>.

However, in the current external market-led employment relationship model, the relationship between employees and organizations is generally more alienated and fragile, employees' organizational commitment has generally declined, proactive dedication at work has decreased, and voluntary turnover rates have risen<sup>[6]</sup>. How to stimulate employees' organizational identification and proactive dedication has become a common challenge for service enterprises to improve customers' service quality perception. Existing studies show that service occurs in the interpersonal interaction between service providers and customers, so the service encounter largely determines the quality of service, and employees' service behaviors have a significant impact on customers' service quality perception, especially service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior<sup>[7]</sup>.

Employer brand can not only enhance an organization's attractiveness in the talent market, but also stimulate the sense of identity and organizational citizenship behavior of internal employees<sup>[8]</sup>. In summary, this study selects frontline employees of the banking industry, a typical service industry, as samples, adopts an empirical research method to verify the impact relationship among employer brand, employees' service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior and customers' service quality perception, discusses the mechanism of employer brand management practices on customers' service quality perception, expands the empirical research on the internal effects of employer brand, and explores the application of more explanatory theories.

## 2.Literature review and research hypotheses

### 2.1.Employer brand

Since Ambler and Barrow systematically elaborated the concept of "employer brand" in 1996, employer brand has been widely concerned by researchers and practitioners as an important topic to solve talent management issues in the market-oriented employment relationship model<sup>[9]</sup>. Researchers believe that employer brand is not just a market-representative concept, but a brand image established for potential, current and former employees, a comprehensive expression of an organization's talent management philosophy and practices, and an enterprise's employment value proposition and commitment<sup>[10]</sup>.

Early researchers simply regarded employer brand as an important variable affecting (potential) applicants in the external labor market, with research samples mostly from

service industries such as financial services, retail and medical care. Researchers define employer brand as the image and unique characteristics of an employer that distinguishes it from competitors in the labor market to attract target talents. Strengthening employer brand is to build an image of "the best place to work" for job seekers in the labor market<sup>[11]</sup>. Employer brand is particularly important for the service industry, as it helps service enterprises absorb differentiated talents. At this stage, research mainly focuses on exploring the content structure of employer brand and its impact on the application intention and behavior of potential employees<sup>[12]</sup>.

In recent years, researchers have extended the study of employer brand to the internal organization. They argue that the research on the after-effects and mechanism of employer brand should not be limited to the target group in the external labor market; internal marketing to current employees is also crucial, and the focus of employer brand building activities should be expanded from (potential) applicants to current employees and even former employees within the organization<sup>[13]</sup>. It will not only affect the job-seeking intention and behavior of potential employees in the labor market, but also influence the attitudes and behaviors of current employees, which in turn affects employee performance and organizational performance<sup>[14]</sup>. However, researchers have not yet formed a clear understanding of issues such as "how to affect employees' attitudes and behaviors and further influence organizational performance", and relevant empirical studies are scarce.

In addition, since the focus of employer brand research expanded to the internal organization, it has faced the dilemma of explanatory theories. Most early studies used the "self-image-product image match" theory borrowed from marketing and the "person-organization fit" theory to explain the impact of employer brand on potential applicants' job-seeking behavior<sup>[15]</sup>. However, what theory should be used to analyze and explain "how employer brand establishes an emotional connection with current employees in the organization, and how employer brand affects current employees' attitudes and behaviors and further influences organizational performance" remains an open question.

As mentioned above, most existing studies attempt to use internal marketing theory to explain the internal effects of employer brand, arguing that internal marketing practices attract, develop, motivate and retain high-quality employees by creating jobs that meet employees' needs, and motivate employees to adopt a customer-oriented mindset to improve service quality<sup>[16]</sup>. Obviously, this theory cannot effectively explain how employer brand establishes an emotional connection with individual employees and further influences their behaviors.

### 2.2.Employer brand and service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior

Organizational citizenship behavior is defined as proactive extra-role behavior, which is not driven by formal reward and punishment systems, but an individual behavior that improves overall organizational effectiveness<sup>[17]</sup>. In the service industry, due to the intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity and interactivity of service products, employees' organizational

citizenship behavior is particularly important<sup>[18]</sup>. Some forms of organizational citizenship behavior are more suitable for specific organizations, and there are many defects in applying the general concept of organizational citizenship behavior to different organizations and industries. For example, service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior is quite different from general organizational citizenship behavior, as it directly targets customers and can improve organizational service performance<sup>[19]</sup>. Based on the research objectives, this study selects service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior as an important research variable.

Service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior refers to the spontaneous behaviors beyond the formal role requirements exhibited by customer-facing employees when serving customers<sup>[20]</sup>. Existing studies show that high-performance human resource practices promote the formation of service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior; employees' perceived procedural justice, affiliation needs, self-actualization needs, and work values are all related to service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior<sup>[21]</sup>.

This study argues that many antecedents of service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior are closely related to certain dimensions of employer brand, such as person-organization value fit, team innovation climate and leadership style, organizational justice and leadership support<sup>[22]</sup>. Based on the analogy and connection of these antecedents and the impact of service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H1: Employees' perceived employer brand is positively correlated with their service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior.

### *2.3. Service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior and service quality perception*

As mentioned above, service products have the unique characteristics of intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity and interactivity. Therefore, service enterprises face greater challenges in improving customers' service quality perception, and the attitudes and behaviors of frontline employees who directly contact customers play an important role in the process of improving service quality perception<sup>[23]</sup>. Many studies have confirmed the relationship between the attitudes and behaviors of frontline service employees and customer responses.

Organ argues that organizational citizenship behavior is an individual behavior that improves overall organizational effectiveness<sup>[24]</sup>. For service enterprises, the improvement of customers' service quality perception requires the active participation and cooperation of all employees, especially frontline service employees. Researchers have found that service employees' organizational citizenship behavior and its sub-dimensions affect customers' service quality perception, as well as interaction quality and outcome quality<sup>[25]</sup>. Employees' service-oriented organizational citizenship behaviors, such as altruism, sportsmanship and personal initiative, play an important role in service delivery.

Bettencourt et al. further pointed out that when frontline service employees form service-oriented organizational

citizenship behavior, loyalty orientation enables employees to promote the enterprise's image, products and services; participation orientation encourages employees to strive to improve their own and colleagues' service delivery quality; service delivery orientation keeps employees' service consistent<sup>[26]</sup>. Employees' positive work attitudes will eventually translate into customer satisfaction and loyalty, as well as more repeat purchases and positive word-of-mouth communication. Based on this, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H2: Service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior is positively correlated with customers' service quality perception.

### *2.4. Employer brand, service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior and service quality perception*

Based on the above discussion, there is a theoretical connection among employer brand, service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior and service quality perception. Internal marketing theory has proved that internal marketing practices can positively affect customers' service quality perception, but the impact process and explanation between the two are still like a "black box"<sup>[27]</sup>. The framework of social exchange theory provides a possibility to explain this process.

Social exchange theory holds that organizations can exchange for positive employee attitudes and behavioral feedback by providing popular human resource practices<sup>[28]</sup>. In the service industry, frontline employees receive information from the enterprise's attractive employer brand practices and perceive organizational support, thus generating stronger service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior at work to strengthen and maintain this "social exchange". The more attractive the employer brand practices are to employees, the higher the employees' "dependence" on the employer, and the more likely frontline service employees are to take the initiative to work at a higher level, that is, to exhibit proactive behaviors of loyalty orientation, service improvement orientation and participation orientation at a higher level in service work, so that customers can perceive a higher level of service quality<sup>[29]</sup>. Based on this, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H3: Employer brand positively affects service quality perception by positively influencing employees' service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior.

## **3. Research design and implementation**

### *3.1. Variable definition and measurement scales*

#### *3.1.1. Employer brand*

At present, researchers have extensively explored the content structure and measurement of employer brand, but have not yet formed a widely accepted view. This study uses the employer brand scale developed by Zhu et al. based on the Chinese context to measure employees' perceived employer brand, which has been proven to have good structural validity

and internal consistency<sup>[30]</sup>. The scale includes five dimensions: compensation and benefits, value recognition, work-life effectiveness, development opportunities, and corporate identity.

### 3.1.2. Service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior

This study adopts the widely cited organizational citizenship behavior measurement scale for service institution employees revised and developed by Bettencourt et al. The scale includes three dimensions: loyalty orientation, service delivery orientation, and participation orientation<sup>[31]</sup>. Among them, loyalty orientation includes promoting the enterprise workplace, telling positive events about the organization, establishing a good corporate reputation, promoting the enterprise's products and services, and actively publicizing the enterprise's products and services; service delivery orientation includes following service guidelines, taking service instructions seriously, following up with customers in a timely manner, performing duties perfectly, maintaining a positive work attitude, and respecting customers; participation orientation includes encouraging colleagues to speak up, providing promotion plans, putting forward constructive suggestions, actively solving customer problems, and taking brochures home to read.

### 3.1.3. Service quality perception

At present, two main views have been formed on the research of the content structure of service quality: one view holds that service quality includes technical quality and functional quality, and the other view holds that service quality includes tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy<sup>[32]</sup>. Although the two classifications differ in dimension division and naming, they essentially include customers' perception of tangible facilities and intangible services in the service process, and the measurement of service quality is aimed at customers' service quality perception.

This study uses the widely used SERVQUAL scale developed by Parasuraman et al., which includes assurance, responsiveness, empathy, reliability and tangibility<sup>[33]</sup>. Based on the research objectives and characteristics of banking services, to ensure the effectiveness and feasibility of data collection, this study only selects five items from the three dimensions of reliability, assurance and empathy in the SERVQUAL scale (timely completing things promised to customers; caring for and helping customers when they encounter difficulties; the employee is dependable; the employee is polite; the employee understands customer needs). In fact, the SERVQUAL scale is designed for the entire service enterprise, and the measurement content involves employees, corporate image and other aspects, while this study needs to measure the service quality part directly caused by employee behavior, so it is reasonable to retain the above five items.

All three variables of employer brand, service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior and service quality perception are measured using a 7-point Likert scale.

## 3.2. Research sample and survey procedure

Banks are typical knowledge-intensive service industries and play an important role in China's economic development. Based on the research objectives, this study selects tellers or wealth managers in bank business halls who directly contact customers extensively as research samples, and adopts a paired sampling survey method for data collection. Among them, the "employer brand" and "service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior" scales are filled out by frontline employees (bank tellers or wealth managers) who directly interact with customers, and the "service quality perception" scale is filled out by customers directly served by bank tellers or wealth managers on the service site.

To reduce the measurement error of the "service quality perception" scale data, a "1-to-2" paired survey method is adopted, that is, each bank service employee sample corresponds to 2 customer samples directly served by him/her in the questionnaire survey. In addition, to minimize sample data error, customer sample questionnaires are filled out by customers immediately after receiving services, and the service time of the 2 customer samples is at least 4 hours apart.

This study distributed 100 pairs of paired questionnaires in bank business halls, that is, 100 questionnaires for "service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior" and "employer brand", and 200 corresponding questionnaires for "service quality perception". Due to the on-site distribution and guidance of researchers to fill in and collect the questionnaires, the questionnaire recovery rate is 100%. After excluding questionnaires with incomplete main content or contradictory answers, 89 valid questionnaires were finally obtained, with a valid sample pairing rate of 89%. Among the valid paired samples, the five major state-owned banks account for 66%, joint-stock banks (China Merchants Bank, Minsheng Bank, etc.) account for 15%, and other banks account for 19%; in terms of gender, males account for 43% and females account for 57%; in terms of working years in the bank, employees with less than 3 years account for 8%, 3-5 years account for 29%, and 5 years and above account for 63%.

## 4. Statistical analysis and results

This study uses SPSS and AMOS statistical software for data analysis, and adopts descriptive statistical analysis, reliability analysis ( $\alpha$  coefficient test), validity analysis (confirmatory factor analysis), OLS regression analysis and structural equation model testing to verify the relationship and mechanism among employer brand, service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior and service quality perception, and construct the action path diagram among the three.

### 4.1. Confirmatory factor analysis

In this study, mature measurement scales developed and verified by researchers are used for employer brand and service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior. Therefore, AMOS is used to conduct confirmatory factor analysis on the conceptual models of the two variables of

"employer brand" and "service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior". The results show (see Table 1) that the conceptual models of employer brand and service-oriented

organizational citizenship behavior have a good fit, indicating that the two variables have good validity and can be used for subsequent research and analysis.

Table 1. Confirmatory factor analysis of employer brand and service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior

Variable	chi-square	RMR	CFI	NFI	IFI	TLI	RMSEA
Employer Brand	583.918(df=340,p=0.000)	0.064	0.858	0.721	0.861	0.842	0.090
Service-oriented organizations influence citizens' behavior	175.144(df=101,p=0.000)	0.079	0.905	0.805	0.907	0.887	0.091

4.2.Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis

Descriptive statistical results show (see Table 2) that the mean values of all dimensions of employer brand and service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior exceed 5, and the variance values show that the data do not deviate significantly, indicating that employees have a relatively high overall awareness of the enterprise's employer brand, and employees

also exhibit obvious service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior; in terms of the reliability of the variable scales, the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient of all variables is above 0.80, indicating that the reliability of each dimension scale of each variable reaches a satisfactory level; the simple correlation coefficient also preliminarily shows that there is a significant correlation between each dimension of the variables.

Table 2. Descriptive statistical results and correlation coefficients

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.Compensation and Benefits	5.47	0.80	(0.85)								
2.Work-Life Balance	5.33	0.75	0.85**	(0.83)							
3.Value Recognition	5.36	0.81	0.80**	0.85**	(0.87)						
4.Development Opportunities	5.42	0.72	0.77**	0.82**	0.82**	(0.82)					
5.Corporate Identity	5.40	0.78	0.86**	0.87**	0.84**	0.86**	(0.84)				
6.Loyalty	5.56	0.83	0.79**	0.80**	0.80**	0.79**	0.80**	(0.88)			
7.Service Delivery	5.49	0.70	0.74**	0.73**	0.77**	0.78**	0.78**	0.86**	(0.84)		
8.Engagement	5.23	0.78	0.69**	0.80**	0.70**	0.74**	0.76**	0.71**	0.74**	(0.80)	
9.Service Quality Perception	5.08	0.61	0.77**	0.78**	0.79**	0.74**	0.80**	0.86**	0.90**	0.81**	(0.84)

4.3.OLS regression analysis of variables and their dimensions

4.3.1.Employer brand and service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior

The OLS regression analysis results of the overall concept show that there is a significant positive correlation between employer brand and service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior ( $\beta=0.875$ ,  $F=333.374$ , adjusted  $R^2=0.793$ ), and H1 is supported by data. The OLS regression analysis results with loyalty, service delivery and participation as dependent variables respectively show that  $\beta$ , overall adjusted  $R^2$  and overall F value all reach statistically significant levels, that is, compensation and benefits, work-life effectiveness, value recognition, development opportunities and corporate identity are significantly positively correlated with loyalty, service delivery and participation respectively.

In addition, it can be seen from all regression models that the influence intensity of each dimension of employer brand on the three dimensions of service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior is different to a certain extent. Development opportunities have a more significant impact on the loyalty orientation, service delivery orientation and participation orientation behaviors of service employees, while work-life effectiveness has a more significant impact on the participation orientation behaviors of service employees.

4.3.2.Service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior and service quality perception

The OLS regression analysis results with service quality as the dependent variable show that  $\beta$ , overall adjusted  $R^2$  and overall F value between the overall concept and sub-

dimensions of service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior and service quality perception all reach statistically significant levels, and H2 is supported by data. That is, in the service industry, there is a significant positive correlation between frontline service employees' service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior and customers' service quality perception. Loyalty orientation, service delivery orientation and participation orientation behaviors can all significantly positively affect customers' service quality perception, among which service delivery orientation behavior has the strongest influence intensity.

4.4.Overall structural equation model test

Using AMOS analysis software, this study puts the three variables of employer brand, service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior and service quality perception into the structural equation model to test the overall hypothetical model. The test results show that the structural model has a good fit (Chi-square/df=1.562), and the path coefficients are significant, H3 is supported by data, and the overall hypothetical model is verified. That is, in the service industry, there is a clear influence path among employer brand, frontline employees' service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior and customers' service quality perception. Employer brand can significantly positively affect customers' service quality perception by positively influencing frontline employees' service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior. It also shows that there is a strong social exchange relationship between attractive employer brand building practices and service employees' service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior, and customers' service

quality perception level is affected by the social exchange between the two.

## 5. Research conclusions and discussion

### 5.1. Research conclusions

Most existing employer brand studies focus on the impact of employer brand on the attitudes and behaviors of (potential) applicants in the labor market, and systematic empirical research on the attitudes and behaviors of internal employees is scarce. Taking frontline service employees in bank business halls as research samples, this study explores the impact relationship and mechanism among employer brand, service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior and service quality perception through experimental research methods.

Comprehensive results of confirmatory factor analysis, OLS regression analysis and structural equation model test show that: ① There is a significant positive correlation between the overall concept and sub-dimensions of employer brand and service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior, that is, an attractive employer brand and its sub-dimensions can actively promote service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior, among which development opportunities have a particularly significant impact on the loyalty orientation, service delivery orientation and participation orientation behaviors of frontline service employees. ② Service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior and its sub-dimensions are significantly positively correlated with customers' service quality perception, that is, employees' service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior can effectively improve customers' service quality perception, among which service delivery orientation behavior has a more significant impact on customers' service quality perception. ③ From the overall conceptual model, employer brand positively affects customers' service quality perception by positively influencing service employees' service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior.

Internal marketing theory holds that employer brand practices improve customers' service quality perception by motivating employees and encouraging their customer-oriented awareness. ④ This study further expands and confirms that employer brand practices actually prompt employees to take the initiative to show a higher level of service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior through social exchange, which in turn positively affects customers' service quality perception.

### 5.2. Theoretical contributions

Based on the above review and comment on existing employer brand-related research, the theoretical contributions of this study may lie in the following three aspects:

First, it verifies that employer brand has a significant positive impact on employees' attitudes and behaviors, links employer brand with behavioral and attitudinal variables of internal employees of enterprises, verifies the impact relationship and mechanism between employer brand and service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior,

introduces the focus of current employer brand research into the internal organization, and expands the perspective of existing employer brand research. For service enterprises, building an attractive employer brand is a signal sent by the enterprise to establish a "reciprocal exchange" relationship with employees, which also helps employees better complete "person-organization fit" and improve organizational identification. According to social exchange theory, the higher employees' organizational identification, the more likely they are to exhibit organizational citizenship behaviors such as service awareness, selfless dedication and helpfulness at work.

Second, it enriches the research on the impact mechanism of employer brand on customers' service quality perception, and explores and verifies the impact relationship and mechanism among employer brand—employee attitudes and behaviors—customer service quality perception.

Third, it expands the explanatory theory of the after-effects of employer brand on internal employees' attitudes and behaviors. As mentioned above, employer brand research has faced the dilemma of theoretical basis since it expanded to the internal organization. Internal marketing theory is an important theoretical support for studying the impact between enterprise internal management practices and customer attitudes and behaviors in recent years. However, internal marketing theory does not provide a systematic analytical framework for the issue of "how organizational management practices affect employees' attitudes and behaviors and further influence customer attitudes and behaviors". Social exchange theory, a widely used theoretical framework in organizational research, just makes up for this deficiency.

### 5.3. Practical implications

Based on the above research results and discussion, this study has the following three main implications for the relevant management practices of service enterprises:

First, service enterprises should pay attention to the shaping and communication of employer brand for the internal current employee group, especially in the service industry. Previous studies have proved that an attractive employer brand can effectively improve the organization's attractiveness, thereby increasing the job-seeking intention of potential applicants, promoting employees to independently complete person-organization fit, and improving the efficiency of organizational talent recruitment. This study shows that in the service industry, an attractive employer brand has a significant impact on the proactive behaviors of frontline service employees such as loyalty, participation and service delivery, which in turn affects customers' service quality perception.

Second, enterprises should provide and effectively transmit attractive "incentives" for internal employees. Based on the principle of social exchange, the attractive "incentives" in the employer brand are the key to affecting employees' "contribution" (i.e., high-level organizational citizenship behavior) and further influencing the level of customer service quality perception. However, the attractive "incentives" may vary among enterprises in different industries. In this study, for frontline service employees in the banking industry, "development opportunities" have a significant impact on

their extra-role positive behaviors of loyalty orientation, service delivery orientation and participation orientation, and "work-life effectiveness" has a more significant impact on their proactive behaviors of service delivery orientation.

Third, shaping frontline employees' service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior helps to significantly improve customers' service quality perception. The characteristics of service organizations make spontaneous behaviors such as organizational citizenship behavior crucial to organizational performance. All services occur in the direct contact between frontline employees and customers. Frontline employees are not only representatives of the enterprise, which can enhance or weaken the organizational image, but also a strategic link between the enterprise and customers, which can provide customer information and service improvement suggestions. This study also proves that the service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior of frontline service employees in the banking industry can directly and significantly affect customers' perception of service quality.

## 6. Research limitations and future prospects

Although this study strives to be rigorous in research design and implementation, there may still be the following two limitations, which are also directions for future research: First, the uniqueness of the employer brand scale in the service industry. This study uses the employer brand scale developed by Zhu et al. based on the Chinese context. Although the conceptual model fits well, the scale was developed against the background of China's new generation of job seekers. Service enterprises have differentiated characteristics in the content structure of employer brand. Therefore, in future research, the content structure and measurement scale of employer brand can be revised based on the unique characteristics of the banking industry, and the findings of this study can be further verified or revised.

Second, the limitation of the number of research samples. This study adopts the paired sample questionnaire survey method, which is objectively difficult to sample. This study finally obtained 89 pairs of valid samples (including 89 frontline bank service employee samples and 178 corresponding customers). Although the sample size meets the requirements of empirical research, to further improve the reliability of the research conclusions, future research can conduct in-depth research by expanding the number of paired samples and collecting data at multiple time points to verify or revise the viewpoints of this study.

In addition, this study aims to explore the impact relationship and mechanism of employer brand on the attitudes and behaviors of current employees in the organization and customers' service quality perception. In terms of employees' attitudes and behaviors, in addition to organizational citizenship behavior, there are variables such as organizational commitment and employee initiative that may be closely related to customers' service quality perception. In future research, these mature key variables can be added to the research model to more systematically explore the impact relationship and mechanism among employer brand—internal

employees' attitudes and behaviors—customer service quality perception, so as to deepen the research focusing on internal employees of employer brand.

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