


## Article

# Employee Recognition, Task Performance, and OCB: Mediated and Moderated by Pride

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**Abstract:** Employee recognition, an incentive approach often used in management practice, plays an important role in organizations. In comparison to other incentive methods, employee recognition does not focus on the amount of money and material, but it does recognize employees and their achievements and values in the workplace. We would like to reveal the outcome and emotional mechanism of employee recognition in this work. Based on the broaden-and-build theory, we explored the role of the emotion pride on the relationship between employee recognition with task performance and OCB. Using a cross-section sampling approach, 256 valid questionnaires from 58 groups by the leader-member dyad method were collected. SPSS20.0 and Amos21.0 were used to perform the data analysis and verify the hypothesis. The results showed that: (1) Employee recognition has a significantly positive effect on task performance and OCB. (2) Authentic pride mediates the relationship between employee recognition with (a) task performance and (b) OCB. (3) Hubristic pride positively moderates the relationship between employee recognition with (a) task performance and (b) OCB. In conclusion, this study reveals the emotional response and behavioral results of employee recognition by focusing on the role of pride in the path of employee recognition with task performance and OCB.

**Keywords:** employee recognition; pride; task performance; organizational citizenship behavior



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## 1. Introduction

Recognizing and rewarding employees is a common approach to achieve leadership effectiveness in contemporary organizational management [1]. Researchers point out that employee recognition is an important vehicle for motivation [2,3]. Supervisors can reward and recognize individuals or teams formally or informally, in public or private, by material or non-material means [4], such as “a pat on the back”, “personally congratulating for a job well done”, and “publicly recognizing for good performance” [1]. Although there are many ways to express employee recognition, one common feature is that it conveys to employees that their value at work is recognized [5].

Workplace recognition may come from colleagues, subordinates, and supervisors [4]. In this study, we focus on the recognition of superiors in particular, which we believe is very important because it can guide employees to understand whether the organization recognizes their value [6]. In fact, because of the authority of their superiors and the particularity of their positions, they are empowered to provide recognition to employees and to recognize the contributions that individuals have made to the organization [7]. The affective event theory holds that the events experienced by employees at work will affect their emotional state, and then affect their work attitude and work behavior. Previous studies have made many findings on the relationship between employee recognition and work attitude and behaviors. Studies have pointed out that the time spent by superiors

to provide recognition can increase employees' trust in the organization and perceive the organization's support [8], improve job satisfaction, and thus improve job performance. In comparison with rewards, employee recognition is more non-monetary related, so it can inspire employees to do more work at a very low cost [1]. Therefore, most recognition studies focus on in-role performance [9]. In this study, we choose OCB as an outcome variable besides task performance to further enrich the gaps in relevant literature by examining how recognition practices (non-financial incentives) provided by superiors influence employees of their in-role and extra-role outcomes, which is task performance and OCB, in our study.

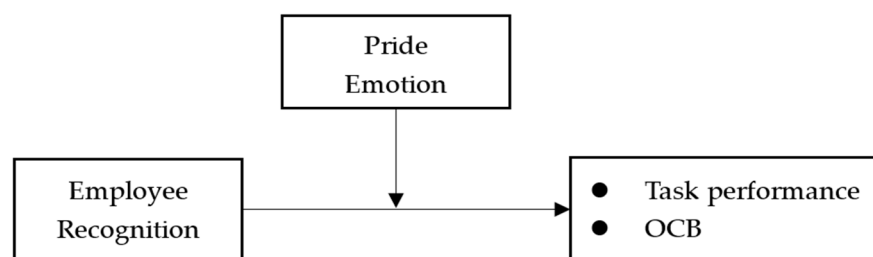
However, besides the fruitful part on work attitude and behaviors, little attention has been paid to the emotional reaction to employee recognition. The recognition from leaders is a great encouragement to employees. Results have found that performance appraisal makes employees feel achievement, gain more confidence, and triggers a positive psychological response [3]. Emotion, caused by a specific object or cause, usually includes a series of physiological reactions and behavioral consequences, which are relatively intense but last for a short time [10]. Pride, as a common self-conscious experience [11], is a typical emotion regulating human social interaction, both from the micro level of individual interaction and the macro level of social interaction [12]. Related studies have demonstrated that pride will influence regulation of the sequent behaviors, and is closely associated with self-efficacy, job satisfaction, goal success, and work performance, which decreases turnover intentions [13,14].

Pride is a positive, subjective emotional experience when an individual attributes a successful event or a positive event to the result of their ability or effort [15]. In prior research, a series of studies demonstrated that pride is composed of two distinct and largely independent facets: authentic pride and hubristic pride [16,17]. These two facets both constitute the rich connotation of pride. Authentic pride is reliably associated with feelings of confidence, self-worth, productivity, and achievement. Hubristic pride is reliably associated with arrogance, egotism, and conceit [18]. Therefore, the second goal of our study is to explore the dual role of pride in the workplace.

In conclusion, our study aims to explore the pathway of employee recognition on task performance and OCB, which broadens the recognition literature by both considering employees in-role and extra-role reactions. What's more, the pride emotion adopted into the model plays two different roles because of its duality. Integrating pride into the model framework to explore how superior recognition affects task performance and OCB could enrich the current knowledge, both in the recognition study and emotion, but especially pride study. In addition, the integrated model is closer to the real organizational management situation, which is much more helpful and meaningful.

## 2. Theory and Hypothesis

Pride in the workplace is not a rare concept. It has been proved that prideful employees are likely to have a better performance and make creative achievements [19]. Existing studies have confirmed that each distinct dimension is correlated with different personality traits, functions in various roles, and has unique outcomes [20]. In this study, we adopt this research result and follow the path that two-facet pride functions are two different roles. According to the connotation of pride, pride emotion arises from the inner attribution of a successful event or a positive event to the result of one's own ability or effort. In the workplace, task performance directly shows how well the employee does their job, and OCB shows the performance out of the job duty and responsibility, both of which are important outcomes contributing to the organization. When employees are recognized by their leaders, the emotional reaction and followed consequences occur. This study tries to figure out the interaction of leader behavior and employee emotion, to see how pride works in the path between employee recognition and task performance and OCBs (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** As proposed above, the research model is shown.

### 2.1. Employee Recognition with Task Performance and OCB

Generally speaking, employee recognition is a constructive feedback behavior adopted by the leader based on the value judgment of individual employees, including work performance, work investment, and dedication [4]. Studies have confirmed that there was a positive correlation between employee recognition and many positive outcomes of the organization [21]. Existing papers have shown that leaders' recognition and performance appraisal are positively related to satisfaction, fairness, perceived utility, and perceived accuracy [22,23]. When employees are recognized by leaders, employees often feel that leadership is fair and just, which is regarded as a manifestation of organizational justice [24]. Leaders or direct managers show respect to employees, to their performance, and to their value and significance, which could make employees feel psychological safety and a sense of belonging [25,26]. Also, positive feedback to employees could stimulate their confidence, help tap their full potential, and bring about a stronger motivation to improve [3,27]. While employees get recognized, they have the disposition to perceive organizational support for the use of their strengths [28], which stimulates their work enthusiasm and passion. This feedback largely influences employees and gives them specific guides that are desired by the organization. The recognized employees will be willing to and able to pay more effort to engage in the tasks, improving their work efficiency and performance [29].

Besides the in-role performance, there are some behaviors that generally go beyond the employee's job duty and are not clearly and directly regulated by the normal compensation system, which is defined as organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB). Employee recognition, as an effective feedback behavior, could make employees feel the communication and interaction with leaders, and make employees understand their job responsibilities and roles, so as to improve the quality of trust and relationship with leaders, help employees better integrate into the organization, and perceive organizational support [30]. Therefore, they would like to give back the appreciation of leaders, such as helping colleges, retaining loyalty to the organization, showing proactive behavior, etc. [31]. In this process of benign interaction, employees will be willing to participate in work more actively, and the more they are engaged, the more they would perform OCB [32,33].

Thus, we hypothesize:

**Hypothesis 1 (H1).** *Employee recognition is positively related to task performance and OCB.*

### 2.2. Pride Emotion: The Mediation and Moderated Mediation

Pride is a common emotional experience that could affect downstream reactions and behaviors [34], such as, job satisfaction [35] and externally visible behaviors [36]. Pride has a strong incentive effect, especially in the face of setbacks and adversities, which makes employees willing to "overcome" the negative situations at work, improving task performance and helping organizations to achieve goals [37,38]. Also, it is proved that pride encourages employees to establish strong ties with organizations [13]. Thus, it can be seen that pride emotion in the workplace is an important topic.

Authentic pride is related to feelings of controllable, effort-driven achievement [18]. When employees get recognized, regardless of the type of recognition, their success gets acknowledged, which makes them feel confident, ambitious, and honored. This is an entirely

authentic pride experience. The fundamental foothold of employee recognition lies in the employees themselves. To recognize the employees themselves is to affirm the employees themselves; to recognize the employees' work behavior is to affirm the employees' way of doing things; to recognize the employees' work results is to affirm the employees' work ability; to recognize the employees' work dedication is to affirm the employees' work spirit and work attitude. Therefore, the leader's praise to the employees can help stimulate the employees' self-awareness and make them feel good about themselves. Experiencing pride will make people willing to pay more efforts to practice and learn, as well as to try their best to achieve the set goals [39]. Besides, treating employees with care and respect can make them perceive organizational virtuousness, thus making employees identify with their organization and be proud. In return, they become more willing to do some out-role behaviors to benefit the organization [40].

As a typical positive self-awareness emotion [15], when individuals experience pride, their self-awareness tends to be positive, they have a better sense of self-efficacy, they believe in themselves more, and they recognize their abilities and choices. As pointed out by the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions, when an individual's positive emotions are high, he or she can face the external environment with a more open and flexible cognitive attitude, make use of more information from the outside world, and think about more possibilities of action, so as to adopt creative ways to deal with work and solve problems [41,42]. When employees are recognized by the leader or organization and generate pride, one is to expand the instant thinking sequence to activate the cognitive ability of work; the other is to build the employee's psychological, physical, intellectual, and social resources, help employees to better engage in organizational tasks and improve workplace behaviors [43]. That is to say, being proud could enable them to have more ability and willingness to work harder and to do something beneficial to the organization.

**Hypothesis 2 (H2).** *Authentic pride mediates the relationship between employee recognition with (a) task performance and (b) OCB.*

The other facet of pride is hubristic pride, which is narcissistic, self-aggrandizement, and self-enhancement [18]. Leaders' confirmation, respect, and appraisal bring confidence and fulfillment to employees [25,44]. When employees experience high hubristic pride, they will attribute this success more to their own personal ability and personal value. While such employees are recognized, they are often able to better exert their positive emotions to expand resources and build resources, and face work more confidently, are more active in completing job tasks, more willing to help colleagues, show better social adaptability, and can cope with various situations in the workplace with ease [45]. It is the nature of hubristic pride to expand, strengthen, and improve themselves.

People who are in high hubristic pride are usually narcissistic; they want to be praised and respected. When this demand is met, their positive self-evaluation will be confirmed. The study found that pride experience is closely related to the control of subsequent behaviors. Recognition makes them feel achievement and pride. Appraisal information concerning personal agency (e.g., "This was my achievement, not someone else's achievement") can be used to make positive inferences about one's progress toward self-regulation [46]. At this time, they will be more satisfied with the leader and the organization. They will double show their ability, take responsibility for their work, and actively interact with colleagues to convey this information and exert their influence. Proud employees will have more of a sense of social responsibility and higher commitment to the organization [38]. Experiencing pride can help individuals make positive judgments on self-concept, so as to strengthen self-regulation, which helps employees handle their work with full confidence. Therefore, when actively completing their work tasks, they will show more pro-social behaviors to help and support colleagues and teams.

Thus, we hypothesize:

**Hypothesis 3 (H3).** *Hubristic pride positively moderates the relationship between employee recognition with (a) task performance and (b) OCB.*

### 3. Method

#### 3.1. Sample and Procedure

This study used a cross-sectional, random sampling method for data collection. Specifically, we invited leaders and their volunteer employees to participate in our study with the help of friends and colleagues. Each leader randomly selected three to five employees in the team to participate. The participants must have a full-time job and been working in the current team for over six months. Leaders were asked to give each employee who would participate a unique code name, and employees were asked to write down their code on their respective questionnaires. We sent paper questionnaires in envelopes to participants by express mail, and the completed questionnaires in sealed envelopes were also sent to us by express mail. For participants who felt using paper questionnaires was inconvenient, questionnaires were sent by email.

The questionnaire is divided into a leadership questionnaire and employee questionnaire. Leaders are invited to evaluate their employees' work performance and organizational citizenship behavior. Three to five employees in the leadership team are invited to evaluate their pride and leader's recognition behavior. The employees were randomly selected by their direct leader. The leader-member dyad method could help to avoid common method bias.

To adapt to China's cultural context, we first translated the original English version questionnaire into the Chinese version, and then we invited a professional to translate the Chinese version back to the English version. After that we compared the translated one to the original one, modifying inappropriate items. Finally, we got the proper Chinese version used in this study.

Samples were collected in many cities along the eastern coast and central China. Finally, 400 questionnaires were issued, and 337 were collected from the finance, real estate, manufacturing, and construction industries. After sorting out and screening the questionnaire, the invalid questionnaires, such as those with missing items, poor filling quality, and were unable to match, were eliminated. A total of 268 valid questionnaires were obtained, and the actual effective recovery rate was 79.53%.

#### 3.2. Measurement

The scales we adopted in this study are all very classical and widely used. They were developed by experts and published in high quality academic journals. The reliability and validity have been verified by many scholars.

**Employee Recognition.** Employee recognition was measured by five items from the contingency reward leadership behavior scale of Walumbwa (2008) [47] and Waldman (1990) [48]. Due to the limitations of existing research, the development of employee-approved scales is not mature. In the existing research, some scholars manipulate the variable of employee recognition through experiments, and some researchers use interviews. We used the widely accepted Brun and Dugas (2008) [4] concept of employee recognition, which refers to the measurement methods of other similar concepts and borrows the relevant items of employee recognition behavior in the contingency reward leadership behavior scale. The scale has 5 items ( $\alpha = 0.88$ ) using the Likert five-point scale to measure, and the score ranges from 1 to 5, which means "never" to "always".

**Pride.** The pride measurement scale was developed by Tracy and Robbins (2007) [15], containing two dimensions: seven items each for authentic pride ( $\alpha = 0.81$ ) and hubristic pride ( $\alpha = 0.91$ ). The scale is measured by the Likert seven-point scale. The score is from 1 to 7, which means "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree".

**Task performance.** Task performance refers to performance indicators that are directly related to work output and can directly evaluate the work results. It is closely related to specific job content, but also with the individual's ability, proficiency in completing tasks,



and work knowledge. To measure task performance, this study used the scale developed by Methot (2015) [49]. There are five items ( $\alpha = 0.84$ ), which are measured by the Likert seven-point scale. The score is from 1 to 7, which means “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”.

**Organizational citizenship behavior.** In this study, we used the OCB scale developed by Bachrach (2007) [50], a total of 10 items ( $\alpha = 0.86$ ), using Likert seven-point scale measurement, the score was from 1 to 7, indicating “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”.

### 3.3. Analytical Strategy

To the data analysis and hypotheses testing, SPSS 20.0 and Amos 21.0. were used. Firstly, we calculated the Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  and factor loadings to measure the reliability and validity of the scale. To present the total items used in the study, and the reliability and validity of the scale, Table 1 shows all the factor loadings, S.E., and Est./S.E. with corresponding  $p$ -values. Then we made a descriptive statistical analysis to present the basic information of the sample. Before hypothesis testing, Means, SDs, and intercorrelations among study variables were calculated to show the basic relationship among variables. Also, to verify the significance of the research variables, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) on the model using Amos 21.0.

**Table 1.** Survey Items.

Variable	Item	Standardized Estimated	Standard Errors	Z (Est./S.E.)
Employee Recognition ( $\alpha = 0.88, p < 0.001$ )	1. My leader talks about excellent employees, and they will get extra praise and recommendation.	0.75	0.06	13.68
	2. When an employee works well, my leader praises him/her personally.	0.80	0.06	14.88
	3. When an employee performs better than the average level, my leader praises him/her.	0.85	0.06	16.18
	4. When an employee works well, my leader especially recognizes and praises him/her.	0.64	0.06	10.58
	5. When an employee performs well, my leader always gives him/her positive feedback.	0.64	0.06	10.59
Authentic pride ( $\alpha = 0.81, p < 0.001$ )	1. I feel confident.	0.67	0.07	11.34
	2. I feel a sense of achievement.	0.82	0.06	15.30
	3. I feel I am valuable.	0.89	0.05	17.47
	4. I feel that I have achieved my goal.	0.83	0.06	15.93
	5. I feel that I am knowledgeable.	0.66	0.05	11.63
	6. I feel satisfied.	0.83	0.06	15.27
	7. I feel I am productive.	0.76	0.05	13.77
Hubristic pride ( $\alpha = 0.91, p < 0.001$ )	8. I feel arrogant.	0.48	0.05	8.18
	9. I feel like I want to show off.	0.71	0.04	13.12
	10. I feel I am snobbish.	0.85	0.04	16.98
	11. I feel proud.	0.93	0.03	19.99
	12. I feel self-important.	0.65	0.05	11.73
	13. I feel self-righteous.	0.89	0.03	18.49
	14. I think highly of myself.	0.89	0.04	18.38
Task performance ( $\alpha = 0.84, p < 0.001$ )	1. Adequately completes assigned duties.	0.66	0.06	11.08
	2. Fulfills responsibilities specified in his/her job description.	0.73	0.06	12.60
	3. Performs tasks that are expected of him/her.	0.63	0.07	10.44
	4. Meets formal performance requirements of the job.	0.84	0.06	15.07
	5. Engages in activities that will directly affect his/her performance evaluations.	0.39	0.08	5.99

Table 1. Cont.

Variable	Item	Standardized Estimated	Standard Errors	Z (Est./S.E.)
OCB ( $\alpha = 0.86, p < 0.001$ )	1. If employees can't keep up with their work, he/she will give help.	0.85	0.06	16.90
	2. Willing to share his/her expertise with other team members.	0.82	0.05	15.81
	3. Try to be a mediator when other team members disagree.	0.38	0.07	6.17
	4. Take measures to try to avoid conflicts with other team members.	0.23	0.08	3.70
	5. Willing to spend time helping team members who encounter problems at work.	0.71	0.06	12.85
	6. Say hello to other team members in advance before doing anything that may affect them.	0.72	0.06	13.29
	7. Encourage other team members when they are depressed.	0.73	0.05	13.49
	8. Provide constructive suggestions on how to improve team efficiency.	0.68	0.07	12.11
	9. Willing to risk dissatisfaction and express their best views on the team.	0.38	0.07	6.22
	10. Participate in and actively participate in team meetings.	0.69	0.06	12.32

To test the hypotheses of main effect and mediating effect, we adopted the stepwise regression method by SPSS20.0. To test the moderated mediating effect, the PROCESS macro module in SPSS20.0 was used.

#### 4. Results

Descriptive statistical analysis can help to extract the demographic characteristics of the respondents in the sample. In this study, the collected sample data were statistically analyzed, and the descriptive statistics in Table 2 were obtained. Among the 268 samples, 140 were male (52.24%) and 128 were female (47.76%); the average age was 30.62 years old ( $SD = 27.72$ ), and most of them were 26–40 years old, accounting for 77.20%; the highest education level was mainly a bachelor's degree and master's degree, accounting for 86.6%; there was no significant difference between unmarried (42.54%) and married (57.46%) individuals. The average working time was 43.8 h per week ( $SD = 45.93$ ).

Table 2. Descriptive statistical analysis (N = 268).

Characteristics	Option	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Man	140	52.24%
	Woman	128	47.76%
Age	21–25 years old	36	13.43%
	26–30 years old	126	47.01%
	31–40 years old	95	35.45%
	41–50 years old	11	4.10%
Education	High school and below	2	0.75%
	Junior college	34	12.69%
	Undergraduate	172	64.18%
	Master or above	60	22.39%
Marriage	Unmarried	114	42.54%
	Married	154	57.46%

Means, SDs, and intercorrelations among study variables are reported in Table 3. Intercorrelation analysis provided us with preliminary evidence of the relationship between variables and provided support for subsequent tests. The CFA results were shown in

Table 4. The four-factor model fits the data well, supporting the distinctiveness of our study variables.

**Table 3.** Means, SDs, and intercorrelations among study variables.

Variables	Mean	SD	Employee Recognition	Authentic Pride	Hubristic Pride	Task Performance
Employee Recognition	3.24	0.66				
Authentic Pride	3.95	0.65	0.20 **			
Hubristic Pride	1.63	0.66	0.01	−0.13 *		
Task Performance	5.29	0.81	0.14 *	0.22 **	−0.04	
OCB	5.23	0.75	0.16 *	0.21 **	−0.06	0.56 **

Note: N = 268. \*  $p < 0.050$ , \*\*  $p < 0.010$ .

**Table 4.** Confirmatory Factor Analysis.

	$\chi^2/df$	RMSEA	NFI	IFI	TLI	CFI
Four-factor model (OCB)	1.79	0.07	0.83	0.90	0.88	0.91
Four-factor model (TP)	1.82	0.07	0.81	0.88	0.87	0.89
Three-factor model	2.39	0.10	0.70	0.72	0.72	0.77
Two-factor model	3.58	0.13	0.58	0.63	0.55	0.62
One-factor model	3.98	0.14	0.50	0.56	0.48	0.53

Note: ER is employee recognition, AP is authentic pride, HP is hubristic pride, TP is task performance, and OCB is organizational citizenship behavior. Four-factor model (ER, AP, HP, TP; ER, AP, HP, OCB). Three-factor model (ER, AP + HP, TP + OCB). Two-factor model (ER + AP + HP, TP + OCB). One-factor model (ER + AP + HP + TP + OCB).

Table 5 showed the hypotheses testing results of task performance. Model 1 is the main effect regression of employee recognition with task performance. Model 2 is the mediating effect, adding the mediator, authentic pride, into Model 1. Table 6 shows the hypotheses testing results of OCB. Model 3 is the main effect, and Model 4 is the mediating effect.

**Table 5.** Hypotheses Testing of Task Performance.

Outcome	Model 1			Model 2		
Task Performance	B	SE	t	B	SE	t
Intercept	4.74	0.25	19.09 ***	3.91	0.35	11.08 ***
<b>Independent variable</b>						
Employee Recognition	0.17	0.07	2.28 *	0.12	0.08	1.64
<b>Mediator</b>						
Authentic Pride				0.25	0.08	3.28 **
R <sup>2</sup>		0.02			0.06	
$\Delta R^2$		0.02			0.04	
F		5.20 *			8.07 ***	
$\Delta F$		5.197 *			10.746 **	

Note: N = 268. \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ . \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

Hypothesis 1 proposed that employee recognition is positively related to task performance and OCB. As presented in Tables 5 and 6, the main effect of employee recognition was significantly positively related to task performance ( $B = 0.17$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and OCB ( $B = 0.18$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Hypothesis 1 was supported. Hypothesis 2 predicted that authentic pride would mediate the relationship between employee recognition with (a)task performance and (b)OCB, mediated by hubristic pride. For high hubristic pride, the mediated relationship will be positive, while for low hubristic pride the relationship will be negative. The results in Tables 4 and 5 show the mediating effects of authentic pride in the path of employee recognition and task performance ( $B = 0.22$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and of employee recognition and OCB ( $B = 0.25$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), which were both significant. Hypothesis 2 was supported. As



in Table 7, the indirect effect of employee recognition on task performance via authentic pride was stronger at higher levels of hubristic pride (indirect effect = 0.08; 95% CI (0.02, 0.12)). As in Table 8, the indirect effect of employee recognition on OCB via authentic pride was stronger at higher levels of hubristic pride (indirect effect = 0.07; 95% CI (0.012, 0.15)). Therefore, Hypothesis 3 is supported.

**Table 6.** Hypotheses Testing of OCB.

Outcome	Model 3			Model 4		
OCB	B	SE	t	B	SE	t
Intercept	4.64	0.23	20.39 ***	3.91	0.32	12.10 ***
<b>Independent variable</b>						
Employee Recognition	0.18	0.07	2.64 **	0.14	0.07	2.03 *
<b>Mediator</b>						
Authentic Pride				0.22	0.07	3.10 **
R <sup>2</sup>		0.03			0.06	
R <sup>2</sup>		0.03			0.03	
F		6.99 **			8.42 ***	
ΔF		6.99 **			9.63 **	

Note: N = 268. \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

**Table 7.** Conditional indirect effect between employee recognition and task performance.

Outcome Task Performance	Hubristic Pride	B	Boot SE	95% Confidence Level	
				Lower	Upper
Indirect effect					
Low	0.98	0.02	0.02	−0.01	0.08
Middle	1.63	0.05	0.02	0.02	0.11
High	2.29	0.08	0.04	0.02	0.12

Note: N = 268. Bootstrapping times = 5000.

**Table 8.** Conditional indirect effect between employee recognition and OCB.

Outcome OCB	Hubristic Pride	B	Boot SE	95% Confidence Level	
				Lower	Upper
Indirect effect					
Low	0.98	0.02	0.02	−0.01	0.07
Middle	1.63	0.04	0.02	0.01	0.09
High	2.29	0.07	0.03	0.02	0.15

Note: N = 268. Bootstrapping times = 5000.

## 5. Conclusions and Discussion

### 5.1. Research Findings

Employee recognition is widely used in organizations [51]. Current studies have showed that employee recognition helps to reduce negative organizational outcomes, such as withdrawal and counterproductive work behaviors, and increases employees' wellbeing, strengthens their sense of organizational belonging, and improves organizational commitment and job satisfaction [52,53]. This study proves that employee recognition can lead to employee pride and promote employees to have better task performance and more organizational citizenship behaviors, which showed that recognition could be both positively related to in-role and out-role performance. These results are consistent with previous studies, and further enrich the recognition study.

Besides, pride, the two-facet construct, plays different roles in the organizational context. In recent years, pride has attracted more and more attention, and researchers have

found different and even contradictory conclusions. Some believe that pride is associated with positive behavior and results [54,55]. Some believe that positive emotions may not produce positive outcomes, and may even be negative [56,57]. Integrating two-facet pride, how emotion functions is better understood. Authentic pride as a mediator mediates the positive relationship between employee recognition with task performance and OCB. Hubristic pride, as a moderator, moderates the indirect effect. While it is high, the relationship is much stronger. Results are all supported by the questionnaire data, which provides strong practical evidence. It is an interesting and meaningful perspective, that this study integrates pride with leadership behavior, considering two facets, emphasizing the importance of pride in the workplace, combined with the broaden-and-build theory of positive psychology.

### 5.2. Theoretical and Practical Contributions

This study has several theoretical contributions. Firstly, this study proved that employee recognition has a positive impact on task performance and OCB. This provided new materials and support for employee recognition research. Task performance and OCB were chosen as typical in-role and extra-role performance of employees. The results confirmed that employee recognition is beneficial to both of them, which revealed its importance and significance in organizational management practices.

Second, pride, divided into authentic pride and hubristic pride, plays a dual role in the pathway of employee recognition with task performance and OCB. This enriches the topic of emotion research in the field of organizational behavior. At present, emotion research in organization studies is no longer scarce and novel, but many cutting-edge analyses point out that emotion is a rich and changeable concept. For example, mainstream emotion studies tend to arbitrarily divide emotions into positive and negative categories, and consider their functions generally, which is a lack of research on the connotation and effect of discrete emotions [58]. Our study contributes to pride emotion research.

In addition to the theoretical contributions above, this study also has considerable practical significance. As a common approach to inspiring employees, employee recognition is favored by organizations and leaders because of its low economic cost and convenient operability. Leaders recognize and praise employees, their work behaviors, and results through oral praise, thank-you letters, emails, etc., which is helpful to stimulate employees' positive emotions and emotional responses to work. Supervisors could use it to both pursue task performance and OCBs. This study reinsured that employee recognition as an important means of leadership practice and has positive effects directly linked to task performance. Besides this kind of in-role performance, employee recognition enables employees to show more OCBs. That is to say, supervisor recognition is also meaningful to extra-role performance. Through the exploration of employee recognition, this study provides a reference for leaders and managers, to give full play to the effect of this practice and show the charm of leadership. In addition, emotion in the workplace is an important factor that cannot be ignored [59]. In this study, pride turned out to be a positive function in the relationship of employee recognition with task performance and OCB. Authentic pride is a mediator, mediating the relationship between employee recognition with task performance and OCB. Hubristic pride is a moderator of this indirect relationship and positively moderates this mediation. Managers should be good at inspiring and arousing employees' positive emotions, creating a positive emotional culture [60].

### 5.3. Limitations and Future Directions

The contributions of this research should be considered in light of its limitations.

Firstly, we use the method of leader-member paired questionnaires, which caused several problems. The questionnaire needed participants to call recognition behaviors and their emotional response to mind when they answered the questionnaires. Memory may not be as reliable as we assumed, because it could change with time, which would lead to inaccurate results. To solve this problem, we chose correct and clear language

expression in the questionnaire design from the start, and before the participants answered the questionnaire, we affirmed to them that they should answer according to the first intuition as to avoid possible post-processing. Finally, while selecting the questionnaires, all the unqualified results were eliminated. Nonetheless, we encourage future scholars to choose more scientific and reasonable research methods, such as the diary recording method, event triggering method, etc., to explore further.

Secondly, about the concept of pride, scholars believe that it is not only an emotion but also a kind of character. In this study, we focused on employees' emotional responses. We believe that although emotions are present and transient, they do have far-reaching effects on people. Besides, we think that pride as a trait is also an interesting research topic. Now studies have confirmed that the pride trait positively relates to creativity, performance, and achievements [19]. It will be great if future studies could do more research on pride, either as an emotion or as a trait.

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