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Emotional assertiveness, assertive communication and assertive training enhancing the employees' performances: A China banking perspective

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Abstract: The study acknowledges empirical, conceptual, and policy-driven papers that address emotional assertiveness, assertive communication, and assertive training as means of improving employee performance in Chinese banking, which is a significant contributor to the Chinese economy. Most banking enterprises have suffered from poor performance and a lack of aggressiveness in operation. It can be used by both managers and employees to create a good interaction process and a favorable work environment, which can help elevate performances. The research employs a quantitative approach, utilizing a questionnaire survey and simple random sampling. The sample comprises 381 employees from the Chinese banking industry, with a response rate above 70%. The regression analysis confirms that emotional assertiveness, assertive training, and assertive communication significantly impact employee performance. In conclusion, this study contributes to academia and industries by addressing the importance of assertiveness in improving performance. The policy-driven evidence on the conceptual framework of HR literacy in emotional, training, communication, and job performance should be adopted and reviewed in the country's existing management by objective policy and legal framework in resolving employee job performance and training that are still underutilized and have a great deal of potential to satisfy the employees and management needs by establishing and emerging nations.

Keywords: emotional assertiveness; assertive communication; assertive training and employees' performance

1. Introduction

The Chinese banking industry plays a vital role in the country's economy, serving as the primary channel for allocating savings to various investment opportunities (Turner et al., 2012). Over the years, the industry has witnessed significant growth alongside China's economic expansion, with major global banks establishing a presence in the country. Although the government retains influence over banking activities, the banks have become increasingly commercially oriented. Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the banking industry in China demonstrated resilience and contributed to the nation's economic recovery (Deloitte, 2021). The sector's performance, supported by employee engagement, resulted in increased assets and a growth rate of 10.1%. The banking industry in China has been instrumental in providing financial support for national policy objectives, including stability in employee, foreign investment, and financial domains. Efforts to reform the Chinese banking industry have shown progress, with greater independence for banks in adopting active monetary policies and managing credit, supervising banks, and deregulating foreign exchange control (Deloitte, 2021).

The lack of assertiveness in operational activities within the banking industry has been found to have detrimental effects on service delivery, internal conflict, and customer loss due to ineffective communication skills (Pipas and Jaradat, 2010). Effective communication is a crucial factor in cultural and social aspects of human life, and inappropriate communication can lead to diminished satisfaction and an overall decline in organizational performance (Samovar et al., 2014). Assertive communication skills place employees in a favorable position for achieving success (Pipas and Jaradat, 2010).

Given the significant impact of insufficient assertiveness in the Chinese banking industry, numerous studies have been conducted to address this issue. These studies have focused on employee performance by considering various factors such as assertiveness, communication, workload, leadership, work environment, satisfaction, and motivation levels (Khan et al., 2015). Assertiveness is believed to enhance employee performance by enabling individuals to change their self-perception and effectively express their opinions, feelings, and thoughts, ultimately leading to improved performance (Mijatović and Stiković, 2019). Organizations that prioritize assertiveness training and promote assertive communication tend to observe decreased levels of depression, stress, and anxiety among employees, resulting in improved performance (Speed et al., 2018).

In the context of the banking industry in China, particularly the Bank of China, fostering assertiveness among employees is crucial. Employees with higher levels of assertiveness and self-esteem are better equipped to handle banking perspectives and meet customer needs. Therefore, this research seeks to address the necessity for employees in the Chinese banking sector to confidently express their beliefs, ideas, and feelings to contribute to the sustainable development of the country.

2. Literature review

2.1. Emotional assertiveness and performance

Butt and Zahid (2015) found that assertiveness enables individuals to express their rights without violating others' rights, promoting stress management and group task performance in organizations. They investigated the impact of assertive skills on work burnout using random sampling and advanced econometric analysis, revealing a negative relationship between assertiveness skills and work burnout. Increased assertiveness skills were associated with enhanced confidence, consistency, conflict reduction, and stress management, resulting in improved performance. Osariemen et al. (2021) examined the relationship between academic performance, assertiveness, and self-esteem, utilizing a sample from a different sector for comparison. They found a significant association between performance and assertiveness, suggesting that assertiveness training can enhance performance. However, the association was only significant for males and not females, indicating the gender-specific nature of the relationship. The study concluded that emotional assertiveness can positively impact student performance.

Moreover, Ahmed et al. (2016) reviewed the effects of behavioral therapies on anxiety, stress, and depressed mood in relation to performance. The study employed a

quasi-experimental design with random sampling and ANOVA analysis. While no statistical differences were observed among subgroups, the researchers emphasized the importance of assertiveness training in reducing psychological stress, tension, and depression to improve performance. Using a convenience sampling approach, the study included 110 respondents and employed the Role-Based Performance Scale and Rathus Assertiveness Scale. The findings demonstrated a significant and positive relationship between assertiveness skills and employee performance, with notable differences in performance between less assertive and highly assertive employees.

Furthermore, Montserrat et al. (2012) conducted a study on self-assured abilities and performance success in a different sector, allowing for relevant comparisons with the banking industry. Their sample was drawn from a population in Spain, and the researchers found a statistically significant positive relationship between performance and assertiveness achievement, suggesting that a lack of assertiveness can negatively impact academic performance. Oladipo et al. (2012) observed that there was no strong relationship between the need for assertiveness and achievement among male students' academic performance. They highlighted the importance of self-confidence as a component of understanding basic arithmetic among secondary school students in Ogun State. These findings provide insights into the impact of emotional assertiveness on performance and its relevance to the Chinese banking industry.

2.2. Assertive training and employee performance

Confidence-building programs can help individuals modify their self-perception and effectively express their feelings and opinions. These programs cover various aspects of assertiveness, such as identifying individual rights, categorizing assertive behaviors, active listening, rejecting unrealistic demands, making suggestions, showing affection, expressing approval, managing anger, giving criticism, providing feedback, and responding to requests. Effective communication skills, both verbal and nonverbal, including response length, eye contact, body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice, contribute to improved performance. Previous studies have demonstrated that interactive training enhances confidence, reduces work-related pressure and hopelessness, prevents burnout, and improves self-esteem. Maheshwari et al. (2015) evaluated the impact of skills training for team mental therapy on anxiety issues among learners, finding a significant reduction in anxiety levels. Additionally, Shin and Jung (2014) established a strong negative association between determination and academic stress.

2.3. Assertive communication and employee performance

Effective communication plays a crucial role in employee performance, teamwork, and customer relations. Poor communication skills are associated with issues such as employee dissatisfaction, the intention to quit, a lack of commitment, and stress. Creating an open and supportive communication environment is essential for organizations to achieve their goals. In healthcare settings, proactive communication among nursing staff is vital for the early detection of dangerous situations, reducing risks, preventing clinical errors, and enhancing patient safety. Cantero-Sánchez et al. (2021) emphasized the importance of fostering a positive job

environment and promoting open communication to attract and retain highly trained nurses and provide better client services in the financial sector.

Assertive individuals are often characterized by high self-esteem. Those with higher self-esteem have positive self-perceptions, recognize their strengths and limitations, believe their strengths outweigh their weaknesses, view themselves as powerful individuals, and effectively express their attitudes, opinions, and emotions to others. On the other hand, individuals with low self-esteem struggle to assert themselves and communicate their needs, ideas, and emotions in a straightforward and assertive manner. This indicates a positive correlation between self-esteem, confidence, and assertive communication, which contributes to higher employee performance. Maheshwari et al. (2015) emphasized the role of communication skills in boosting employees' self-esteem within the Chinese financial system.

Several studies have investigated the relationship between communication and employee performance in the banking industry. Paudel et al. (2021) focused on communication's impact on employee performance at Barclays Bank, highlighting the significance of effective managerial communication in creating a favorable work environment and fostering respect. Mote (2014) emphasized the importance of communication in promoting employee performance within the banking industry and identified the use of key communication cues, such as written and oral communication, as essential for effective communication and employee efficiency. Mote (2014) found a positive relationship between communication and employee performance, particularly through information provision, direction, and rationale, which positively influenced task availability and overall performance.

2.4. Gaps within the literature

The lack of research on assertiveness and its impact on employee performance is a significant gap in the current literature. Despite numerous studies on employee performance, assertiveness has received less attention, and its potential influence on organizational success remains underexplored. Understanding the relationship between assertiveness and employee success is crucial for organizations seeking to improve their performance and address underperformance issues. Existing literature shows a dearth of scientific findings regarding the level of assertiveness among employees in the banking sector in China. This knowledge gap is also evident at the organizational level, where limited research exists on how assertive interactions can enhance employee performance. The lack of research in this area hinders the development of effective strategies to support employees and facilitate positive performance outcomes.

Additionally, there is a limited understanding of the role of assertiveness training in employee development. Although studies highlight the importance of training employees, there is a lack of research exploring the specific components that should be incorporated into assertiveness training. Further research is needed to investigate the benefits of assertiveness training and its impact on employee performance. Moreover, there is a scarcity of empirical data on the assertiveness levels of managerial employees in China. This situational gap in the literature hampers the understanding of how managerial interactions, particularly aggressive behaviors, can

influence employee performance. Gaining insights into the effects of managerial assertiveness on employees is crucial for improving goal achievement and fostering positive interactions in the workplace.

In conclusion, the existing literature lacks comprehensive research on the relationship between assertiveness and employee performance. This knowledge gap hinders organizations' ability to effectively support and engage employees in assertive interactions. Further research is needed to explore the role of assertiveness in employee development, address the scarcity of empirical data, and provide insights for enhancing organizational performance.

2.5. Conceptual framework

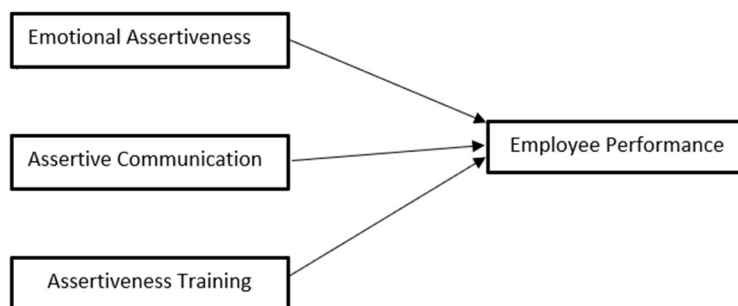


Figure 1. Emotional assertiveness, assertive communication and assertive training enhancing the employees' performances.

Source: Authors' compilation.

The conceptual framework employed in this study incorporates elements from various theories, such as assertive training, assertive communication, and emotional assertiveness, as independent variables, while worker performance serves as the dependent variable. For instance, Butt and Zahid (2015) found that emotional assertiveness positively influenced individual performance by managing stress levels during group tasks. Similarly, Maheshwari et al. (2015) conducted a study on the effects of training programs on reducing anxiety issues among employees, which resulted in improved performance. Additionally, Paudel et al. (2021) emphasized the significance of communication, particularly at managerial levels, in enhancing productivity and performance. Social exchange theory incorporates assertive communication within organizations, facilitating the exchange of thoughts and ideas without communication barriers. This theory promotes equal opportunities for all parties involved to freely express themselves while actively listening to others' perspectives. The social exchange theory is a positive challenge that is used in assertiveness, where everyone is in the same position to speak their mind freely (Poyraz, 2020). Implementing social exchange theory and assertiveness fosters harmonious collaboration in problem-solving and idea-sharing, thereby enhancing organizational performance. For instance, employees applying social exchange theory and assertiveness in emotional communication and training can better understand customers' needs and provide improved services or products. This theory plays a vital role in promoting interactions among stakeholders within organizations, shedding light on the practical implementation of assertiveness. Perhaps in organizational

settings, the social learning theory helps to understand how learned behaviors, acquired through observation, imitation, or practice, can affect performance when individuals apply these learned traits in their actions and communication. By integrating this theory into assertiveness, it guides individuals on how to socially teach and interact with one another effectively. Learning, as an ongoing process, encompasses interactions and communication through which individuals derive mutual benefits. By integrating this theory into assertiveness, it guides individuals on how to socially teach and interact with one another effectively. Learning, as an ongoing process, encompasses interactions and communication through which individuals derive mutual benefits.

3. Research method

The study involved sampling from the target population, which consisted of employees working in Chinese banks, to gather information for analysis. The selected samples were considered representative of the general population, following the principles outlined by Sharma (2017). According to Statista (2022), the number of employees in Chinese banking institutions ranged around 4.17 million individuals between 2009 and 2017. A non-probability sampling technique was utilized in this research, allowing for the subjective selection of units from the population (Sharma, 2017). This approach is commonly used in explanatory research to gather large amounts of data efficiently (Eisinga et al., 2013). The study anticipates a survey questionnaire of bank employees and managers, regardless of gender. The location of the survey will be various provinces in China, including Guangdong. This convenience sampling research is determined using Cochran's formula, whereby n seems to be the required random sample, p is indeed the proportion of prevalence of such a scenario, and E seems to be the maximum error percentage, but also z is just the number equivalent to that same required amount of assurance. Accordingly, 5% of errors are acceptable.

$$n = 0.5 \times (1 - 0.5) \times (1.96)^2 \div (0.05)^2, \text{ whereby } n = 381.$$

The appropriate sample is employed within the analysis to establish a representation of the general population. To justify this, about 381 participants were involved in the study. Hair et al. (2018) established that for statistical data to be accurate as well as apparent, there should be at least 100 questionnaires distributed. As such, the study was within this scope. Both primary and secondary sources of information can be utilized to gather data for the study. In this research, a quantitative approach will be employed, making questionnaires a reliable and effective method for data collection (Rahi, 2017). An online, self-administered questionnaire will be implemented, allowing respondents to access and complete the survey at their own convenience and uninterrupted time through web browsers (Saunders et al., 2019). The data collected from the primary source will be analyzed using the SPSS software, which is commonly used for statistical analysis. The questionnaire structure, as described by Boparai et al. (2018), was designed to be attractive and straightforward. It consisted of four sections (A, B, C, and D).

4. Analysis and discussion of results

The graphical representation reveals a significant gender imbalance within the banking sector, with a notable majority of male individuals compared to females. The male participants constituted 100% of the 381 individuals included in the study. **Table 1** also highlights that the majority of employees in the banks fell within the age range of 27 to 35 years, accounting for approximately 65.4% of the total. The next largest age group was between 22 and 26 years old, contributing around 24.9%. A very small percentage of individuals above 50 years old were observed (0.3%). In terms of educational background, the graph indicates that the highest proportion of participants were undergraduates, representing about 69.6% of the total. College-level individuals constituted around 19.9% of the participants. Regarding work experience within the banks, the study found that a significant percentage of participants had been employed for over 5–6 years, accounting for approximately 61.7% of the surveyed population. This was closely followed by those with 1–2 years of work experience, comprising around 27%.

Table 1. Demographic data.

Demographic	Categories	Frequency (n = 381)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	381	100
	Female	0	
Age	22–26	95	24.9
	27–35	249	65.4
	35–45	32	8.4
	46–50	4	1.0
	Above 50	1	0.3
Education background	College	76	19.9
	Associate degree	15	3.9
	Undergraduate	265	69.6
	Graduate	20	5.2
	Doctorate level	5	1.3
Work experience	1–2 years	103	27
	2–4 years	14	3.7
	5–6 years	235	61.7
	Above 6 years	29	7.6

4.1. Descriptive statistics

Table 2 illustrates the median of all components in the independent and dependent variables. The range of the study's average across all items is 2.55 to 3.84. The highest mean, 3.84, on the item about assertive communication helps me to increase my confidence, demonstrating its significance. The lowest mean, 2.55, is on whether my skills of assertiveness have a negative impact on my work performance.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics.

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. deviation
I am satisfied with your work performance.	1	5	3.66	1.198
My rights are heard effectively within the company to promote work performance.	1	5	3.66	1.239
My skills of assertiveness have negative impact on the work performance.	1	5	2.55	1.190
I believe that behavioral therapies on anxiety, stress, and depressed mood have great impacts on individuals' performances.	1	5	3.72	1.187
During group task, I manage stress effectively.	1	5	3.70	1.164
Assertive communication helps me to increase my confidence.	1	5	3.84	1.118
Assertive communication helps me to enhance my performances.	1	5	3.81	1.107
Individuals with good levels of self -esteem may articulate their attitude.	1	5	3.81	1.058
Interactive training benefits me by boosting my confidence.	1	5	3.77	1.121
Interactive training benefits me by minimizing my work pressure and increases my performance.	1	5	3.82	1.083
Skills training for team human mental therapy reduced anxiety and increased performance.	1	5	3.76	1.134
Interactive training benefits us by boosting our skills and performances.	1	5	3.82	1.082
My performance fulfillment, teamwork, and customer relations also benefit from effective interaction.	1	5	3.76	1.135
My reduced work shock is linked to effective communication.	1	5	3.78	1.110
Open line of communication atmosphere amongst employees promotes key performances.	1	5	3.81	1.107
Stress are all linked to poor communication skills.	1	5	3.70	1.162

4.2. Reliability test

Reliability analysis is conducted to assess the consistency and stability of variables (Sekaran and Bougie, 2019). The Cronbach's Alpha test is used to evaluate the reliability of measurements, while the reliability analysis helps determine the validity of the items (Zulkepli et al., 2017). In the pilot survey, Cronbach's alpha scores greater than 0.6 and less than 0.7 are considered acceptable, while values between 0.7 and 0.9 indicate strong reliability. Results are more reliable when they

demonstrate strong associations among the variables (Hair et al., 2018). **Table 3** reveals that the Cronbach’s Alpha scores range from 0.600 to 0.781, suggesting strong reliability and conformity with the general rule of thumb that states that sixteen independent variable components and the dependent variable element are suitable for further examination.

Table 3. Reliability test.

Measurement item	Cronbach’s alpha
I am satisfied with your work performance.	0.638
My rights are heard effectively within the company to promote work performance.	0.622
My skills of assertiveness have negative impact on the work performance.	0.802
I believe that behavioral therapies on anxiety, stress, and depressed mood have great impacts on individuals’ performances.	0.651
During group tasks, I manage stress effectively.	0.710
Assertive communication helps me to increase my confidence.	0.690
Assertive communication helps me to enhance my performances.	0.684
Individuals with good levels of self-esteem may articulate their attitude.	0.659
Interactive training benefits me by boosting my confidence.	0.658
Interactive training benefits me by minimizing my work pressure and increases my performance.	0.767
Skills training for team human mental therapy reduced anxiety and increased performance.	0.779
Interactive training benefits us by boosting our skills and performances.	0.781

4.3. Multiple regression

The evaluation of the independent variables’ impact on the dependent variable relies on the results of the multiple regression analysis in **Table 4**. The R^2 coefficient is used to determine the percentage of variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent variables (Copper and Schindler, 2018). According to Zikmund et al. (2016), a model is considered suitable if the R^2 value exceeds 0.5 (0.714 in this case). The R^2 value takes into account the number of variables in the model to avoid overestimating the effect of adding a significant variable on the explained variability (Saunders et al., 2019). The adjusted R^2 is considered a more accurate measure of shared variation once a strong relationship between the variables is established. In this study, the multiple regression analysis yielded an R^2 value of 0.714, indicating a good fit for the model in **Table 5**. The internal consistency and robustness of the model are demonstrated by the slight variation between the R^2 value (0.714) and the R value (0.851). Furthermore, the Augmented Dickey-Fuller test indicates that each variable is independent and satisfies the multicollinearity requirement (Sekaran and Bougie, 2019).

Table 4. Coefficients.

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity statistics		
	B	Std. error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF	
1	(Constant)							
	My rights are heard effectively within the company to promote work performance.	0.501	0.050	0.518	10.050	0.000	0.284	3.523
	My skills of assertiveness have negative impact on the work performance.	0.018	0.029	0.018	0.615	0.539	0.912	1.097
	I believe that behavioral therapies on anxiety, stress, and depressed mood have great impacts on individuals' performances.	0.018	0.056	0.018	0.320	0.749	0.245	4.089
	During group task, I manage stress effectively.	0.122	0.071	0.118	1.728	0.085	0.160	6.236
	Assertive communication helps me to increase my confidence.	0.136	0.071	0.127	1.922	0.055	0.173	5.775
	Assertive communication helps me to enhance my performances.	0.002	0.079	0.002	.023	0.982	0.141	7.102
	Individuals with good levels of self-esteem may articulate their attitude.	0.074	0.073	0.065	1.009	0.314	0.180	5.554
	Interactive training benefits me by boosting my confidence.	0.132	0.077	0.124	1.708	0.088	0.144	6.954
	Interactive training benefits me by minimizing my work pressure and increases my performance.	-0.221	0.086	-0.199	-2.575	0.010	0.126	7.955
	Skills training for team human mental therapy reduced anxiety and increased performance.	0.069	0.071	0.065	0.974	0.331	0.167	5.991
	Interactive training benefits us by boosting our skills and performances.	-0.021	0.081	-0.019	-0.255	0.799	0.140	7.164
	My performance fulfillment, teamwork, and customer relations also benefit from effective interaction.	-0.007	0.074	-0.006	-0.092	0.927	0.153	6.524
	My reduced work shock is linked to effective communication.	0.071	0.079	0.066	0.901	0.368	0.142	7.038
	Open line of communication atmosphere amongst employees promotes key performances.	0.071	0.064	0.065	1.097	0.273	0.213	4.698
	Stress are all linked to poor communication skills.	-0.022	0.057	-0.021	-0.390	0.696	0.251	3.987

a. Dependent variable: 6. I am satisfied with your work performance.

Table 5. Model summary.

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate
1	0.851 ^a	0.725	0.714	0.641

a. Predictors: (Constant)

4.4. Regression ANOVA

Examining the regression ANOVA findings, as shown in **Table 6** below, the simple linear regression criterion has been satisfied. The *p*-value for a significant link between multiple independent variables and a dependent variable has to be lower than

0.05 at the 95% degree of assurance when using the regression ANOVA statistical method (Hair et al., 2019). If the p -value is more than 0.05, the null hypothesis should not be rejected because the evidence against it is weak. The statistical significance of the variation between the supporting variables and the independent variable, as well as between the independent variables themselves, is illustrated in the table above, where the p -value is Sig. 0.000.

Table 6. ANOVA.

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	395.523	15	26.368	64.111	0.000 ^b
	Residual	150.120	365	0.411		
	Total	545.643	380			

a. Dependent Variable: 6.I am satisfied with your work performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21

4.5. Discussion and findings of study

The aim reached was addressed based on the analysis by giving questionnaires to the 381 individuals working in banking industry, China. Based on **Table 7**, three hypotheses were created as a result of addressing those objectives, and they were examined further in this chapter.

Table 7. Summary of hypothesis result.

Item	Hypotheses	Significant ($P < 0.05$)	Status
H1	There is a positive relationship between emotional assertiveness and employee performance.	Sig. 0.00	Accepted
H2	There is a positive relationship between assertive communication and employee performance.	Sig. 0.00	Accepted
H3	There is a positive relationship between assertiveness training and employee performance.	Sig. 0.00	Accepted

H1: There is a positive relationship between emotional assertiveness and employee performance.

From the SPSS output in the ANOVA table, $R^2 = 0.672$, $F = 776.852$. Furthermore, Sig. = 0.000. This provides proof that there is a significant and positive relationship between emotional assertiveness and employee performance. In support of these findings, a study by Zahid and Butt (2015) suggests a positive correlation between assertiveness skills and job performance, particularly in the banking sector. Their research, conducted with bank managers, revealed a significant inverse relationship between assertiveness skills and job burnout. Similar findings were reported by Patel et al. (2018). These studies highlight the importance of assertiveness in reducing job burnout and improving employee performance. In light of the banking sector's significance in China's economy, it is crucial for managers to address job burnout and enhance employee performance by fostering emotional assertiveness. Emotional assertiveness is defined by Zahid and Butt (2015) as the ability to assert one's rights without infringing upon the rights of others. It is widely recognized as a

vital skill in various work settings, including the banking sector, for managing workplace stress. Lack of assertiveness among employees can lead to job burnout, negatively impacting commitment, productivity, and performance. One important aspect of emotional assertiveness is self-respect, which involves recognizing one's rights in the workplace and communicating with confidence. Assertiveness empowers individuals to express their thoughts and opinions confidently while respecting the rights of others. It aims to enhance individuals' self-confidence, promote open communication, and improve their ability to handle situations effectively. Studies, such as those by Seyedfatemi et al. (2013), highlighted the significant role of assertiveness in improving mental health and workplace performance. Developing assertiveness skills leads to effective communication, conflict resolution, and personal growth, creating a safe and healthy work environment. Furthermore, Montserrat et al. (2012) found a negative correlation between assertiveness and academic achievement among students, suggesting that assertiveness weaknesses may lead to poor performance in various settings. Emotional assertiveness plays a crucial role in employee performance and well-being. Employees who are more emotionally assertive tend to exhibit greater confidence, self-assurance, and effective communication, leading to improved job performance.

H2: There is a positive relationship between assertive communication and employee performance.

From the table above, a regression analysis was employed to determine the relationship between assertive communication and employee performance. F values = 516.237, $R^2 = 0.577$, and Beta = 0.759. The outcome of the analysis indicated Sig = 0.000. This provided proof that there was a positive and significant relationship between assertive communication and employee performance. Sowko et al. (2019) argue that effective communication, which requires assertiveness, is crucial for a successful company. An assertive communication style enables management to express their thoughts and opinions directly without attacking others, provide constructive feedback, offer timely praise and recognition, and create a motivational environment. Moreover, Sigroha (2021) confirms a positive association between employee performance and assertive communication. Assertive communication allows employees to express themselves effectively, respect others' needs, and find constructive solutions to conflicts without compromising their performance. It boosts self-esteem, strikes a balance between passive and aggressive communication styles, and promotes a sense of confidence and boundary respect. Nonetheless, assertive communication still positively impacts job performance, creates a positive work environment, reduces turnover, and enhances customer satisfaction. Pipas and Jaradat (2010) also support the idea that assertive communication leads to better workplace relationships, reduces stress and anxiety, and provides employees with the necessary social support to perform effectively.

H3: There is a positive relationship between assertiveness training and employee performance.

The SPSS output indicates F = 322.359 and $R^2 = 0.460$. Furthermore, Beta = 0.678. The sig. value = 0.000. This showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between assertiveness training and employee performance. The findings

indicate that there is a positive association between assertive training and employee performance. To ascertain these findings, Cantero-Sánchez et al. (2021) conducted a study on assertiveness training in relation to social learning theory for OHS environmental practitioners and found that such training increases assertiveness levels and improves job performance. The study revealed that assertiveness training was effective in the banking sector, leading to improved assertiveness and reduced social anxiety among employees at China Banking. The results demonstrated moderate effects of assertiveness training, with 50.4% of participants reporting improved assertiveness levels. Supporting these findings, Eslami et al. (2016) found that assertiveness training reduces anxiety levels and improves assertiveness. The study focused on young people and showed that assertiveness training decreased levels of depression, stress, and anxiety. Given the importance of performance in the banking sector, assertiveness training and skills are crucial. Similarly, Manesh et al. (2015) concluded that assertiveness training enhances job performance by reducing social anxiety among employees. The banking sector, including Chinese banking, is likely to benefit from reduced social anxiety resulting from effective assertiveness training. Assertiveness training equips employees with the skills to interact confidently and effectively, leading to better performance and communication with stakeholders. Another study by Maheshwari et al. (2015) evaluated the impact of assertiveness skills training on treating learners' anxiety problems, further supporting the positive effects of assertiveness training on reducing anxiety issues. The literature review reveals that assertive communication promotes harmonious information exchange with respect. Effective interaction enhances employee performance in terms of fulfillment, teamwork, and customer relations. On the other hand, poor communication skills contribute to reality shock, the intention to quit, a lack of commitment, and stress among workers. Overall, assertive communication plays a significant role in enhancing employee performance and fostering positive work environments. It encourages open dialogue, consideration of diverse perspectives, and respectful engagement, ultimately benefiting both employees and organizations.

5. Conclusion and future directions

In today's dynamic business environment, it is crucial for organizations to adapt and thrive by cultivating long-term employee performance. The analysis findings demonstrate that assertive communication, assertive training, and emotional assertiveness are significantly correlated with employee performance in Chinese banks. These findings can aid organizations in formulating effective strategies to enhance key performance indicators within the company. Moreover, they enable management to prioritize work-life balance and rewards as means to motivate and retain skilled employees, thereby avoiding the substantial costs associated with recruiting and training new personnel. Assertiveness plays a pivotal role in improving job performance, preventing workplace harassment, fostering the adoption of safe behaviors, and facilitating important decision-making concerning occupational safety and health. Particularly in the banking sector, assertiveness is vital for promoting teamwork and mitigating communication errors that could negatively impact individual job performance.

The application of regression analysis to investigate the relationship between independent factors (emotional assertiveness, assertive training, and assertive communication) and employee performance in China's banking industry has contributed to addressing a knowledge gap in the academic field. This research work serves as a valuable reference for future studies, providing a foundation for further research that explores mediating factors influencing employee performance. The results obtained can be utilized to develop a more comprehensive theoretical framework for future investigations, incorporating additional variables and employing diverse research methodologies to uncover additional variations. Consequently, this study provides a solid basis and guidance for academic scholars to continue exploring new components or employing different approaches to identify further factors impacting employee performance.

The lack of assertiveness in organizational operations is identified as a key factor contributing to poor service delivery, internal conflicts, and customer loss resulting from ineffective communication skills. Therefore, organizations, including banks, should recognize the importance of employees' ability to express themselves assertively and not underestimate its impact on their work performance. The study reveals that assertiveness training among employees plays a significant role in understanding their job requirements. Additionally, employee satisfaction with assertive communication enhances their emotional connection with the organization, leading to reduced absenteeism. The findings further highlight the positive association between organization-based self-esteem and job performance among employees. Based on these insights, the authors recommend that organizations implement training sessions to promote assertive communication skills among all employees, including superiors and managers. This approach can enhance support for junior workers, increase employee commitment and performance, and reduce absenteeism in the workplace. Overall, the research findings emphasize the importance of assertive communication in improving organizational outcomes and suggest avenues for practical interventions and future research in this area. This study investigated the factors influencing employee performance in the Chinese banking industry using four variables.

However, future research should consider incorporating and exploring additional factors that may impact employee performance in both the banking industry and other financial sectors, enabling meaningful comparisons. The focus of this investigation was solely on the Chinese banking industry, and therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to other industries in China. To enhance the research's credibility within China, it is recommended to broaden the scope of analysis to include various sectors such as computer technology, industrial, and international business, among others. By diversifying the focus beyond a specific sector, a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing talent retention can be gained. Furthermore, this study adopted a descriptive research design, which limited the duration of data collection. Expanding the data collection period and timeline would provide more comprehensive insights into employee performance.

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