

ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR- A STUDY ON THE DETERMINANTS AND THEIR IMPACT

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ABSTRACT

More and more focus on the people management and HR strategy has generated a new term of the Organizational Citizenship Behaviour. This is the specific to the organizational environment. This study tried to find out the impact of the various determinants of this type of behaviour. The study identifies, interprets and analyses the factors influencing the behaviour and the quantum of their impact on the organizational citizenship amongst its people.

Keywords: Work centrality, emotional intelligence, optimism, organizational citizenship behaviour.

Introduction

Organizations have realized that to increase profit margin, improve the quantity, quality of goods and services; to ensure timely delivery and improve customer loyalty, satisfaction and be competitive, such organization must inspire its employees to give their best, be extra ordinary and persist in the face of adversities. It has been realized also that having a high quality brand new products and state-of-the-art technology alone does not help any organization get the winning edge over competitors. The shift from industrial to knowledge based society has ushered in new employee role that has become even more essential. The task that is now before management is no longer in retaining their best performers, but in building a culture that encourages them to go beyond the borders, to do other aspects of the job that are outside their officially assigned roles that can help the organization to be ahead in competition.

This is the tenet of Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) (Bateman and Organ, 1983), defined as individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly

recognized by the formal reward system (Organ, 1988). It is an extra-role behavior that is not included in the formal job description, not rewarded if performed and not punished if they are not performed, but which is beneficial to the effective functioning of the organization. Organizational citizenship is, in a sense, an extra effort to support the functioning and effectiveness of the work environment and the work itself (Uçanok, 2008).

Since its inception, OCB has continued to receive research attention (e.g., Babcock-Roberson and Strickland, 2010). It has been linked to so many job attitudes and behaviors that include, job satisfaction, fairness, leader support, and burnout (Chiu and Tsai, 2006), work engagement (Babcock-Roberson and Strickland, 2010; Ehigie and Otukoya, 2005). It has been observed that contextual organizational behaviors have dominated OCB research, whereas personal or dispositional variables have been largely ignored and needed to be given more empirical consideration. Some of such personal variables are work centrality, emotional intelligence and optimism.

Work centrality has been conceptualized as a popular construct of what comprises a general commitment to work (Paullay et al., 1994). It is defined as individuals' belief relating to the level of importance that work plays in their lives (Paullay et al., 1994). The work centrality concept could be traced to Dubin's (1956) formulation of work as a central life interest. People who consider work as fundamental to their life identify very strongly with work roles. It has been observed that people with high work centrality report continues to work even when they have opportunity to rest or retire from work, despite their huge financial standing which would guarantee them good live without working (Arvey et al., 2004).

Many researchers (e.g., Wallace, 1999) have looked at work centrality as a predominantly

cognitive construct that covers one's general commitment to work, but not many have considered whether it could spur employees into engaging in OCB. People who are widely committed to work not only identify with work role, they are also engaged in their work, and whether such people perform OCB is yet to be clear. To our knowledge, not one study to date has examined whether individuals' level of belief in work as central part of their life complements their degree of engaging in OCB in Nigeria. The purpose of the present study, therefore, was to fill this gap in the OCB literature.

Another variable that has been linked to OCB is individuals' emotional intelligence. Attention has focused on the contribution of the construct to management in organizational settings (Goleman, 1998). Goleman (1995) emphasized the contribution of emotional intelligence to individual success, specifically in the workplace. Sharma (2011) asserted that emotionally intelligent individuals are good at handling changes smoothly, handling multiple work demands comfortably, promptly shift priorities, adapt their responses and manoeuvre efficiently to fit the fluid circumstances and successfully respond to a vast variety of emotional stimuli that emanate from the inner self and the immediate environment. They are also able to strike a healthy balance between pleasant distractions from aversive events and coming to terms with their moods (Salovey et al., 2000), can monitor, reflect back and control their emotions, therefore, they can also detach themselves from negative emotions coming to terms with their moods which may promote well-being (Sharma, 2011).

Although emotion and organization scholars have strongly debated the nature of emotional intelligence (Antonakis et al., 2009), one conceptualization that has shown great potential is that the construct is an individual's ability to accurately process and utilize emotional information (e.g., Jordan et al., 2010). As such, emotional intelligence has generally been used to predict positive job outcomes such as employee performance (e.g., Mayer et al., 2008). According to Bar-On (1997), emotional intelligence is an array of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands. Goleman (1998) posits that emotional intelligence provides the base and is the fundamentals of emotional competencies. It is the capacity to have positive outlook, empathy and transparency, and ability to inspire and develop others' (Sharma, 2007).

Research has related optimism to numerous positive job behaviors (Ugwu, 2012). Optimism has been defined as the tendency to always expect positive outcome (Scheier and Carver, 1993). Seckinger and colleagues (2010) defined it as the tendency to conceive that things will turn out well despite current bad state. Luthans and colleagues (2007) summarized that "employees who are more hopeful, optimistic, efficacious, and resilient may be more likely to 'weather the storm' of the type of dynamic global environment contexts confronting most organizations today than their counterpart with lower psychological capital." Despite the real or expected organizational benefits that have been linked with employee optimism, researchers have deeply subverted its value in the workplace. Accordingly, Rego and colleagues (2010) reported that as a perceived organizational feature not much has been on optimism and why researchers unanimously ignored the study of the relationship between employee optimism and organizational citizenship behaviors is not known. The goal of the present study is therefore to examine whether some personal variables, work centrality, emotional intelligence and optimism could determine the exhibition of OCB using the resource perspective.

Work centrality and OCB

Work centrality relates positively with work satisfaction and with organizational and occupational commitment (Hirschfeld and Field, 2000; Schmidt and Lee, 2008; Herrbach et al., 2009). Diefendorff and colleagues (2002) found limited support for a direct relationship between work centrality and OCB, Diefendorff and colleagues included work centrality as a control variable, which they found was not related to OCB performance itself. Individuals whose work is so central in their lives may be more likely to engage in OCB. Also they are more likely to value an organization since it offers them an opportunity to express an interest in working. It is also possible that those who believe that work is an important part of their life may be more likely to invest more time working while those who do not have high value for work may not give priority attention to work but keep seeking out other activities. Work-role attachment theory suggests that people who are committed to work should also be committed to the organization that employed them (Adams et al., 2002).

Method

Sample and Procedure

The participants for the study consisted of 175 employees randomly selected from the Nigerian Civil defence corps, a paramilitary outfit in Enugu metropolis, southeast, Nigeria. The choice of these employees was due to the notion that as social vices continues to increase in society, their work is daily becoming more and more relevant and challenging that often times it may require them to move beyond what are expected of them to engage in other job behaviors that may be of immense benefit to the society. Besides, organizational citizenship behaviors are particularly important as organizational contexts continue to become more uncertain and interdependent (Bambale et al., 2011) as in the case of the civil defense and other similar organizations in Nigeria. Males and female employees participated in the study. Their ages ranged from 30 to 50 years, with a mean age of 39.65 years. Participation was voluntary. A total of 199 employees received the test instruments, out of which 187 completed and returned them, representing a response rate of 93.97%. Out of this number returned, 12 copies were discarded for improper completion and only 175 copies were used for data analyses.

Instruments

Work centrality. Work centrality was measured with Kanungo's (1982) six-item scale. This scale was adapted from the Work Involvement Questionnaire where respondents are expected to specify their degree of agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Sample items included: "The most important things that happen in life involve work," and "Work is something people should get involved in most of the time." Cronbach's alpha of the scale for the present study is 0.79.

Results

Table 1: Means, standard deviation and intercorrelations among the study variables

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1 OCB	47.83	7.62	-										
2 Gender	1.53	.50	-.08	-									
3 Marital status	1.56	.94	.10	-.11	-								
4 Job Position	1.58	.49	.02	.14*	.11	-							
5 Education	1.39	.49	.12*	.11	.05	.15*	-						
6 Age	39.65	4.98	.06	-.11	.04	.02	.15*	-					
7 Org. Tenure	6.51	1.76	.13*	-.05	-.14*	-.09	-.02	-.05	-				
8 Job tenure	5.15	1.55	.09	-.23**	-.05	-.05	-.14*	.04	.77***	-			
9 Work centrality	23.92	2.24	.30***	-.05	.11	-.00	.09	-.12	.15*	-.13*	-		
10 EI	32.47	8.54	.47***	.07	.05	-.03	-.03	.26**	.08	.06	.16**	-	
11 Optimism	25.21	3.16	.46***	-.00	.02	.09	.13*	.09	.12	.16	.19**	.41**	-

Key: *** = $p < .001$, ** = $p < .01$, * = $p < .05$. A total of 175 employees completed the questionnaires. Gender (1 = male, 2 = female); Marital status (1 = single, 2 = married); Job position (1 = junior staff, 2 = senior); Education (1 = below degree certificate, 2 = degree certificate and above). Raw scores of other variables were entered as they were collected.

Table 2: Hierarchical regression results

Variables	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
Gender	-.07	-.05	-.10	-.09
Marital status	.10	.07	.05	.05
Job position	.01	.02	.03	.01
Education	.14	.11	.12	.09
Age	.08	.12	.02	.00
Organizational Tenure	.17	.21	.15	.09
Job tenure	-.03	-.02	-.02	.02
Work centrality		.32**	.23*	.20*
Emotional intelligence			.43**	.33**
Optimism				.26**
R ² Adjusted	.02	.11	.28	.33
R ² Change	.06	.10	.17	.05
F Change	1.41	18.98	40.35	13.42
F Values	1.41	3.73	8.59	9.65

Key: ** = $p < .001$, * = $p < .01$

The control variables tested in the present study additively accounted for 1.6% of the variance in OCB. None of these variables was statistically significant on the criterion variable. Work centrality accounted for 11.2% of the variance in the criterion variable, over and above the control variables. The result of the regression equation model revealed that work centrality significantly predicted OCB ($\beta = .32, p < .001$). The result confirms the first hypothesis of a significant predictive value of work centrality on OCB. Also, emotional intelligence accounted for 28.2% of the variance in the criterion variable over and above that of the control variables and work centrality. In the regression equation model, emotional intelligence significantly predicted OCB ($\beta = .43, p < .001$). This also confirms the second hypothesis of a predictive value of emotional intelligence on the criterion variable. Optimism on the other hand accounted for 33.2% of the variance in the criterion variable above and beyond the control variables, work centrality and emotional intelligence. The result of the regression equation model indicated that optimism significantly predicted OCB ($\beta = .26, p = .001$). This upholds the third hypothesis of a predictive relationship between optimism and OCB.

Discussion

Building upon previous findings, the study examined the predictive value of work centrality, emotional intelligence and employee optimism on organizational citizenship behavior. The results of the analyses indicated that work centrality predicted OCB. A possible explanation of this result is that those who have high levels of work centrality, are more inclined to enjoy their job, are more probable to have an affectionate bond with their organizations and

show greater effort doing their job. A person who works for something that he/she values, gets involved with the job and does everything possible to do the best and eventually benefits the organization. This finding has acknowledged the notion that the changes in the degree of work centrality will affect various work related attitudes and behavior as employee performance, organizational commitment, job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behavior. This result is in tandem with previous findings that work centrality relates positively to work satisfaction and with organizational and occupational commitment (Schmidt and Lee, 2008; Herrbach et al., 2009). It is also consistent with Hirschfeld and Field (2000). This current study also agrees with Mannheim and colleagues (1997), Diefendorff and colleagues (2002) which established support for a direct relationship between work centrality and OCB.

The results of the present study equally indicated that emotional intelligence has a significant predictive value on OCB. This result may be as a result of the fact that emotionally intelligent individuals have the ability to handle changes smoothly, handle multiple work demands comfortably, and readily shift priorities. They adjust their responses and switch tactics to fit the fluid circumstances and successfully respond to a vast variety of emotional stimuli being elicited from inner self and the immediate environment. This finding seems to be consistent with Schutte et al., (1998) who found that emotional intelligence is associated with greater optimism and greater life satisfaction (Ciarrochi et al., 2000). The finding agrees with the study of Cameli (2003) which revealed that EI augments positive work attitudes, altruistic behavior and work outcomes.

The results of the present study also found that employee optimism predicted OCB. This result may be explained from the notion that previous studies (e.g., Terril et al., 2010) found that optimism significantly predicted several aspects of well-being. It has also been associated with a vast range of positive outcomes, including physical and psychological health, coping and recovery (Seligman, 2002) and thus could predict OCB. This result of the present study seems to be consistent with Kluemper and colleagues (2009) who found that optimism is positively associated with job satisfaction, organizational commitment and performance. It also seems to agree with Ugwu (2012) who found that employee optimism predicted work engagement which has conceptual resemblance with OCB (Babcock-Robertson and Strickland, 2010).

Implications of the study

The results have implications for OCB research and organizations. An implication of these findings for organizations may be a reemphasis on the importance on the possible antecedents of OCB. Since OCB has been linked with a good number of positive job outcomes including performance, management should endeavour to groom employees that will exhibit such behavior for the good of the organization. Such could be achieved if supervisors reinforce employees that engage in OCB. Therefore, management should focus on the different motivations employees have and should encourage OCB with the good motives. Although future research might want to use different methods, our findings provide support for the important role of some personal or dispositional variables in research on OCB. Combined with future research, the current study could have significant implications for the hiring and training of employees within organizations.

Limitations of the study

There are several limitations which have to be taken into account when interpreting the results of this study. First, the sample size was relatively small which has a negative influence on the statistical power. It may have given room for sampling error. Second, because data were generated from single source, there could have been some level of faking on the part of the participants, thus a common method bias may exist in the data. The results for variables such as OCB may be affected by social desirability bias. Employees will be likely to state that they frequently exhibit OCB even when they do not. In addition, it is doubtful whether employees can accurately describe their own attitudes and behavior in self report measures. Future investigations should seek the point of view from colleagues or

supervisors regarding the respondents' engagement in OCB. Another notable limitation of the current study is that, given the proliferation of OCB dimensions identified in prior studies, it was not possible to address them in the current study. There are other variables that were neither included as predictor variables nor controlled for in the current study that are related to OCB.

Suggestions for further studies

Future studies could endeavour to address the identified limitations to make the result more acceptable and generalizable. First, future studies could engage more participants in order to reduce sampling error and thus create more possibilities for increasing the statistical power. Such studies could also utilize multiple sources of data since this will likely minimize any awkward data that could be generated from single source thereby setting it free from desirability bias. Future studies could address the multiplicity of OCB by paying special attention to its various dimensions. Such studies could as well move farther to include other variables that have been linked to OCB, but which were not given consideration in the present study.

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