

ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR (OCB) AND TURNOVER INTENTION AMONG OPERATION EMPLOYEES

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Abstract

This paper examines the relationship between OCBs and turnover intention among a group of operation employees in Malaysian hotel industry. The sample consisted of 97 operation employees across hotels in northern region of peninsular Malaysia. Superiors' rating of employees' OCBs were collected and matched with employees' self-ratings of turnover intention. The results revealed that altruism, sportsmanship, courtesy and civic virtue significantly predicted employees' turnover intention. The findings were discussed and recommendations were made.

Introduction

Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) is defined as, "individual behaviour that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization" (Organ, 1988, p. 4). The word discretionary, according to Organ (1988) means that the behaviour is not a requirement of a formal job description, but it is a matter of personal choice and failure to exhibit such behaviour is not generally considered as cause for punishment. There are several reasons for the growing interest in OCB. Companies now days realized that to run a business effectively, initiatives are no less crucial than managerial efforts (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2000). Organizations have also shifted away from the use of hierarchical structure to autonomous team-based where cooperation and initiatives are important (Paine & Organ, 2000). Furthermore, Bolino and Turnley (2003), stated that high organization performance is not possible through ordinary employee effort. Rather, it is the ability of the organization to elicit employee behaviour that goes beyond formal duty that can be the key asset that is difficult to be imitated by competitors.

A great number of research has attempted to investigate the subordinates, task, organisational characteristics and leadership behaviours as antecedents to OCB. In view of all these research efforts, it is surprising that not much attention has been given to empirically test consequences of OCB on organisational effectiveness or some other indirect measures of organisational effectiveness such as employee withdrawal behaviours. This situation represents one of the empirical gaps in current literature. According to Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine and Bachrach (2000), although over 160 studies have been reported in the literature to identify the factors influencing OCB,

only five studies have attempted to investigate whether these human behaviours contribute to organisational effectiveness (Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1994; Podsakoff et al., 1997; Walz & Niehoff, 1996).

Likewise, review of current literature reveals that studies investigating the effects of OCB such as on withdrawal behaviours are relatively sparse. To date, only a few studies have explored the relationship between OCB and withdrawal behaviour (e.g., Chen et al., 1998). These limited number of studies however, do not permit much generalisation, thereby, warranting further empirical exploration.

A review of related literature on OCB highlights a paucity of research involving the hospitality industry such as the hotel industry. OCB has been investigated for decades throughout the private sector, yet it is a relatively new concept in the hospitality industry mentioned. Comparing with other industries, the hotel industry experiences a severe problem with respect to its high turnover rates (Johnson, 1981). Ample evidence shows that employee withdrawal behaviour influences hotel performance. Turnover increases separation costs, replacement costs and training costs (Koys, 2003), whereas absenteeism is one of the major contributors to indirect costs such as productivity (Albensi, 2003). Thus, the present study may provide significant practical implication for the hospitality industry.

Antecedents and Consequences of OCB

Many antecedents of OCB have been investigated by scholars in an attempt to search for a clear understanding of why people engage in OCB. Podsakoff et al., (2000) stated that the empirical research examining antecedents of OCB has concentrated on four primary categories including individual characteristics (e.g., satisfaction, commitment, trust in leader, personality, role perception), task characteristics (e.g., task feedback, task routinization, intrinsically satisfying task), organizational characteristics (e.g., perceived organizational support, cohesive group, reward structure) and leadership behaviors (e.g., transformational leadership, leader-member exchange). Recent OCB research have also focused on such variables as workers' feeling, moods, emotions at work (Brief & Weiss, 2002), job embeddedness (Lee, Burch & Mitchell, 2013), perceived organizational support (Eva, Newman, Miao, Wang & Cooper, 2018).

In the discussion section of many articles investigating the antecedents of OCB, several authors have emphasized the need for researchers to explore the consequences of OCB (Bolino, 1999). However, much of the existing research on OCB examined the antecedents of OCB except a few recently published articles. These include the effect of OCB on performance, actual turnover (Chen et al., 1998), turnover intention and absenteeism (Khalid et al., 2009), employee retention, role overload (Dash & Pradhan, 2014).

Why should OCB be related to employee to employee turnover? To better understand this effects, we must first examine the nature of OCB and turnover. Since the practice of OCB is optional in nature, a good organizational citizen can be considered as an all-around contributor – the ones who are not only good in accomplishing formal duties but also assist those around them. On the other hand, withdrawal behaviour such as turnover is regarded as detrimental or dysfunctional (Pelted & Xin, 1999) and is potentially destructive to one's co-worker, work group and organization. Since OCB reflect voluntary behaviour that is beneficial to organization, whereas turnover is considered as resentment toward the organization, we would expect that turnover to be adversely related consistent with the cognitive consistency theory. Cognitive consistency theory claims that individuals are inclined to experience psychological discomfort when they behave in ways incoherent with their values and moral standard (Shengming & Jiping, 1997). People are motivated to act congruent with their values or maintain agreement between their behaviors, beliefs and attitudes. We proposed that as an individual's OCB at work increases, that individual's tendency to withdraw from job will decrease. Although other factors should also influence turnover, it is likely that employees with higher levels of OCB would also report lower levels of turnover. Based on the above discussions, were postulated that OCBs are negatively related to turnover intention.

Methods

This study was carried out among a sample 97 operation employees drawn from 19 hotel properties in the northern region of Peninsular Malaysia. There were 350 pairs of subordinate questionnaires and superior questionnaires distributed within the period of two months. These questionnaires were administered and collected with the help of human resources departments of each hotel. List of employees name and their manager were obtained for the purpose of coding the two sets of questionnaires. The name of employees were placed on the manager questionnaires for OCB evaluation and a code number representing each employee was placed on each employee questionnaires for self-ratings of turnover intention and demographic information. Analysis related to the hypothesis required the matching of manager's responses with specific subordinates. In some cases, manager ratings were obtained but subordinates responses were not obtained. In other instances, subordinates responses were obtained but no manager ratings to match. Thus, usable sample for correlating variables could not include all managers and subordinates responses. A total of 145 (41.4%) subordinate questionnaires and 155 (44.3%) manager questionnaires were returned respectively. Thirty six subordinates did not receive ratings from manager and they were excluded from the analysis and 43 manager questionnaires without the subordinate responses to match were also excluded. After deleting incomplete responses, a total of 97 subordinates-manager cases were available for analysis. Fifty-one per cents of the respondents indicated that they were. In terms of ethnicity, 80% indicated they were Malays, 10% Chinese, 6% Indian and 4% others. Respondents range in age from 18 to 57 years with a

mean of 27 years. The average employees had been with the hotel for 5 years. In term of marital status, 55% of the respondents were married, 40% were single, 2% were widowed and the remaining 3% was others. In total 287 managers or heads of department were involved in the evaluation of their respective employees' levels of OCB. In the present study, managers rated between one to five employees each but the majority rated only two employees.

A five dimensions scale developed by Podsakoff and Mackenzie (as cited in Niehoff and Moorman, 1993) was used in the present study, managers were asked to indicate the extent to which their subordinates typically demonstrated the various citizenship behaviors at work using a 5-point Likert scale format from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. Overall, there were 20 items adapted from Podsakoff and Mackenzie (as cited in Niehoff and Moorman 1993). Minor modification was made to the questionnaire to suit with study sample. The word "organization" and "company" were replaced by the word "hotels".

Turnover intention was measured with 3 items adapted from Camman, Fichman, Jenkins and Klesh (as cited in Chen et al., 1998). The reported internal consistency coefficient for this scale was .78 (e.g., If I may choose again, I will choose to work for the current organization). Respondents rated their level of agreement with each item on a 5-pount scale with anchors strongly disagree and strongly agree. Although each respondent possessed English ability to some extent, the entire instrument was translated into Malay using back translation method, and respondents were given both English and Malay versions to facilitate comprehension of the items.

Data Analysis and Results

Table 1 Correlational Analysis

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Altruism	3.67	.59	-					
2. Courtesy	3.98	.67	.31**	-				
3. Sportsmanship	3.45	.69	.34**	.42**	-			
4. Conscientiousness	3.59	.71	.39**	.41**	.46**	-		
5. Civic virtue	3.71	.67	.43**	.31**	.31**	.40**	-	
6. Turnover intention	2.41	.89	-	-	-	-	-	-
			.37**	.32**	.47**	.33**	.27**	

Note: N=97; *p<.05; **p<.01

Data analysis in this study was performed using SPSS computer package. Three cases were identified as multivariate outliers. Evaluation of assumption of linearity, normality and homogeneity of variance revealed no threat to multivariate analysis.

Internal consistency were estimated and all were above .70. Zero-order correlations among the continuous study variables were calculated and can be found in Table 1. The pattern of correlations is about what would be

expected based on the literature. The intercorrelation was also inspected for multicollinearity. All correlation coefficient between manager ratings of OCB dimensions were below .70, therefore variable redundancy did not appear to be of concern (Nunnally, 1978). As can be seen, turnover intention was significantly correlated with all the five OCB dimensions. More importantly, the relationships were in the direction predicted by the study hypothesis. The strength of the relationship ranged from -.27 to -.47. Sportsmanship ($r = -.47, p < .01$) was significantly more highly correlated with turnover intention.

Table 2 Regression

Variables	β	Sig.
Altruism	-.23	.00
Courtesy	-.31	.00
Sportsmanship	-.39	.00
Conscientiousness	-.06	ns
Civic virtue	-.17	.00
R2		

The total OCBs scores accounted for 7% of the variance in turnover intention. This result was significant, $F(1,59) = 15.17, p < .01$. consistent with theoretical expectations, altruism ($\beta = -.23; p < .01$), courtesy ($\beta = -.31; p < .01$), sportsmanship ($\beta = -.39; p < .01$) and civic virtue ($\beta = -.17; p < .01$). Conscientiousness ($\beta = -.06; n.s.$) was not a significant predictor of turnover intention.

Discussions

The purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between OCB dimensions and a form of withdrawal behaviors, that is, turnover intention. Measures of OCB were hypothesized to be related with turnover intention. Overall, the results showed strong support for the study hypothesis. Sportsmanship, altruism, courtesy and civic virtue were found to have a significant and negative relationship with turnover intention. This finding is generally consistent with previous studies by Chen et al., (1998) and Khalidet al., (2009).

Sportsmanship and civic virtue are the OCB dimensions that benefits the organization (avoid complaining or willing to face difficulty, keep abreast of changes in the organization) rather than specific co-workers. An employee who exhibits good sportsmanship and civic virtue by looking at the positive side of what the organization actions, successfully coordinating work with others, "keep up" with development in the organization, provide constructive ideas for the benefits of the organization and attend functions that are not required is more likely to have lower turnover intention than those employees who do not exhibit sportsmanship and civic virtue. Sportsmanship and civic virtue are viewed as mainly benefiting the organizations as a whole,

as compared to courtesy and altruism that are directed at specific persons (William & Anderson, 1991).

As individual's propensity to engage in OCB dimensions that benefit the organization as whole may strongly determine the individual's propensity to stay with the organization. However, the current finding that the conscientiousness was not related to turnover intention contrast with those of Chen et al., (1998) who found that conscientiousness significantly and negatively predicted turnover. These contrary findings may have to do with the differences in the measures of conscientiousness. In comparison to the measure used in this study, Chen et al., (1998) used a more general measure of conscientiousness such as 'is one of my most conscientious employees' and 'believes in giving an honest day's work for an honest day's pay'. The first contribution of this study was that, this study helps to bridge the gap in OCB literature in the context of Eastern culture. Although researchers have extensively studied organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) in the U.S. context, OCB measurement has received relatively limited attention in other contexts (Pascal, 2009). Secondly, this study recasts the frequently studied concept of OCB. Previously, OCB has been viewed as a consequence of attitudinal and dispositional variables (Organ & Ryan, 1995). This study took another direction by examining a possible outcome of OCB. The finding that OCB is related to turnover intention should complement the previous research findings that demonstrate that OCB are related to organizational effectiveness, because turnover intention is also related to organizational effectiveness. Thirdly, the results from the present study indicate support for the notion of the theory of cognitive consistency.

The applicability of this theory which was previously found across a variety of situation now is extended to the OCB and turnover intention linkages. Whereas this study provides some insight into the importance of organizational citizenship behaviour, several limitations of the research, both conceptual and methodological, are notable. First, limitation was generated by the use of Western measures. However, efforts were taken to reduce potential problems by back-translation, double-checking, and discussion of each questionnaire item with the hotel managers. New items were also developed to capture a broader citizenship behaviour. As a result of this procedure, it is believed that the items were both appropriate and relevant to Malaysian respondents. Another limitation is that the results are based on non-managers' employees, sample may not be generalized to managerial level positions in the hotel industry.

Another issue is that other potentially important variables beyond facets of OCB especially job satisfaction and organizational commitment was not controlled in the model. The importance of OCB may have been reduced if these variables had been included. Finally, this study is based on cross-sectional data and thus, causality cannot be firmly established. With these limitations in mind, the current results suggest several avenues of future

research worthy of pursuit. To begin with, given the specific sample of the present study, expanded at replication to other forms of organization and industries would help the validation process. Second, the present research focuses on the relationship between OCB and turnover intention at the individual levels of analysis.

Conclusion

An important avenue for future research is to explore this relationship at the group or organizational levels of analysis. It can be argued that the group with higher level of OCB may foster group cohesiveness and eventually decrease employees' turnover. This is consistent with suggestion by Schnake and Dumler (2003) that OCB occurs at the individual level, however it is OCB in the aggregate that impacts organizational effectiveness. Future research empirically testing this proposition would contribute to our understanding of the effect of aggregate OCB on turnover intention. The findings of the present study suggest that future research should also examine the effects of OCB on other forms of withdrawal behaviors such as absenteeism, lateness, tardiness and social loafing. Research of this nature could further our understanding of the relationship between OCB and a broader range of withdrawal behavior. Future research should also continue to examine the role of demographic factors as moderators. Study by Kuehn and Al-Busaidi (2002) for example found that level of OCB varied with age. His may suggest that OCB may interact with age in predicting withdrawal behavior.

Additional research in this area seem not only warranted, but critical to advancing theory and practice regarding the field of OCB and withdrawal behavior. The findings of the present study may convince practitioners of the importance of citizenship behavior. Hotel operators experiencing problems with work force turnover may be particularly interested in this study. Traditionally, turnover rates have been shown to be influenced by many factors such as availability of job, economic conditions, management style, opportunity to leave the present job and non-work factors. This study, however, provides initial evidence that withdrawal behaviors can also be predicted based on behavioral factor that is OCB. Offering competitive salaries and wide opportunity for promotion may be somewhat difficult for many hotels or may not be adequate to sustain good employees. However, hotels can promote loyalty by enhancing such things as citizenship behavior among employees. To encourage OCB among employees, managers may become role models by exhibiting high level of OCB. Podsakoff et al., (2000) indicated that "Supportive behavior on the part of the leader was strongly related to OCB and may underlie the effects of perceived organizational support on OCB" (p. 532). Additionally, hotel management should also look into employees' job satisfaction as well as commitment. On the human resource side, several steps are possible such as selecting job candidate which is based on their level of organizational citizenship behavior, improve policies and procedures concerning performance evaluation in such a way to include certain

dimensions of citizenship behavior, and hire employees with high OCB by determining whether applicant have performed beyond minimum standard in their previous working experience or during schooling.

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