

Full Length Research Paper

The relationship between leader-member exchange, organizational inflexibility, perceived organizational support, interactional justice and organizational citizenship behaviour

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It has been proposed that issues of organizational behaviours should be incorporated in the study for predicting subordinate citizenship behaviour. This research had one objective: to assess the impact of four behaviours – leader-member exchange, organizational inflexibility, perceived organizational support and interactional justice – on organizational citizenship behaviour. The subjects of this study were all full-time employees with their managers who working in the educational organization in Iran. This study surveyed 220 respondents. The sampling frame of the respondents was obtained from educational organization in Shiraz city in Iran. Data were collected on a structured questionnaire containing standard scales of transformational leadership behaviours, LMX, and organizational citizenship behaviours. After establishing the psychometric properties of the scales, hypotheses were tested through statistical analysis of the data. Results indicate that four variables are more likely to predict citizenship behaviour.

Key words: Leader-member exchange, organizational inflexibility, perceived organizational support, interactional justice, organizational citizenship behaviour.

INTRODUCTION

Citizenship is a political concept that has special meaning for organizations in general and for bureaucracies and public administration in particular. In the organizational context citizenship behaviour and orientations generally describe an extra effort exhibited by individuals for the sake of other fellow-workers or for the organization as a whole. Vigoda-Gota and Cohen (2004) believe that the concepts of citizenship and citizenship behaviour add substantially to our understanding of various managerial and organizational behaviours.

In an attempt to better understand the factors (leader-member exchange, organizational inflexibility, perceived organizational support and interactional justice) affecting organizational citizenship behaviour, researchers have turned their attention to organizational and individual factors that might influence these relationships. Understanding these complex relationships is important

to researchers and managers in any organization. This paper begins by briefly highlighting and discussing the underlying theories upon which studies are based on the current study. In this regard, the emerging research on organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) can help to understand how people contribute to organizations. Study of employee's citizenship behaviour is very important for any organization. Leaders for better understanding of their employee's behaviour in organization need to know about new organizational knowledge such as organizational citizenship behaviour. The effective functioning of an organization depends on employee's behaviour. If these organizational citizenship behaviours are significant antecedents to real organization performance, then managers will need to pay attention to them.

Literature review

Vigoda-Gota in his study noted that Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) is a unique aspect of individual activity at work, first mentioned in the early 1980s. Accord-

ing to Organ's (1988) definition, it represents "individual behaviour that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and in the aggregate promotes the efficient and effective functioning of the organization". This special behaviour has become a lively research field investigated by organizational sociologists, psychologists, and management researchers. Begum (2005) argues that organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) is referred as set of discretionary workplace behaviours that exceed one's basic job requirements. They are often described as behaviours that go beyond the call of duty. Other examples of OCB are willingness to take steps to prevent problems with other employees, and obeying organization rules, regulations and procedures even when no one is watching (Chompookum and Derr, 2004). According to Gautam et al. (2004) Smith et al. (1983) defined OCB as individual contributions in the workplace beyond role requirement and contractually rewarded job achievements. To this extent OCB can be described as discretionary (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001), contextual (Borman and Motowidlo, 1997) or extra-role performance.

Leader-member exchange theory is based on the assumption that leaders establish a social exchange relationship with their employees and that the nature of this exchange relationship influences the manner in which the leader treats each individual employee. High-quality exchange relationship involves mutual trust, support, and loyalty between the leader and his or her employees, enhanced levels of interpersonal attraction and bidirectional influence. Wang, Law and Hackett (2005) claims that the leader-member exchange (LMX) and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) have become the foundation of a new era of managing a diversified workforce in the advent of a globalized world. It is believed that understanding the process paths by which LMX relationships impact important performance behaviours, (for example, OCB) are crucial to advancing leadership in the organization (Chin Lo, 2006).

Correspondingly, according to Deluga (1998), as a subordinate who performs OCB will not be formally rewarded, he or she may be informally rewarded in terms of supplementary resources and support from the leader. Consequently, the subordinate will be motivated to continue to maintain the favourable relationship. Despite that, Aquino and Bommer (2003) noted that the person who received some benefits from others may indirectly have the tendency to return or feel obligated to return the favour and this interaction is known as positive reciprocity. This kind of interaction can also be applied in the context of relationship between LMX and OCB, This is because when the leader trusts a particular subordinate and provides certain advantages to him or her in terms of greater authority, more support and so forth, consequently the subordinate may develop a feeling that he or she wishes to pay the favour back to the leader. This can be done by performing behaviours that are beyond the

formal employment contract, which is known as citizenship behaviours. Taken together, LMX has significant influence on the level of OCB among employees as a high quality of LMX may motivate employees to exhibit extra-role behaviours without any formal rewards from the organization. As noted by Wayne, Shore, Bommer, and Tetrick (2002), as the quality of the relationship increases, OCB behaviour increases.

H1: LMX will induce a positive effect on OCB.

Another major category of factors that may influence OCB is organizational characteristics such as organizational inflexibility. Organizational inflexibility is defined as the extent to which the organization rigidly adheres to those rules and procedures. One would expect organizational inflexibility to influence a wide variety of factors, some of which may be expected to increase OCB and some of which may be expected to decrease it. At first glance, one might expect highly inflexible rules and procedures to be disliked by employees, to reduce their job satisfaction (Hall, 1991), and to have detrimental effects on OCB because they encourage employees to focus on formalized job procedures and requirements, perhaps to the exclusion of extra-role or citizenship behaviours (Organ, 1988). In addition, work rules may be so inflexible that they prevent employees from helping each other on the job or taking the initiative to implement new procedures that would improve performance. However, there may also be some compensating benefits of inflexibility. For example, organizational inflexibility may enhance perceptions of fairness and procedural justice because formal rules make the organization's expectations clear, and inflexibility may be an indication that everyone is expected to play by the same rules, thereby increasing employee satisfaction, commitment, and trust in the organization. If this is the case, one would expect increased levels of OCB (Organ et al., 2006). Thus, there are some reasons to believe that inflexibility may enhance OCB.

H2: Organizational inflexibility will induce a positive effect on OCB

Wei Liu (2004) points out that according to organizational support theory, if employees perceive more support from the organization, they are likely to show greater attendance and efforts, which in turn, lead to better performance (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Eisenberger et al. (1986) found that employees reciprocated POS by reduced absenteeism. While this result indicated an increase in efforts to meet organizational goals as a result of higher POS, the authors called for research directly examining the effects of POS on work performance. Subsequent research on this issue has generated mixed results. On the one hand, Eisenberger and colleagues' studies provided empirical evidence for a po-

sitive relationship between POS and job performance. For example, Eisenberger et al. (1990) found that higher levels of POS were associated with higher levels of conscientiousness in carrying out job responsibilities and with one indicator of performance, innovation on behalf of the organization. Further, in a study of police officers, Armeli et al. (1998) found direct evidence for the positive effects of POS on police performance. Further, the perception that the organization values and cares about them may induce employees to incorporate organizational membership and role status into their self-identity, and thus increase prosocial behaviours carried out on behalf of the organization (Eisenberger et al., 1990). These extra-role behaviours that are beneficial to the organization but are not required by job role descriptions or rewarded by formal organizational reward systems are referred to as organizational citizenship behaviours (Organ, 1988).

H3: Perceived organizational support will induce a positive effect on OCB

Niehoff and Moorman (1993) suggested that procedural justice consists of two factors, formal procedures and interactional justice. The formal procedure factor represents the degree to which fair procedures are used in an organization. The interactional justice factor represents the fairness of the interactions that accompany an organization's formal procedures. Though there are several models that could be used to interpret how various actions by supervisors could affect subordinates' procedural justice perceptions (Cropanzano and Greenberg, 1997), it is perhaps most useful to consider the power bases in terms of relational/non-instrumental and instrumental process. When supervisors make influence attempts relying on social power bases, relational facets of the power bases are likely to be more important than instrumental facets. This is because such facets have more to do with the nature of the social exchange between supervisors and subordinates, rather than possible outcomes of the exchange.

Two perspectives that highlight relational/non-instrumental processes may be relevant to understanding the role of procedural justice in relational processes may be relevant for understanding the role of procedural justice in subordinates' contribution towards organizational outcomes. First, the group values perspective (Lind and Tyler, 1988) suggests that individuals are primarily concerned about their long-term social relations with authorities employing the procedures. Subordinates derive feelings of positive self-worth to the degree that supervisors' demonstrated power capacities include treating subordinates with respect and allowing them a voice in work matters. A second perspective focuses on interactional justice, the interpersonal treatment accorded individuals during the enactment of procedures (Bies and Moag, 1986). Instrumental perspectives (e.g. self-inter-

est model, Lind and Tyler, 1988) portray justice judgments as based on how well a procedure serves interests external to the experience of the procedure. Research suggests that subordinates' perception of procedural justice, which in turn influences subordinates' attitudes to authorities and organizational outcomes (Konovsky, 2000). Thus if subordinates feel that the supervisors are behaving fairly while using power; it would have a positive effect on subordinates' organizational outcomes.

H4: Interactional justice will induce a positive effect on OCB.

Methodology and data

The subjects of this study were all full-time employees with their managers who working in the educational organization in Iran. This study surveyed 220 respondents. The sampling frame of the respondents was obtained from educational organization in Shiraz city. The sampling frame consisted of managers and employees. The respondents were from two of four educational organizations. Two organizations were selected by simple random sampling. In each organization, selection of participants was based on cluster random sampling.

This study employed self-administered questionnaires as a means of collecting data. The self-administered questionnaire was selected for the three reasons. First, the respondents of the study had a relatively high level of education and would therefore understand the contents of the questionnaire. Secondly, the respondents would have more confidence and freedom to express their views than the interview method. Thirdly, using enable data collection from a relatively large number of respondents in a short time. Prior to data gathering, researcher negotiated with the head of each organization for the execution of the research, whereby the permission was obtained to perform the study. An introductory letter from the head of the organizations explained the purpose of the study as well as introduced the researcher. Letter was then sent from the head of organization to the head of security in each organization, explaining the purpose of the study. A subsequent letter from the security was sent to the managers and employees explaining the purpose of the research and requesting for their cooperation in the data collection. The respondents were given one week to complete. The completed questionnaires were picked up by researcher.

Questionnaire design

The questionnaire of this study was designed specifically for staffs and their immediate supervisors: (1) demographics (including sex, age, marital status, education, and working experience); (2) leader-member exchange, (3) organizational inflexibility, (4) perceived organisational

support, (5) interactional justice and (4) Organizational citizenship behaviour. In order to minimize the biased results while conducting OCB evaluations for the employees, in-dyad research method was adopted in this study. That is, OCB evaluations for the employers were performed by their corresponding head staff (their immediate supervisors).

Leader-member exchange

Seven items reported by Scandura and Graen (1984) were used to measure LMX. Sample items are, "My working relationship with my manager is effective" or "I can count on my manager to "bail me out," even at his or her own expense, when I really need it." Employees responded to these items on seven-point scales with range of "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7).

Organizational inflexibility

Subscale "inflexibility" and "formalization" selected and adopted from substitutes for leadership scale that defined by Podsakoff and MacKenzie in 1994. Inflexibility has six items such as "In this organization, violations of rules and procedures are not tolerated" or "In this organization anytime there is a policy in writing that fits some situation, everybody has to follow that policy very strictly;"

Perceived organizational support

Perceived organizational support is one's belief that one's organization values one's contributions and cares for one's welfare (Eisenberger et al., 1986). POS was measured using the eight-item short form (Eisenberger et al., 1997; Lynch, Eisenberger, and Armeli, 1999). Respondents indicated the extent of agreement with each statement on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). Sample items include "My organization cares about my opinions," and "Help is available from my organization when I have a problem."

Interactional Justice

Interactional justice was suggested by the work of Bies and colleagues (Bies, 1987; Bies and Moag, 1986; Tyler and Bies, 1990). 6 items for this factor included questions that focused on the interpersonal behaviour of the supervisor. Specific items asked whether the supervisor was considerate and kind, whether the supervisor considered the employee's rights, and whether the supervisor dealt with the employee in a truthful manner. Employees responded to these items on seven-point scales with range of "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7).

Organizational citizenship behaviours

To measure employees' OCB, researcher used the five-

dimension scale developed by Podsakoff and MacKenzie (1990). Each five constructs –altruism (4 items), (e.g., "He/she helps other who has heavy work loads"), courtesy (4 items), (e.g., "He/she consults with me or other individuals who might be affected by his/her actions or decisions"), sportsmanship (4 items), (e.g., "He/she consumes a lot of time complaining about trivial matters.®"), conscientiousness (4 items), (e.g., "He/she obeys company rules, regulations and procedures even when no one is watching."), and civic virtue (4 items), (e.g., "He/she attends and participates in meetings regarding the organization.") - Included items describing specific behaviours, and managers indicated their agreement on each item for each employee working for them using a seven-point format. Niehoff and Moorman (1993) noted that the OCB rating from asked the manager to list the names of the employees across the top and simultaneously rate each employee on each item. In their view, this format allows a manager to compare each employee on every item, increasing the amount of variance across employees.

Data collection

According to the aforementioned research objectives and hypotheses, a survey was adopted in this study for data collection and the personnel from educational organization were the main subjects of study. The samples in this study were male (42.7%) and female (57.3%) with age between 30 - 40 years old (44.1%) and married (80%). Also most of them had bachelor degree (42.7%) and had 16-20 years of work experience (27.7%). The descriptive statistics of the sample is illustrated in Table 1.

Statistical methods

In this study used two types of analysis, descriptive analysis and inferential analysis. Descriptive statistics are frequency, percentage, means, standard deviations, reliability coefficients, and zero-order correlations. All variables were screened for normality, homogeneity of variance and outliers. To assess the reliability and internal consistency of the data, the Cronbach alpha test was performed. To assess direct and indirect relationships among variables, researcher followed a two-step procedure using confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modelling (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). SPSS 16.0 and Amos 16.0 were used to perform these analyses. Structural equation modelling utilized to provide evidence of discriminant validity through chi-square difference tests (Bentler and Bonett, 1980; James et al., 1992). Ding, Velicer and Harlow (1995) note that 100-150 participants are sufficient to conduct SEM. Based on the number of respondents with complete data in this study (n = 220), this yielded a sufficiently large sample for the use of structural equation modelling.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics (N = 220).

GENDER	Male	94	42.7%
	Female	126	57.3%
AGE	< 30 years	32	14.5%
	30-40 years	97	44.1%
	41-50 years	64	29.1%
	51 > years	27	12.3%
MARITAL STATUS	Single	38	17.3%
	Married	176	80%
	Missing	6	2.7%
EDUCATION	High school or below	22	10%
	College	76	34.5%
	Bachelor	94	42.7%
	Master or above	26	11.8%
	Missing	2	.9%
TENURE	< 5 years	33	15%
	6-10 years	24	10.9%
	11-15 years	34	15.5%
	16-20 years	61	27.7%
	21-25 years	39	17.7%
	> 26 years	29	13.2%

RESULTS

The result is highly reliable if the Cronbach's value is between 0.70 and 0.98 and it should be ignored if the Cronbach's value is below 0.35 (Wortzel, 1979). In this study, the Cronbach's value for each construct were all greater than 0.70 (Table 2), which means the adaptation of the measurement for the constructs was appropriate. In order to understand the correlation between the leader-member exchange behaviours, organizational inflexibility, perceived organizational support, and interactional justice in employees on organizational citizenship behaviour in this study, the matrix of correlation coefficients were shown in Table 2. A higher coefficient indicates a stronger correlation between variables.

We tested the hypotheses with multiple regression analyses (Cohen and Cohen, 1983). Analysis included leader-member exchange behaviour, organizational inflexibility, perceived organizational support, and interactional justice measures as independents and organizational citizenship behaviour as dependent variable. The relationships between perceptions of leader-member exchange behaviour, organizational inflexibility, perceived organizational support, and interactional justice and OCB were tested in one multiple regression models (Table 3). The model with OCB as dependent variable was found statistically significant ($F_{OCB} = 46.118, p < 0.0001$). In the model, all four variables were found to be significantly related to OCB. Among four variables, interactional justice (Ij) had the strongest relationship to OCB with $\beta_j = 0.307, p < 0.0001$. After interactional justice, leader-member exchange had the strongest relationship to OCB

with $LMX = 0.300, p < 0.0001$. The third variable organizational inflexibility had the relationship to OCB with $\beta_i = 0.206, p < 0.0001$. The fourth variable perceived organizational support had the weak relationship to OCB with $POS = 0.109, p < 0.048$. Furthermore, leader-member exchange behaviour (LMX), organizational inflexibility (Oi), perceived organizational support (POS), and interactional justice (Ij) were found to be associated positively with OCB. Regression analyses between four variables and OCB variable are summarized in Table 3.

Because the measurement relationships proposed were consistent with the data, the analysis shifted to an evaluation of the main sets of the theoretical relationships shown in Figure 1. The model shown in the figure includes: direct effects of the a) leader-member exchange behaviour, b) organizational inflexibility c) perceived organizational support, and d) interactional justice on organizational citizenship behaviours. In this study, the tests for goodness-of-fit index conformed to the criterion suggested by researchers. Therefore, the model proposed in this study is a good fit (Table 4). Furthermore, the path analysis results for the hypotheses proposed were illustrated in Figure 1. It was found that leader-member exchange, organizational inflexibility, perceived organizational support, and interactional justice induces a significant and positive effect on the organizational citizenship behaviours. As a result, H1, H2, H3, and H4 are supported.

DISCUSSIONS

This study examined the combined effects of leader-member exchange behaviour, organizational inflexibility, perceived organizational support, and interactional justice in employees on organizational citizenship behaviours of staff from educational organization in Iran. This study confirmed that all variables are significantly and positively (>0) related to the organizational citizenship behaviours. As noted by Wayne et al. (2002), as the quality of the LMX relationship increases, OCB behaviour increases. Therefore, this study verified that the leader-member exchange behaviour have positive and direct effects on the organizational citizenship behaviours. One would expect organizational inflexibility to influence a wide variety of factors, some of which may be expected to increase OCB and some of which may be expected to decrease it. Unfortunately, to our knowledge, no study has examined the direct relationship between organizational inflexibility and OCB. So, this study shows that organizational inflexibility has positive and direct effects on the organizational citizenship behaviours. The results of the Lambert (2000) study shows that the general pattern of results previously reviewed (Bishop et al., 2000; Eisenberger et al., 2001; Liden et al., 2003; Masterson et al., 2000; Moorman et al., 1998; Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002; Settoon et al., 1996; Wayne et al., 2002; Wayne et al., 1997; Witt, 1991) indicates that employee perceptions of the support that they receive

Table 2. Means, standard deviations, reliability, and intercorrelations.

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
Organizational Inflexibility (1)	20.63	4.11	.77				
Perceived organizational support (2)	19.61	5.23	.205	.83			
Interactional justice (3)	20.89	6.02	.236	.403	.73		
Leader-member exchange (4)	26.74	5.52	.231	.259	.605	.92	
Organizational citizenship behaviour (5)	73.61	11.25	.371	.353	.581	.562	.79

Note. N = 220. P value for all variables are <0.01. Cronbach alpha reliabilities are shown in bold.

Table 3. Summary of regression analysis.

Independents	OCB	
		T
Leader-member Exchange	.300	4.741***
Organizational inflexibility	.206	3.950***
Perceived organizational support	.109	1.987*
Interactional justice	.307	4.608***
F	46.118***	
R ²	.462	
Adjusted R ²	.452	

Notes: * Significant at p < 0.05; *** Significant at p < 0.0001

from their organization are positively related to OCB. This suggests that taking steps to enhance perceptions of organizational support may be an effective way to increase OCB (Organ et al., 2006). Therefore, this study verified that the perceived organizational support has positive and direct effects on the organizational citizenship behaviours. Organ (1990) suggested that fairness perceptions play an important role in promoting OCBs. According to many researchers organizational justice appears to be a key determinant of work outcomes such as OCBs (e.g. Niehoff and Moorman, 1993; Konovsky and Pugh, 1994; Moorman et al., 1998).

Therefore, this study also verified that the interactional justice has positive and direct effects on the organizational citizenship behaviours.

Conclusion

It is not uncommon for employees to be asked to go above and beyond the call of duty at work. These organizational citizenship behaviours frequently make important contributions to the well-being of one's co-workers and/or the organization. Supervisors should do their best to maintain a good dual relationship with their subordinates, increase organizational inflexibility with clearly about rules and procedures, more support of employees by employers, and increase justice in workplace. They could accomplish this by trading emotion, loyalty and contribution with their subordinates, which eventually will improve the relationships between employ-

ees and their supervisors. Therefore, under such good interaction, a benign cycle will be formed, which will not only enhance commitment of the employees to the organization and reduce turnover intention, but also promote the OCB of employees to improve organizational effectiveness. Therefore, it is suggested that a fair and unbiased allocation of resources, time and more relationship with subordinates by the supervisor will promote the extra role of subordinates in supervisors, which in turn enhances the OCB of subordinates.

Several suggestions are recommended for future research. To date, only a handful of studies have examined the effects of transformational leadership on OCB. An interesting topic for future research would be to investigate whether the antecedents and mediators of OCB differ across cultures. Leadership accounts a lot of variance for work-related behaviours of subordinates and effectiveness of organizations. Different leadership concepts might be explored in future research to widen our knowledge of leadership. In addition, investigations could also be conducted with subjects from different fields for further verifications. Moreover, this study was conducted in a cross sectional fashion. Longitudinal I studies for future research would be conducive to our further understanding of the leadership dynamics in organizations. This study adds empirical support to the leader-member exchange; organizational inflexibility, perceived organizational support, and interactional justice are associated with employees' willingness to go above and beyond their job requirements. The findings, taken with those of prior studies, suggest a roadmap for future research.

Limitations

This study is not without limitations that could have influenced the results. The present study has a number of methodological limitations that suggest areas for future research. First, our sample was from the educational organization in Shiraz city. So, this setting may not be unique enough to limit the external validity of the findings. Second, all data was collected at the same time the generalization of the findings might thus be limited. In addition, to avoid the common method variance, the OCB of subordinates is evaluated by their immediate supervisors in this study.

Table 4. Reliability analysis of overall model fit.

Index	Cited	Admissibility	Result	Yes/No
χ^2 / DF	Schumacker and Lomax (1996)	1.00-5.00	6.25	No
GFI	Joreskog and Sorbom (1988)	>.80	.968	Yes
NFI	Bentler(1990)	>.90	.936	Yes
CFI	Bentler(1990)	>.90	.944	Yes
TLI	Tucker and Lewis(1973)	0.00-1.00	.815	Yes

Note. DF = Degree of freedom, GFI= Goodness-of-fit, NFI = Normed fit index, CFI = Comparative-fit-index, and TLI = Tucker-Lewis index

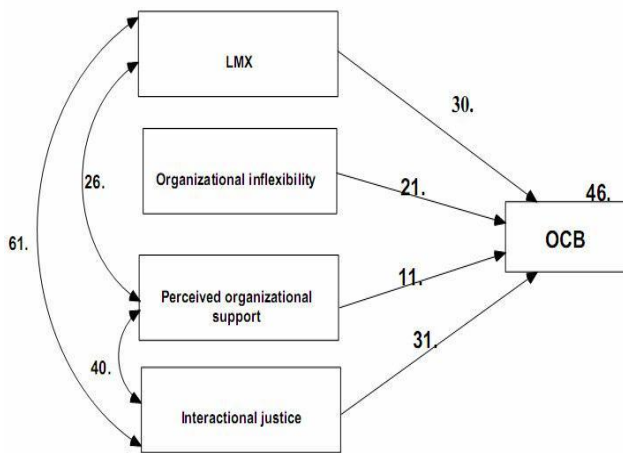


Figure 1. Estimated path coefficients of the hypothesized mode

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