Perceived Organisational Support and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour: The Mediating Role of Personality

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Organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) is a form of behaviour which is discretionary in nature and not supported by the formal reward system of the organization although it is essential for effectives and efficient functioning of the organization. The present study was aimed to examine the mediating role of personality in perceived organisational support (POS) and OCB relationship. The study was conducted on 188 front levels managerial personnel of Indian organizations. The NEO- FFI, OCB Scale and POS Scale were used for data collection. Obtain results indicated a significant positive relationship of POS and personality traits (extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness) with OCB. The results of mediated hierarchal regression analysis support mediating role of personality traits (conscientiousness extraversion and agreeableness) in POS -OCB relationship.

Keywords: Organisational citizenship behaviour, perceived organisational support, personality traits, mediation analysis

With the recent drive of positive psychology, organisational citizenship behavior (OCB) has been the most researched topic in Organization behavior and Human resource management since last two decades. It has been found a tremendous effect of OCB on job performance. OCB is form of behaviour which is discretionary in nature and not supported by the formal reward system of the organization although it is essential for effectives and efficient functioning of the organization. Sometime such kind of behaviour is also considered as extra role behaviour, organisational spontaneity or contextual performance. Organ (1988) proposed an expanded taxonomy of OCB that included Altruism (e. g. helping others) Conscientiousness (e.g. being punctual), Sportsmanship (e.g. not complaining about trivial matters), Courtesy (e.g. consulting with others before taking action) and Civic virtue (e.g. keeping up with matters that affect the organization).

Theoretically, OCB is of interest to researchers because it cannot be explained by the same motivational bases that induce individuals to join, stay and perform within contractual, enforceable role prescriptions (Katz, 1964). Much of what we call citizenship behavior is not easily governed by individual incentive schemes; such behavior is often subtle, difficult to measure, and may contribute more to others' performance than one's own (Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1997). Conceptually, OCB has been associated with social responsibility (Flanagan, Bowes, Jonsson, Csapo, & Sheblanova, 1998; Witt, 1990) or communal work, both of which are generally characterised by the absence of monetary imbursement for the work undertaken (Noon & Blyton, 1997).

Existing researches confirmed the importance of personality characteristics and social exchange relationships as predictors of task and citizenship performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Judge & Ilies, 2002; LePine & Van Dyne, 2001; Settoon, Bennett, & Liden, 1996).

Social exchange theory (Blau, 1986) and the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960) describe social exchange as an open-ended stream of transactions, with both exchange partners making contributions and receiving benefits. These exchanges are open-ended because the form and timing of contributions is discretionary (Bateman

& Organ, 1983; Konovsky & Pugh, 1994; Organ, 1988). Unlike contractual obligations, which demand repayment, social exchange creates unspecified reciprocal obligations enforced through cultural and normative standards of behaviors (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

Perceived support is important as it forms the basis of the social exchange between the employee and the organization. Perceived organisational support (POS) is an employee belief that the organization cares for and values his or her contribution to the success of the organization (Kaufman et al., 2001). POS encompasses policies promoting employee well-being and feelings of accomplishment, a sense of positive contribution to the organization, and personal and organisational goal attainment (Eisenberger et al., 2001). When POS is high, a social exchange develops in which the employee may feel compelled to reciprocate the high level of perceived affective commitment he or she receives from the organization (Wayne, Shore & Liden, 1997). Based on the evaluation of prior treatment, the employee comes to trust that the organization will continue to treat him or her fairly in the future. It is suggested that this trust leads to a higher level of affective commitment on the part of the employee, which in turn may lead to higher levels of both in-role and extra-role behavior.

H1: Based on the above-mentioned studies and theoretical discussion I proposed a positive relationship between POS and OCB.

There is increasing empirical evidence that personality affects individuals' performance once they are hired into an organization (e.g., Barrick & Mount, 1991; Caldwell & Burger, 1998; Tett, Jackson, & Rothstein, 1991). Organ (1990) argued that individual differences play an important role in predicting whether an employee would exhibit OCB. Hence, it is believed that some people, because of who they are, would be more likely to show OCB.

Personality traits refer to enduring patterns of thought, emotion, and behavior that are not likely to change over time and explain people's behavior across different situations (Costa & McCrae, 1989; Funder, 2001). The emergence of Big-Five model in the personality field in the early

1990s brought a new opportunity for research in the field of OCB. Organ (1990) proposed that an employee's individual dispositions would provide the most valuable explanation of organisational citizenship behaviours to researchers and practicing managers. A bulk of studies has conducted on the predisposition and OCB relationship (Organ, 1990; Organ, 1994; Organ & Lingl, 1995; Penner, Midili, & Kegelmeyer, 1997).

The personality variables of interest in this study include conscientiousness, extraversion and agreeableness. Conscientiousness entails qualities such as reliability, dependability, neatness, punctuality, and discipline (Organ, 1994). It is selected because its correlation with OCB seems to be the most robust among all personality predictors studied. Employees high on conscientiousness could also be predisposed to develop behaviours which extend beyond the expected task performance behaviours. A positive correlation of conscientious and OCB might be assumed because OCB is a type of behaviour which extends beyond the expected task performance.

Barrick, et al. (2005) has described extraversion as key dispositional determinant of social behavior. People who are high in extraversion are generally sociable, assertive, active, bold, energetic, adventuresome, and expressive (Goldberg, 1992). In contrast, those who are low in extraversion are timid, submissive, silent, and inhibited. Thus, those who are highly extraverted display more flexible behaviors that make them more likely to show OCB.

Agreeableness, on the other hand, refers to how well one gets along with other people, or how good-natured one is in terms of interpersonal relations (Organ, 1994). LePine and Van Dyne (2001) revealed an interesting double blade effect for agreeableness. They found that agreeableness correlated positively with cooperating behaviors and negatively with voice behavior. Empirical evidence showed that agreeableness is significantly related to interpersonal performance (Mount, Barrick & Stewart, 1998). In work contexts, agreeable employees show higher levels of interpersonal competence (Witt et al., 2002) and collaborate effectively when joint action is

needed (Mount et al., 1998). Thus, it is expected that persons high on agreeableness are more likely to perform OCB.

H2: On the basis of above discussion I hypothesized that Personality traits (conscientiousness, extraversion and agreeableness) would have a positive association with OCB

In addition to research on the direct relationship between perceived organisational support and OCB, some studies have examined potential mediators of this relationship. For example, Eisenberger et al. (2001) examined the potential mediating effect that employees' felt obligation toward the organization had on the relationship between perceived organisational support and OCB. Consistent with their expectations, they found that perceived organisational support was positively related to employees' felt obligation toward the organization and that felt obligation served as a complete mediator of the relationship between POS and employees' citizenship behavior.

Bishop et al. (2000) examined the potential mediating effects of organisational commitment on the relationship between perceived organisational support and an overall measure of OCB. They found that perceived organisational support was positively related to organisational commitment and that organisational commitment fully mediated the effects of POS on OCB. Similar results have been reported by Liden et al. (2003) and Cardona et al. (2004) both. Cardona et al. (2004) examined the mediating effect of normative commitment on the POS-OCB relationship in two samples of physicians working in Spain. They reported that normative commitment completely mediated the relationship between POS and OCB in both of their samples.

H3: In this line of research it was hypothesized that personality traits will mediate the POS –OCB relationship.

Method

Sample:

Present study was carried out on 188 front level male managers of Indian organisations.

Stratified purposive sampling was used for sample selection in the present study. Participants in the study were 188 employees of public (N=95, 50.5 %) and private (N=93, 49.5 %) companies. Their job tenures with their organisations ranged from one (1) to thirty six (36) years with a mean tenure of 14.59 years (S.D = 10.24); while their ages ranged from 21 to 60 years with a mean age of 39.44 years (S.D = 10.45). The subjects were convinced to participate in the study and they were not paid for their participation in this study.

Tools:

Organisational Citizenship Behaviour Scale (OCB): The OCB scale was adopted from Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Moorman and Fetter (1990). This five dimension scale focuses on performance in areas that are not a part of the requirements specified in the job description as follows: (a) altruism (b) conscientiousness (c) civic virtue (d) courtesy and (e) sportsmanship. A five point response format was used for this scale (1=strongly disagree, 3=neutral, 5=strongly agree). In present study internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's Alpha) for whole scale was found to be 0.85. Conscientiousness dimension consists of five items and its alpha was found to be 0.67. Sportsmanship dimension consists of five items and its alpha was found to be 0.71. Civic Virtue dimension consists of four items and its alpha was found to be 0.67. Courtesy dimension consists of five items and its alpha was found to be 0.76. Altruism dimension consists of five items and its alpha was found to be 0.71.

Personality Scale: Personality traits were measured with the Hindi version of the NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI), originally developed by Costa and McCrae (1992). The NEO-FFI measures five major domains of personality and thus allows a comprehensive assessment of general personality. The domain scales of the NEO-FFI are neuroticism, extroversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness This inventory consists of sixty items (twelve items for each factor) and based on five-point Likert format (from strongly agree to strongly disagree).

Only the subscales that were hypothesised

in this study were included in the analyses. In present study, internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's Alpha) was found to be 0.50 for extraversion (7 items), 0.65 for agreeableness (9 items) and 0.77 for conscientiousness factor (12 items).

Perceived Organisational Support Scale (POS): To assess the level of perceived organisational support of managers, the Perceived Organisational Support Scale was developed during the study (Singh & Singh, 2010). The scale consists of 20 items with five point response format. Internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's Alpha) of the Perceived Organisational Support Scale was found to be 0.86.

Statistical Analysis

Along with correlation analysis Mediated regression analysis was completed to determine the relationship between POS and OCB, as mediated by personality traits (conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness). In mediated regression (Baron & Kenny, 1986) the mediator (personality traits) is regressed on the independent variable (POS). In the second step, the dependent variable (OCB) is regressed on the independent variable. On the last step, the dependent variable is regressed simultaneously on both the independent and mediational variables. At each step there must be a significant (Pd" 0.05) effect and the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable must be less in the third equation than in the second equation. Full mediation is supported when the independent variable has no significant (Pd" 0.05) effect when the mediator is controlled, while partial mediation is indicated if the effect of the independent variable is reduced but still significant (Pd" 0.05) when the mediator is controlled (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

Results

Descriptive statistics and inter-correlations for the variables in the study are presented in Table- 1. The results of correlational analysis indicate a significant positive relationship of perceived organisational support with all the five dimensions of OCB (p< 0.05). POS was also found to be significantly positively correlated with conscientiousness, extraversion and agreeableness dimension of personality (p<0.01). Conscientiousness extraversion and agreeableness dimension of personality were found to be significantly (highly positive) correlated with all the five dimensions of OCB (p< 0.01) except the agreeableness and civic virtue relationship.

Table 1. Descriptive statistic and correlation

	Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	POS	71.68	11.16	.86								
2	Conscientiousness	48.21	6.03	.33**	.77							
3	Extraversion	26.32	3.59	.27**	.57**	.50						
4	Agreeableness	33.25	4.67	.32**	.59**	.46**	.65					
5	OCB-Conscientiousness	20.84	3.13	.16*	.37**	.33**	.26**	.67				
6	Sportsmanship	17.53	4.19	.30**	.41**	.26**	.44**	.33**	.71			
7	Civic Virtue	15.10	2.68	.21**	.25**	.28**	.10	.33**	.04	.67		
8	Courtesy	20.74	2.98	.22**	.48**	.37**	.43**	.54**	.41**	.36**	.76	
9	Altruism	19.51	3.45	.17*	.37**	.36**	.46**	.42**	.30**	.30**	.51**	.71

Note. Cronbach alpha reliabilities are shown along the diagonal. *p<0.05, **p<0.01, N=188

Table 2 presents the results for the mediated regression analysis. In the first step, Extraversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness (mediating variable) were regressed on POS separately. In step 2, OCB (dependent variable) was regressed on the POS (independent variables). For step 3 of the mediated regression, each of the five OCB variables was regressed on POS and one of the personality traits separately. Thus, for each OCB, five separate regressions were calculated. Partial mediated regression is shown in step 3 when both the mediator variable (personality traits) and the OCB variable are significant, but the OCB-POS relationship decreases from step two, as indicated by a decrease in the beta weight. If the OCB measure was not significant in step 3, full mediation would be indicated.

Table 2. Mediated Regression Analysis: POS (independent), Personality (mediator), OCB (dependent)

Independent Variable	Dependent Variables				
	Conscienti ousness	Sports manship	Civic Virtue	Courtesy	Altruism
POS	Mediating variable: Conscientiousness				
Step1 (POS>Conscientiousness)	.331***	.331***	.331***	.331***	.331***
Step2(POS>OCB)	.164*	.304***	.214**	.221**	.175*
Step3(Conscientiousness> OCB)	.355***	.347***	.197**	.456***	.351***
Step3(POS>OCB)	.047	.189**	.149*	.071	.059
Sobel test	3.62***	3.77***	2.80**	4.03***	3.60***
	Mediating variable: Extraversion				
Step1(POS>Extraversion)	.272***	.272***	.272***	.272***	.272***
Step2(POS>OCB)	.164*	.304***	.214**	.221**	.175*
Step3(Extraversion >OCB)	.313***	.195**	.236***	.333***	.336***
Step3(POS>OCB)	.079	.251***	.150*	.131	.084
Sobel test	2.88**	2.23*	2.48*	2.98**	2.97**
	Mediating variable: Agreeableness				
Step1(POS>Agreeableness)	.317***	.317***	.317***	.317***	.317***
Step2(POS>OCB)	.164*	.304***	.214**	.221**	.175*
Step3 (Agreeableness>OCB)	.236**	.386***	.036	.401***	.450***
Step3(POS>OCB)	.089	.181**	.203**	.094	.032
Sobel test	2.60**	3.57***	.45	3.60***	3.75***

*p< 0.05, **p<0.01, Note: Standardized â is reported in table

According to the above criteria (Baron & Kenny, 1986), results support the full mediation of conscientiousness, extraversion and agreeableness in the relationship of POS with conscientiousness, courtesy, and altruism where as partial mediation with sportsmanship and civic virtue relationship.

Discussion

In general, this study had three basic objectives regarding organization (POS), employee (disposition) and mediating characteristics of citizenship behavior. The article explored the relationship of POS and personality traits with the five dimensions of OCB. The foremost objective of this article was to examine the mediating role of personality traits in POS-OCB relationship.

The study reported a positive association of POS with OCB which is also consistent with a bulk of previous researches (e.g., Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades, 2001; Liden, Wayne, Kraimer, & Sparrowe, 2003;

Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Wayne et al., 2002). The employees perform OCB in anticipation that the organization will discharge its accrued obligations through increased employee rewards or other acts favorable to them (Organ & Konovsky, 1989). In turn, organizations, with work environments advantageous to employees, create social and normative pressures on employees to reciprocate through behaviors valued by the organization (Eisenberger et al., 2001).

A significant positive association of conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness with all the five dimensions of OCB except the agreeableness and civic virtue relationship was also reported in the study.

The result of the study is consistent with previous studies which showed that conscientiousness is positively related to different aspects of contextual performance (e.g., Hogan & Holland, 2003; Hurtz & Donovan, 2000). Recent researches offer more evidence on the relatively strong correlation between conscientiousness and citizenship performance (Miller et al., 1999;

Hogan, Rybicki, Motowildo, & Borman, 1998; Neuman & Kickul, 1998). Conscientious individuals can perform their part of the work with a minimum of oversight (Morgeson et al., 2005). Furthermore, conscientious individuals are dependable, efficient, and hardworking. They are predisposed to take initiative in solving problems and are more methodical and thorough in their work (Witt et al., 2002). It seems reasonable that this trait would result in higher OCB performance.

A positive association of extraversion and different dimensions of OCB was supported by previous study in which extraversion has been found to relate positively to job performance in occupations that necessitate social interactions (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Extroversion is defined as "a trait characterised by a keen interest in other people and external events, and venturing forth with confidence into the unknown" (Ewen, 1998). Individuals high in extraversion tend to be highly social, talkative, and affectionate (Schultz & Schultz, 1994) and commonly have numerous friendships and good social skills (McCrae & Costa, 1989).

Empirical evidence showed that agreeableness is significantly related to interpersonal performance (Mount, Barrick & Stewart, 1998). People who are high in agreeableness are generally friendly, good natured, cooperative, helpful, courteous, and flexible (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Witt, Burke, Barrick & Mount, 2002). John and Srivastava, (1999), stated that agreeableness encompass a 'prosocial and mutual orientation', which suggests that individuals who are high on agreeableness might be more likely to engage in helping behaviour than individuals low on this trait.

Mediating role of personality in POS and OCB relationship was the core objective of the study. The obtain results supported the full mediation of conscientiousness, extraversion and agreeableness in the relationship of POS with conscientiousness, courtesy, and altruism where as partial mediation with sportsmanship and civic virtue relationship. McManus et al., (2004) reported that personality traits are strong predictors of the perceived supportiveness of the working environment. People who are high in

conscientiousness generally perform better at work than those who are low in conscientiousness (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Better performance is more valued by organization. In return it leads high level of support from organization especially from management. Consequently high conscientious employees receive more support from organization because of their better performance.

Extroverts have a much more active social life than an introvert. Extroverts like talking about their social lives, while introverts like talking about their introverted interests. It has been found that extravert are highly social, talkative, and affectionate (Schultz & Schultz, 1994) and commonly have numerous friendships and good social skills (McCrae & Costa, 1989). Due to possession of such attributes they provided more support to their co-workers and in return they also receive more support from them. Therefore extrovert perceives more organisational support than introvert.

People who are high in agreeableness are generally found as friendly, good natured, cooperative, helpful, courteous, and flexible (Barrick and Mount, 1991). Branje, Lieshout & Aken (2005) showed that individuals who perceive their family members as more agreeable perceive more support from family members across relationships. Also, individuals who are perceived as more agreeable are perceived as more supportive. Further, individuals who are perceived as more agreeable perceive more support from the relationships. A study also reported that trait of 'agreeableness' is associated with perceptions of supportive work environments (McManus *et al.*, 2004)

It is obvious from the above discussion that POS is not a characteristic of jobs but of individual, different manager in the same job being no more similar in their reporting of POS. Perception of organisational support is more determine by the individual disposition (personality traits) rather than it actual existing condition in the organization. Thus we can say that personality traits like conscientiousness, extraversion and agreeableness mediate the POS-OCB relationship.

Implications

Basically this research study has a number of practical implications that can be transferred in organisational context. By better understanding the dispositional antecedents and mediators of organisational citizenship, organizations can begin to adopt strategies that are specifically aimed at finding individuals who display behaviors that assist specific individuals as well as the organization in general. These strategies include the use of selection procedures to screen individuals whose personality is related to citizenship behavior. In addition, organisational development interventions can be utilized that focus on changing the organisational environment to promote the innovative and spontaneous behavior such as interpersonal communication, cooperation, and teamwork that is traditionally beyond the specific role requirements of the organization.

Limitations

The result of study is limited to front level Indian male executives only. Further study should be done across the gender, hierarchy of management and country for the purpose of generalization. Although, well established model of mediated regression analysis ((Baron & Kenny, 1986) was used in the study but use of Structure equation modeling (SEM) might improve the results of mediation analysis

Conclusion

The present study stipulates that POS and personality traits (conscientiousness, extraversion and agreeableness) positively associated with OCB and Personality traits mediated the POS and OCB relationship.

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