

EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT, ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR AND WORK LIFE BALANCE

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ABSTRACT

The study is an extensive review of literature in management and related discipline to understand the relationship shared by Organizational Commitment, Organizational Citizenship Behaviour and Work Life Balance. The study compiles the recent findings to identify the underlying relationship and thereafter develop a model giving an outline of the relationship that have an impact on the individual elements. The study is beneficial as it explains the cause and effect of the individual element and the reaction that can be expected.

Keywords: *Organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behaviour, work life benefits and work life balance.*

Introduction:

Increase in cross-cultural interaction, generational diversity, unprecedented changes in the external and internal business environment has lead to a significant change in the organization structure and working. The contemporary organizations have been faced with job hopping, high employee turnover, flexibility of work, multi tasking , few common issues that exist and are daunting the contemporary organization causing huge losses to company (Evangelista, Lim, Rocafor. and Teh 2009). With such negative trends setting in, the organizations find it challenging to retain quality employees. This requires maintaining a superior relationship between employers and employees and to develop the commitment level of the employees by using different external and internal strategies. The contemporary work cohorts use their mind, heart and soul to take career decisions. They not only seek to develop themselves but also their surroundings. Under such circumstances it becomes imperative for the organizations to maintain healthy work practices and develop an amiable relationship with employees.

Purpose:

The study intends to identify the ways in which the organizations can develop the commitment of the employees. In an endeavour to do so the relationship between organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behaviour and work life balance is explored. Unfolding the relationship a few propositions have been suggested.

The article is categorized under four heads - the first part explains the concept of organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB), different dimensions, relationship with various aspects of individual performance and organizational health. The second part describes the different aspects of OC (organizational commitment) and their significance. Third part describes the concept of work life balance (and also offers insight on how this be utilized to convert or transform OC into OCB. A model describing the transformation of OC to OCB using WLB has been explained in the last part of the article.

Literature Review:

Organizational Citizenship Behaviour:

OCB and OC though are relatively new concepts to the management arena but have been extensively researched by practioners and academicians. OCB has been studied in the light of not only gender, personality types, age, qualification, culture, motivation, job satisfaction but also several interdisciplinary aspects including human resource management, hospitality, marketing management, economics, psychology, leadership, strategic management. (Demirer,Bilgin, Özcan and İşleyen (2009); Okediji, Esin, Sani and Umoh 2009; Liu, Huang and Chen)

The concept of OCB was first introduced by Organ (1988, 1990) who described it as a voluntary effort by the individuals, neither explicitly defined or enforced by the organization nor recognized by the formal reward system. OCB mostly is found to exist in employees with high organizational commitment. Yilmaz and Cokluk-Bokeoglu (2008) has investigated the relationship between OCB and

OC among 225 primary school teachers of Turkey. They identified that the perception about OCB and OC is moderate but positive among the primary school teachers. OCB though practiced universally it is perceived to vary with the cultural background of the individual. Variation in OCB is also found to exist between part time and full time employees (work status). Bilgin, Özcan and İşleyen (2009) investigated the relationship between Organizational Citizenship Behaviour and Organizational Commitment and also between organizational citizenship and general characteristics of the members like educational level, technology usage, size of business and membership to another cooperative. The study was conducted on 155 members of Çukobirlik, an agricultural marketing cooperative with a population of 11000 members. The participants were geographically dispersed over a wide region. The findings of the study were in alignment with similar studies of its kind. They found that organizational citizenship was positive and higher in organizationally committed employees. And employee characteristics like age, level of education and size of business were directly associated with OCB.

Past research has identified several dimensions of OCB such as altruism, conscientiousness, social and functional participation (Dyne et.al. 1994), organizational and interpersonal focused OCB (Williams and Anderson 1991) helping and voice construct (Dyne et. al. 1995; Dyne and Pine 1998). On similar a study of 257 restaurant employees by Stamper and Dyne (2001) tested the helping and voice dimension¹ of OCB on part time and full time employees. Helping construct was found to be positively correlated for full time employees whereas voice construct was exhibited by both the groups of employees. They also found that bureaucratic organizations restrict helping behaviour. Interestingly helping behaviour is found to be exhibited mostly by women employees.

Recent study by Sharma, Bajpai and Holani (2011) conducted on 200 managerial and non managerial staff from Public and Private sector in India to understand the degree of differences in terms of OCB between the employees of both the sectors and also the linearity of job satisfaction and OCB. They concluded that OCB was higher among the public sector employees as compared to private sector. The reason they identified was due to the high amount of competition that exist in the private sector. However job satisfaction was found to be positively correlated to OCB. Irrespective of the type of organization, job satisfaction was found to be increasing and enhanced by practising OCB. Practice of OCB, therefore usually exist from individual initiative rather than organizational (Bolino and Turnley 2005). This provides the lead towards the first proposition;

¹ Affiliative-promotive behaviour like interpersonal and cooperative behaviour is termed as helping OCB whereas, challenging-promotive behaviour is termed as voice behaviour such as making suggestion and recommendations.

Proposition 1:

OCB in different forms can be exhibited by employees irrespective of their work status, culture, gender and generation difference.

OCB is an important deciding factor of the organizational wellbeing, health and most significantly its productivity. Organizations' practising non-discriminating policies, human resource empowerment are the fittest and can avail the benefit of loyal and committed group of employees curbing down retrenchment, job dissatisfaction, absenteeism and lesser grievances. Ensher, Grant-Vallone and Donaldson (2001) have studied the perception of 366 ethnically diverse employees on discrimination shown by supervisors, co-workers and the organization as a whole on organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behaviour, job satisfaction and grievances. They identified a high level of organizational discrimination to be operative as compared to supervisor and co-workers. The discrimination faced by the employees predicted the level of organizational commitment and job satisfaction and also the extent of engagement in pro social activities (OCB). Disengagement from OCB revealed a negative impact on the organizational working and health. Another study of substantial importance by Nezakati et.al on OCB implementation through HRE is worth mentioning. Human resource empowerment exists when employees are capacitated with enhanced knowledge, skills and motivation for optimum performance of their roles and thus achieving organizational objectives. Organizations can recoup the benefit of higher satisfaction, skilled employees, reduce wastage, lesser supervision, and better work behaviour by practising empowerment. The model developed suggested the implementation of OCB by firstly preparing both individual (Knowledge, skills, competencies) and management (feedback, quality centres, evaluation system), secondly fulfilling the requirement like- communication of objectives, job description and enrichment, work environment; thirdly implementation through information sharing, independence, modifying the structure if needed; followed by the benefits of OCB that will be recouped by the organization in their innate form.

Organizational Commitment:

Organizational commitment refers to an employee's belief in the organization's goals and values, desire to remain a member of the organization and loyal towards the organization (Mowday et al. 1982; Hackett et al. 2001). With the increasing speed and scale of change in organizations, managers are constantly seeking ways to generate employee commitment, which translates to competitive advantage and improved work attitudes such as job satisfaction, performance, absenteeism, and reduce turnover intentions (Lok and Crawford 2001; Nehmeh 2009).

Allen and Meyer (1990) conceptualized a model of organizational commitment and identified three components:

- (1) affective;
- (2) continuance; and
- (3) normative commitment.

The affective component refers to the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in, the organization. Much of the research undertaken in the area of organizational commitment focused on affective commitment (Brunetto and Farr-Wharton 2003). The continuance component refers to commitment based on the costs that the employee associates with leaving the organization. The normative component refers to the employee's feeling of obligation to remain with the organization. Normative involvement has received less research attention. Many studies have revealed that the level of organizational and managerial support perceived by employees, extent of involvement in decision making (Porter et al. 1974; Mowday et al. 1982) feedback on job performance and job role (Mathieu and Zajac 1990), leadership behaviors (Brown 2003) and organizational culture influence whether a person has high or low organizational commitment. According to Liu, Huang and Chen only affective and normative commitment are good predictors of OCB.

The organizational commitment has evolved from the theory of Psychological contract (Shore and Tetrick 1994). Therefore the concept of Psychological contract² (Schein 1980 as cited in Shore and Tetrick 1994) should be considered by the contemporary organizations. Failure on the part of the organization to execute the obligations (transactional and relational obligations) may lead to discontentment and dismay among the employees which may upset their performance as well as relationship towards the organization.

Proposition 2a:

Affective and normative commitment can be generated through proper execution of psychological contract.

Proposition 2b:

Violation of psychological contract generates negative feelings which may in turn give rise to continuance commitment.

Organizational commitment has been found to differ across generations. Commitment towards organization (Generation X) as contrasted to commitment towards individual managers (idealistic values and human spirit) is exhibited by Generation Y employees (Alexander and Sysko 2009). Commitment of modern generation is in terms of the quality of work done and accomplishment thereof; commitment for this group of cohort cannot be

defined in terms of tenure or number of years spent (Evangelista et al. 2009). A low labour turnover does not ensure committed workforce. Employees with continuance commitment will reflect retention and not productivity (Nehmeh 2009).

The Transformation Element:

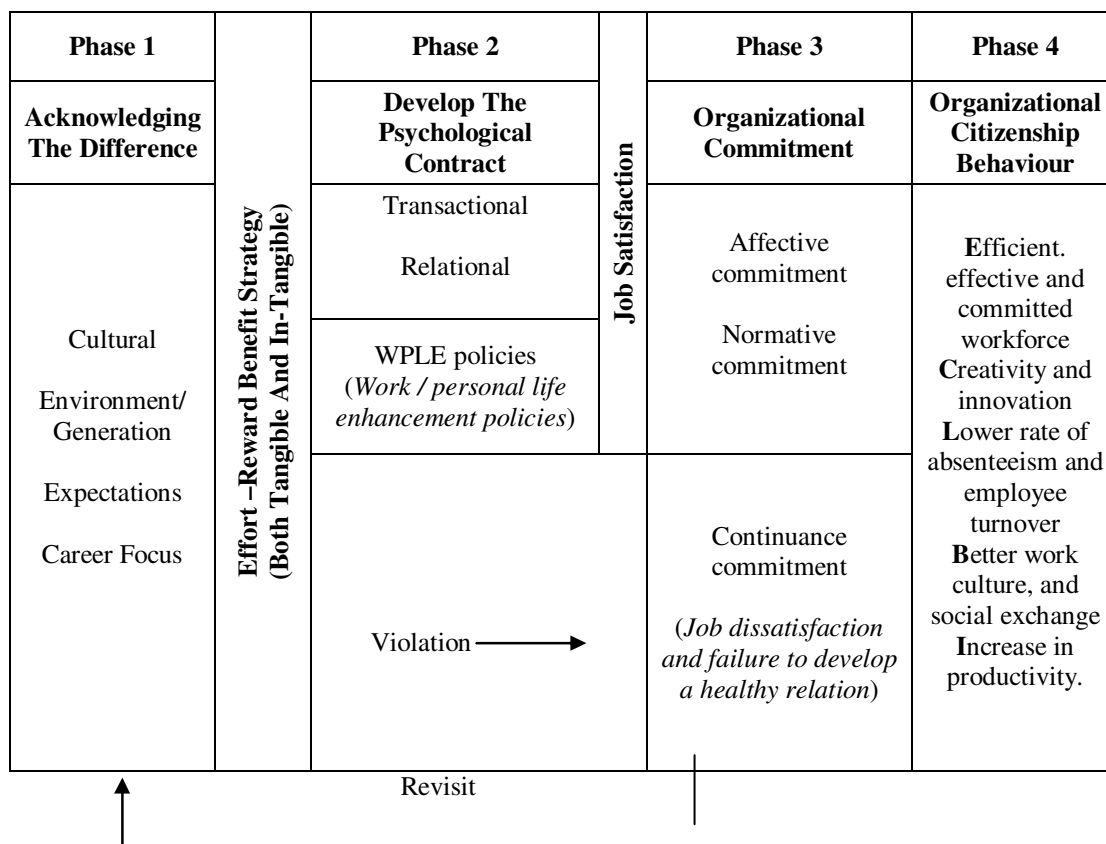
Building on the fact that commitment is influenced by the execution of psychological contract, the organizations can build on such obligations by practising proactive policies in terms of management, training and development and wellbeing of the employees through healthy work life policies. As rendering of a benefit by one party creates an obligation on the other. Therefore organizations should develop such practices which enable the creation of psychological obligation leading to a maturing relationship and better positive commitment among the employees (Robinson, Kraatz and Rousseau 1994)

Studies reflect that organizational performance is affected with the exercise of positive work life balance initiatives and practices (Lazăr, Osoian, Rațiu). In addition better training and development opportunities along with well defined work-life policies and empowerment practices increases the organizational commitment of employees which in turn enhances the organizational citizenship behaviour (Noor 2009). Work life policies consist of activities of both moral and social importance. Contemporary work life policies such as flexitime, telecommunicating, compressed work week, job sharing, dependent care assistance, schedule flexibility can reduce work life conflict and increase effectiveness at work and in accomplishing other roles (Evangelista et al. 2009). Studied also reflect a positive benefits of work life policies such as increased affective commitment, reduced turnover intention and also distant outcomes of customer satisfaction (Casper and Harris 2008 as cited in Evangelista et al. 2009).

Several models of Work Life balance exist of which a few has been extensively used in research studies. The model developed by Fisher-McAuley, Stanton, Jolton and Gavin (2003) is one such model. They have identified three dimensions namely: Work interference with personal life (WIPL the interference of work and personal life), Personal life interference with work (PLIW interference of personal life with work) and lastly work /personal life enhancement (WPLE enhancing work through personal life). WPLE is an ideal situation. The organizations should try to attain this through practising healthy work life policies. The overall work life balance will be effective only when there is lower level of interference (WIPL and PLIW) and higher level of enhancement (WPLE).

² Schein(1980) described it as a perception of exchange relationship between individual and the organization. It is also termed as promissory contract.

Figure 1: Towards OCB
(Source : Authors' contribution)



Proposition 3a:

OCB can create work family conflicts, job stress and role overload.

Proposition 3b:

Balanced effort to reward practices can produce greater OCB.

The above propositions can be supported by the findings that individuals practising OCB are mostly over-committed (Kinman and Jones, 2007) and hence suffer from role overload, job stress and work family conflict (Bolino and Turnley, 2005). These drawbacks can be minimized by balancing effort to reward relationship. Study by Kinman and Jones (2007) identified a strong interaction between effort- reward and effort –reward and commitment. Therefore organizations should strategically frame reward policies and work life practices to acknowledge and enhance this discretionary behaviour on the part of the employee.

The Building Blocks:

Building on the existing research the foundation blocks for developing OCB can be presented diagrammatically as in figure 1. The development of company's image that leads to development and modification of psychological contract has been found to undergo striking change during the initial phase of employment (Robinson et.al.1994). There

are several sources to this development which acts beyond the organization's control – the employees' cultural background, the work environment or culture operating in the organization, feedback from peers and co-workers, expectation of the employee from the organization, the career focus or orientation of the employee. Therefore a thorough understanding and background analysis of the elements should be made before recruiting and defining the policies.

The development of psychological obligation can be initiated by drawing a proper reward to effort strategy. Reward strategies should acknowledge not only the accomplishment of assigned task but also the voluntary effort of the worker. An adaptable work life policy (Work / Personal Life Enhancement) can be beneficial to both the parties. The policies should provide the employees to fulfil both their work expectation as well as family expectation.

The next phase is the development of the psychological contract / obligation (relational and transactional). The positive development of such obligations further generates job satisfaction which in turn develops organizational commitment (affective and normative). Such commitment can be observed in the behaviour of the employees, quality of service, the nature of interaction and exchange within the organization. However for the present generation this may not be reflected in the tenure of service to the organization. This is because the career focus of the

present generation is protean³ in nature. They will not continue with the organization until it guarantees growth, freedom, mobility, psychological success and work satisfaction (Hall 2004).

However the violation of such contract may lead to termination of the process leading to employee turnover. In certain cases these discontentment is not obvious. However such employees do not show any extra-role behaviour. Such employees are said to have continuous commitment which do not bring any advantage to the organizations. Under such circumstances the company policies should be flexible enough to revise the reward strategies.

The reason of continuance commitment of the employee may be

- lack of employment options or job opportunity,
- challenge or responsibility avoidance
- easy to continue with the organization without being observed.

In all the above cases the organization will face the consequences. Research on OCB has always focused on the “good soldier” neglecting the role of “good general” (Robinson et.al.1994). The model depicts the fact that OCB can be generated only when the perception and differences of the employees can be reciprocated by the organization. Therefore the benefits of OCB to be achieved necessitate a two way exchange only then it can be beneficial.

Conclusion:

The study identifies that conversion of job satisfaction to organization citizenship behaviour can be developed through 4 different phases. The performance of OCB though highly individual and voluntary in nature it can be generated by following the four different steps. Acknowledging the differences gives the lead to the development of the positive psychological contract followed by satisfaction on the part of the employees. This in the long run generates commitment and loyalty of the employees which in turn is reflected through voluntary / citizenship behaviour of the employees.

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