

Influence of National Culture on OCB

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Abstract: Pro social behaviour called Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) is the voluntary behaviour that is exhibited by an employee which is useful for the improvement of the productivity however not rewarded by the formal reward system of the organisation. Even though a lot of research studies have been dedicated to find out what basically makes an employee to go for extra role behaviour, the role of external factor like culture of the country on this behaviour is not studied much. This paper tries to find out the relation between the cultural background of the individual and the level of OCB exhibited by the individual and few organisational strategies to improve the OCB in the employees of the organisation.

Keywords: Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB), National culture.

1. INTRODUCTION

OCB is defined as the extra role behaviour which one does out of his own interest and desires and not for any explicit reward considerations. According to Organ, (1988), OCB is defined as the behaviours of the employees of the organisation that improve the efficiency of the organisation however are not rewarded by the organisation for the exhibition of such behaviours. This extra role behaviour may be like helping a fellow colleague in his personal or organisational issues or it can be some voluntary activity undertaken to rectify some of the pressing problems in the organisation. There have been a lot of studies that are undertaken to probe what causes or forces an employee to engage him in the pro social behaviour. Motivation, learning, attitude, perception and many other behavioural constructs and their impact on the OCB is discussed. However, there are few studies exploring how the culture of an employee has an impact on his citizenship behaviour.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

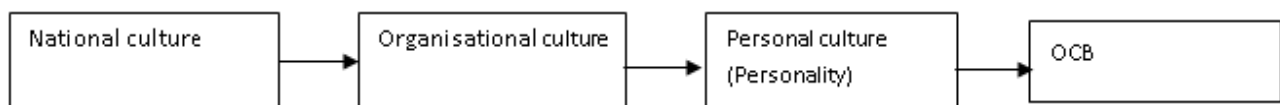
Few studies tried to explore the relationships between the OCB and culture. Study by Moorman and Blakely (1995) on "Individualism and collectivism as an Individual Difference Predictor of Organizational Citizenship Behaviour" found out that the individuals from collectivist culture are more likely to engage in Organisational Citizenship Behaviour. Basically cultural values are the ideas people share about what is desirable in the social context. These values can be explicit or implicit. However, whatever be the values people have, it will be carried by them to their workplace and will have a greater influence in their behaviour. In a particular situation whether to help his fellow colleague or remain silent comes basically from what the country's culture has taught them. The cultural values differ from one country to other. Here is where one talks about individualistic culture and collectivist culture. In individualistic culture, individual performance and ambitions and career growth are stressed more and in this process the employees focus more in their individual career growth and there is less concern for the fellow colleague. Hence in this types of cultures, citizenship behaviours are least exhibited. However, organisations cannot grow with one person working in the organisation, it is necessary to make the teams work. Employees from the collectivist cultural background seem to work in collaboration with others and are expected to exhibit more pro social behaviour.

Hui and Rousseau, (2004) in their study tried to explore the relationship between psychological contract and OCB. The research is conducted in China. The employees in China view employment based on trust and support. They develop a relation or association with the company to which they are working. Hence, this culture acted as a factor that will increase the incidences of OCB behaviour by the employees of the organisation.

According to Schwartz, culture is considered to be socially accepted norms that are used to motivate the different behaviours of the individuals. According to this perception, the cultural norms dictate many of the constructs of OCB(Schwartz, 1992). It may motivate someone to help one another or abstain from doing so.

Another study by Organ and Lingl,(1995) maintains that the national culture moderates the relationship between the personality, job satisfaction and OCB. Their study with samples from US and UK found no significant difference between the OCB exhibited by the people of these two countries.

Model:



Hence, from the various research studies one can arrive at the decision that the pro social behaviour exhibited by the individual is because of the individual culture of the person which can be called as the personality of the individual.

Personality:

Personality can be defined as the distinct set of characteristics that form the individual's core characteristics (Kreitler, 2013). Personality is the important factor which decides whether a person will voluntarily help the individuals in their life. The two employees working in the same organisation whose country is the same and the organisational policies are the same, where one chooses to adjust his schedule to help his fellow colleague whereas another decides not to adjust is because of the personal organisation of values, the perception of the individual towards life and towards the individual who seeks the help. Hence if the organisation try to develop OCB in their work culture, it is essential for the organisations to select those kind of people who are matured enough to help the other people in the organisation. Hence, the recruitment process should be designed in such a way that it measures the pro social behaviour in the individuals who are seeking employment in the organisation.

Organisational culture:

However, the personal culture or the personality of the individual in the organisation is shaped by the organisational culture that is developed and maintained by the organisation. Organisational culture is the set of beliefs, values and norms that are shared by the members of the organisation and supported by the management of the organisation(Alvesson, 2012). Sometimes the personality of the individuals gets modified according to the policies and culture followed in the organisation. When the organisation focuses more on task completion rather than extending equal concern for the employees of the organisation, the employees also are busy with completing their own tasks rather than attending to the help sought out by the colleagues.

National Culture:

The culture that is followed in the organisation is dependent on to which country the organisation belongs to and in which country the organisation operates. The organisations manufacture the products that are acceptable to the culture of the nation or country(Martin, 2001). And the organisational policies are framed considering the culture of the country. The organisation may not be able to sell the products that are against the culture of the people or the country. The organisations also modify their products and service according to the culture of the country. Hence, the culture of the country plays a pivotal role in deciding the OCB characteristics exhibited by the employees of the organisation.

This point is supported by the research by Moorman and Blakely (1995), which states that the people from collectivist culture are more engaged in OCB behaviour rather than people who are coming from the Individualistic behaviour. One cannot separate the individual from the culture to which he belongs to. When an organisation appoints an individual, it not

only appoints the knowledge, talents alone. It employees the individual as a whole and the core part of the individual is coming from the culture of the country to which he belongs to.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Developing the OCB in an individual is a difficult affair. Basically because the individual's characteristics are designed by the culture to which he belongs to. When the culture doesn't support pro social behaviour, the organisations cannot expect the person to be socially oriented or to exhibit the pro social behaviour. Hence if the organisations expect the employees to show OCB they have to select the people from the culture which supports working as team and growing together.

Another suggestion is that the people may be from the culture which supports the pro social behaviour. However the organisations culture like task orientation with little concern for people in the organisation may make the employees to adapt to the organisational situations. Hence, irrespective of their cultural background, they may abstain from exhibiting the OCB. Hence the organisations that are willing to increase the OCB in their organisations may have to reframe their policies in such a way that the people are encouraged to show off their pro social behaviour. Since OCB is a voluntary behaviour exhibited by the individual with no formal organisational rewards the organisational policies should be more flexible to encourage such kind of behaviours in the organisation.

The only reward for the employees will be the satisfaction and the recognition given by the organisation for the exhibition of pro social behaviour. While considering the satisfaction, if the employee is from a national culture that supports pro social behaviour and if the organisation doesn't encourage such behaviours, there will be internal conflict in the mind of the employee whether to follow what the mind says which is developed from the culture of the country to which the employee belongs or to follow the organisations policies. This internal conflict may lead to de-motivation and decreased productivity(Ashton, 2013). By recognising the employees for their extra role behaviour, the organisation can reduce the internal conflict which will help the employee to improve his productivity.

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