

ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR AND ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING CLIMATE RELATIONSHIP

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ABSTRACT

Global competition highlights the importance of innovation, flexibility, responsiveness, and cooperativeness for long-term organizational success. Innovative and spontaneous behaviours' vitality is revealed in protecting organization in an ever-changing environment. As a necessity, organizations will become more dependent on employees who are willing to contribute effective organizational functioning, regardless of their formal role requirements. Employee behaviours like citizenship behaviours become more important and even crucial for organization's survival. In this study, organizational citizenship behaviours as voluntary acts beyond the role specifications and its relationship with organizational learning climates are studied. Learning climate characteristics and the antecedents of organizational citizenship behaviours are compared and as a result of this comparison; organizational learning climate is explained as a contextual factor that facilitate employees to show citizenship behaviours.

Key words: Organizational citizenship behaviour, Organizational learning

INTRODUCTION

Organizations always have long-term plans but in a benevolent environment they don't very much need to think about the future of organizations, they are assured by their ways of doing business. But when environment begins to change; they are confused about the decreased organizational performance and profitability. Continuous change proved the fact that gained superiority does not give an advantage unless it can't be duplicated by others and these conditions -we called shortly global competition- forced organizations to learn new ways of business rather than apply known solutions (Baldwin et.al., 1997). Of course, it is not easy to play a game if the rules are constructed while you are playing. So when organizations search for unknown business development in an unpredictable environment, they have to generate the knowledge to construct new mechanism for organizational goals accomplishment.

As Baldwin et.al., (1997:47) said "*when the speed of change exceeds the limits of our system to make sense of it, the change becomes unpredictable*", these conditions stress the concepts -innovation, flexibility, responsiveness- that organizations should use to adapt and enact to environment for sustained advantage in long term. In the last decade, organizations search for work behaviours beyond the traditional means of performance. In this perspective, the importance of learning concept is revealed. Organizations learn by through individuals but if they want to preserve the knowledge while individuals come and go, knowledge have to be shared in organization and become a part of work behaviours, procedures, politics etc. that we can talk about an organizational learning.

As a necessity, organizational learning mechanisms and employees' behaviours as first step of organizational learning have to be well understood. Organizations will become more dependent on employees who are willing to contribute effective

organizational functioning, regardless of their formal role requirements. In this respect, employee behaviours like citizenship behaviours become more important and even crucial for organization's survival. In this study, organizational citizenship behaviours and its relationship with organizational learning climates is studied. Learning climate characteristics and the antecedents of organizational citizenship behaviours is compared and as a result of this comparison; organizational learning climate is explained as a contextual factor that facilitate employees to show citizenship behaviours.

ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING

With an open system perspective, organizational survival depends on the relationship with its environment and learning is the main step of adaption and reaction of organizations. Organizational learning or learning organizations are become highlighted concepts as organizations need to take action beyond the traditional ways of doing business that become useless in changing environment. As environment becomes more dynamic nearly for all businesses in this global competition, organizations need to adapt and act quickly to keep up with at least the speed of change. Environmental conditions make organizations to have stronger incentives to renovate conditions. Organizational learning involves new responses or actions that are based on the environmental changes interpretation (Daft&Weick, 1984). Continuous improvement requires a commitment to learning (Garvin, 1993).

Luthans (2001) said that portraying an organization as a learning system is not new, Frederick W. Taylor tried to transfer learning to workers by his scientific management methods to increase productivity. However, organizational learning usually attributed to Chris Argyris and his colleagues work (1978) (single-loop and double-loop learning) and become popular with Peter Senge's study (adaptive and generative learning). Peter Senge described learning organization in his book "Fifth Discipline" (Senge, 1990) as "where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together". Organizational culture is taken as a major characteristic that built up learning organizations (Luthans, 2001). The importance of learning in an organization is mostly depend on how much value is given to it, in organizational culture, to what degree it is supported by cultural norms or to what degree it is operationalized by procedures or systems (eg. reward system, performance evaluation). Organizational culture which takes learning crucial for survival set mechanisms like teamwork, empowerment that depends on employees. Learning organizations are characterized by human-oriented cultural values (Luthans, 2001:113); new ideas are important and rewarded, mistakes are viewed as learning opportunities, all employees benefit from learning and everyone can be a source of useful ideas. Organizational learning is an endless process so we can not talk about organizations that fully learned. As a result of this, learning climates that support continuous development are taken in concern to make a comparative study with organizational citizenship behaviors.

ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING CLIMATES

Schneider et al. (1994:18) distinguish climate as “*the atmosphere that employees perceive is created in their organizations by practices, procedures and rewards*” from culture “*the broader pattern of an organization’s mores, values and beliefs*”. Honey and Mumford (1996:95-96) describe learning climate as the behaviours and practices involved in continuous development are actively encouraged and managers take a key role to develop learning climate.

Organizational climate is refers to employees’ perception of work environment, not simply the value-based perceptions (likes or dislikes) but the way that how employee describes the workplace (Altman, 2000). For a clear cut understanding of organizational climate, it is necessary to identify the types of work environment that set the surrounding for employees’ perception of climate. Recent research has identified over 460 areas but to make a comparable study, the five general category in Altman’s (2000) study is taken in this study. These are:

- Job characteristics focus on the requirements of a person's job. For example, autonomy of an employee, the amount of challenge of work, the level of importance a person feels about the contribution of his or her job to the overall success of the company.
- Role characteristics focus on the role a person plays within a department or organization. For example, role ambiguity and role conflict.
- Organizational characteristics focus on the qualities or traits associated with the organization. For example, innovativeness of a company, fairness of company's policies and procedures.
- Leader characteristics focus on the qualities associated with a company's managers and leaders. For example, supportiveness of managers to facilitate employees’ work, effectiveness of managers in setting and emphasizing employee goals, and trust to the manager.
- Work group characteristics focus on the relationship within workgroups, departments, or teams. For example, the importance of teamwork, the cooperation of employees within a workgroup, or the willingness of a team to accept and integrate a new team member.

The characteristics of learning climates can briefly summarized as (Senge, 1990, Cunnigham & Iles, 2002, Luthans 2001):

- Common purpose,
- Empowered employees
- Openness to new ideas
- Supportive leadership
- Promoting dialogue and enquiry
- Effective feedback
- Organizational support systems
- Perception of fairness

ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR

The challenge of global competition highlights the importance of the concepts such as innovation, flexibility responsive to ever-lasting change. Organizations seek new areas for sustainable competitive advantage. Human resources are the most crucial factor to create advantage that can not be easily duplicated by rivals and specific for each organization. Work behaviours like organizational citizenship behaviours are receiving more attention as they contribute to effective functioning of organization.

Organizational citizenship behaviours are the kind that are beyond the traditional measures of job performance and can be conceptualized as positive organizationally relevant behaviours of individual organization members (Van Dyne et al., 1994). Organ (1988:4) defined organizational citizenship behaviour as *“individual behaviour that is discretionary, nor directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and in aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization. By discretionary, we mean that the behaviour is not enforceable requirement of the role or the job description, that is, the clearly specifiable terms of the person’s employment contract with the organization; the behaviour is rather a matter of personal choice, such that its omission is nor generally understood as punishable.”*

Podsakoff et al. (2000) made a literature review of organizational citizenship behaviour and indicated almost potentially 30 different forms of citizenship behaviour have been identified. They classified citizenship behaviours into seven common themes to deal with conceptual overlaps between dimensions. The seven dimensions of organizational citizenship behaviour categorized by Podsakoff et al (2000:516- 526) are:

- Helping behaviour involves voluntarily helping others with, or preventing the occurrence of, work-related problems (p.516)
- Sportsmanship defined as “a willingness to tolerate the inevitable inconveniences and impositions of work without complaining” (Organ 1990b:96)
- Organizational loyalty involves promoting the organization to outsiders, protecting and defending it against external threats, and remaining committed to it even under adverse conditions (p.517).
- Organizational compliance internalization and acceptance of the rules, regulations and procedures which results in a scrupulous adherence to them, even when no one observes or monitors compliance (p.517)
- Individual initiative is voluntary acts of creativity and innovation designed to improve one’s task or the organization’s performance persisting with extra enthusiasm and effort to accomplish one’s job (p.524)
- Civic virtue is willingness to participate actively in governance of organization (p. 525).
- Self development includes voluntary behaviours employees engage into improve their knowledge, skills and abilities (p. 525)

THE ANTECEDENTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR

Organizational citizenship behaviours are voluntary acts in their nature, these behaviours are a matter of personnel choice (Organ, 1988), so most research focused on the individual characteristics of OCB. But as individuals are a part of a group, department or a company we can not think the behaviours without the context they are come out. Podsakoff et al (2000) identified the contextual factors as task characteristics, organizational characteristics and leadership characteristics.

The antecedents of OCB (Podsakoff et al., 2000:526-533):

- Employee characteristics: Employee satisfactions, organizational commitment, perception of fairness are viewed as general moral factors (Organ and Ryan, 1995) that appeared to be important determinants of citizenship behaviors. Role perceptions are also found to have significant relationship with citizenship behaviors. Role ambiguity and role conflict are known to be related to employee satisfaction and satisfaction related to citizenship behavior.
- Task characteristics: task feedback and intrinsically satisfying tasks were positively related, while task routinization was negatively related to citizenship behaviors.
- Organizational characteristics: Group cohesiveness and perceived organizational support was found to be significantly related to citizenship behaviors.
- Leadership characteristics: leadership has a key role as an antecedent of OCB. Supportive and transformational leadership behaviors, leader-member exchange theory had significant and consistent positive relationship with OCBs.

ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING CLIMATES AND ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR RELATIONSHIP

In this ever-lasting change, organizations have to be more adaptive and competitive actors in their businesses that organizational survival mostly depends on organization's capability of external adaptation and internal integration of organization. Organizations will necessarily become more dependent on individuals who are willing to contribute to successful change, regardless of their job requirements (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2004). Organizational learning as a relative property of organizations denotes the extent to which use data to guide behavior as to promote the adaptation (Edmondson & Moingeon, 1998:9) through internal integration of organization. Organizational culture is an integration tool of shared values, beliefs that shape how organization members feel, think and behave (Schein, 1990). These norms, beliefs and values that make up culture most probably serve to provide opportunities for organizational citizenship behavior (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2004:283). Organizational learning values that are embedded in organizational culture foster OCBs.

As Senge (1993) demonstrated, organizational learning fosters a sense of commonality of purpose and strategic thinking and develops organizational

system approach. Individual's readiness to help a colleague or cooperate with other coworkers might develop team identity. This creates an environment that enhances one's tendency to show OCBs.

Table-1 shows organizational learning characteristics and the antecedents of OCB that are classified according to the work environment categories to see the similarities between them.

Table- 1: Organizational learning climate and organizational citizenship behavior relationship

Work environment categories (Altman, 2000)	Organizational climate characteristics (Senge, 1990; Luthans, 2001; Cunningham&Iles, 2002)	The antecedents of OCB (Podsakoff et al., 2000)
Task characteristics	- The contribution of job to the company - Empowerment, autonomy - Challenging job	- Task feedback (+) - Intrinsically satisfying task(+) - Task routinization (-)
Role characteristics	- Role ambiguity - Role conflict	- Role ambiguity (-) - Role conflict (-)
Organizational characteristics	- Organizational support systems - Perceived fairness	- Perceived organizational support (+)
Leadership characteristics	- Supportive leadership	- Supportive leadership behavior(+) - Transformational leadership behavior (+) -Leader-member exchange behaviour (+)
Work group characteristics	- Importance of teamwork	- cooperation and coordination in teamwork(+)

The (+) and (-) signs are used to show the effects of antecedents in revealing OCBs. For example task feedback and intrinsically satisfying tasks are significant determinants of OCB, increases OCBs and task routinization is negatively related to OCB (Podsakoff et al., 2000). As shown in Table-1, organizational learning climate characteristics are mostly similar with the antecedents of OCB that enhances the OCBs. According to this comparison, organizational learning climate characteristics can be thought as hygiene factors that are associated with the surrounding or peripheral aspects of the job (Luthans, 2001:263). Perceived organizational learning climate as job content not properly determines the appearance of OCBs but if there is a perceived learning climate that will enhance OCBs.

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