

The Relationships Between Job Resources, Job Demands and Teachers' OCB: Concept Paper

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OCB has been implemented in organizations for their effective functioning, and has promoted such behavior in public and private organizations. In fact, interest in citizenship behavior has expanded from the field of organizational citizenship behavior to a variety of different domains and disciplines, and most of them are conducted in commercial settings. However, there remains a paucity of research on OCB among human service professions especially among school teachers particularly in Malaysia.

Field of Research: Organizational Behavior, Malaysian teachers

1. Introduction

In today's highly competitive environment, organizations are constantly looking for new ways to maximize employee's work efforts. With the increased use of information technology, still there is lacuna in the effective functioning of the organization (Garg & Rastogi, 2006). It is now firmly believed that the effective functioning of an organization depends largely on employees' efforts that extend beyond formal role requirements. This paper will focus on the relationships between job resources which include supervisor support and peer support, job demands which include role conflict and students' misbehavior, and teachers' organizational citizenship behavior in secondary schools in Malaysia.

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) was first used by Organ to denote organizationally beneficial behavior of workers that was not prescribed but occurs freely to help others achieve the task at hand (Bateman & Organ, 1983). OCB is defined as "performance that supports the social and psychological environment in which task performance takes place" (Organ, 1997, p. 95). The practical importance of OCBs is that they can improve organizational efficiency and effectiveness by contributing to resource transformation, innovation and adaptability (Organ, 1988; Williams & Anderson, 1991; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine & Bacharach, 2000).

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Malaysia aims to become the regional hub for educational excellence. One of the key thrusts in the Ninth Malaysia Plan (2006 – 2010) relates to knowledge, innovation and values-which will be the key determinants of Malaysia future success as a knowledge-based economy. The Ninth Malaysia Plan for the year 2006 up to 2010 has placed a lot of importance on education, training and also life long learning. In line with the greater focus on human development under the Ninth Malaysia Plan, a total of RM40.3 billion will be allocated for the development expenditure for education and training (Ninth Malaysia Plan, 2006-2010, 2006). Therefore, teachers play pivotal role in making sure this vision is materialized as they constitute the oil that lubricates the academic performance of the students. In addition, schools will become more dependent on teachers who are willing to contribute to the schools' success regardless of their formal job requirements. This is because most of the time, official obligations and procedures are not enough for organizational effectiveness (Yucel, 2008).

Since the performance of schools is usually determined by the state of teachers' psychological well-being and their commitments (Yucel, 2008), one question that arises is with regard to the number of teachers who are actually willing to go over and above their call of duty, especially in secondary schools in Malaysia. This is based on several reports related to teaching profession such as the issues on commitment to teaching, turnover intention and burnout. In 2005, the National Union of Teaching Profession (NUTP) conducted a survey among 9,000 primary, secondary and technical school teachers and it was revealed that 67% of Malaysian teachers suffered from stress. In a recent research conducted by Segumpan and Bahari (2006) among 1209 teachers from 14 secondary schools in Malacca, it was found that 57.2% of the respondents had high stress level with respect to students' misbehavior. Hence, it could be concluded that the reason why some teachers in schools are not performing OCB is because they are suffering from burnout. This is in line with Yucel's (2008) suggestion that the level of burnout can explain why some teachers failed to demonstrate OCB. Thus, this paper aims to review the relevant literature and subsequently propose a conceptual model linking job resources, job demands and organizational citizenship behavior.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) represents individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization (Organ, 1988, p. 4). OCB consists of informal contributions that participants can choose to make or withhold, without regards to considerations of sanctions or formal incentives. They are often described as behaviors that "go above and beyond the call of duty". The employees who perform citizenship behaviors are considered "good soldiers" (Organ, 1988) for their effort contributed without formal exchange

or reward in the employment contract. Organ (1988) provided a multi-dimensional scale of OCB. The scale consists of five dimensions that make up the OCB construct which are altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy and civic virtue. Graham (1989) proposed a four-dimension model of OCB consisting of interpersonal helping, individual initiative, personal industry, and loyal boosterism. Williams and Anderson (1991) found a two-dimensional structure of OCBs, and defined it as: (1) benefits directed at the organization in general, such as performing duties that are not required but which improve organizational image and performance (OCBO), and (2) benefits directed at individuals within the organization, such as altruism and interpersonal helping colleagues who have heavier work loads (OCBI).

Although most scholars agree on the multidimensionality of the OCB construct, a review of the literature reveals a lack of consensus about its dimensionality (Somech & Ron, 2007). Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine and Bachrach (2000) identified almost 30 potentially different forms of OCB and categorized them into seven dimensions based on prior conceptualizations and taxonomies of OCB (Organ, 1988, 1997; Van Dyne et al., 1994). The seven dimensions are helping behavior, sportsmanship, organizational loyalty, organizational compliance, individual initiative, civic virtue and self developments.

As for the educational setting, Somech and Drach-Zahavy (2000) proposed three components of teachers' OCB. The first component consists of OCB towards the school. OCB towards the school refer to behavior beneficial to a larger and more impersonal organization. Somech and Drach-Zahavy (2000) suggest that these behaviors represent innovative and initiative activities, which are not part of the job description. The second component consists of OCB towards team member. These OCB represent behaviors intentionally directed at helping teachers in one's own team and refer to behavior beneficial to one's own group of colleagues. The third component consists of OCB towards students. These OCB are behaviors directly and intentionally aimed at improving the quality of teaching and helping students to improve their achievements.

There has been considerable interest in the subject of OCB in business and organizational studies, however, there remains a paucity of research on OCB among school teachers (Oplatka, 2006). According to Hannam and Jimmieson (2002), OCB in teaching and other helping professions has largely been ignored. Most of the OCB literature prefers to focus on employees in more commercial settings such as hotels, (Chiu & Tsai, 2006; Hemdi & Nasuridin, 2008; Nasuridin, 2001), sales (Ackfeldt & Coote, 2005; MacKenzie, Podsakoff & Ahearne, 1998; Netemeyer, Boles, McKee & McMurrian, 1997), banks (Emmerik, Jawahar & Stone, 2005; Ishak, 2004; Karatepe & Uludag, 2008) and manufacturing industry (Hsieh & Hsieh, 2003; Organ & Lingl, 1995) rather than those who work in large bureaucratic systems and whose duties are often intensely interpersonal (such as

teaching). Hence, this paper hopes to give an insight of OCB in a non-commercial setting particularly in the education setting in Malaysia.

Previous research that has been conducted on OCB in the education setting conceptualized this behavior in several dimensions. The most common ones are the five dimensions (altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy and civic virtue) proposed by Organ (1988) and also two dimensions of OCB (OCBO and OCBI) proposed by Williams and Anderson (1991). However, this paper will focus on two dimensions of OCB specifically for the teaching profession following Williams and Anderson (1991), which are OCB targeted at the school as OCBO (towards the organization), and OCB targeted at the students and peers as OCBI (towards the individual).

2.2 Job Resources

Job resources refer to those physical, psychological social or organizational aspects of the job that either/or (a) reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs; (b) are functional in achieving work goals and (c) stimulate personal growth, learning and development (Bakker, Demerouti & Euwema, 2005). Resources may be provided at a variety of different levels within an organization. For example, at the organizational level, job resources include pay, career opportunities, or job security. Interpersonal resources may be provided in the form of supervisor and/or co-worker support, or a positive team climate. This paper focuses on job resources arising from social context which are supervisor support and peer support. It is assumed that when job resources increase, job demands and the associated psychological cost can be reduced which will result in better functioning in the organization and thus encourage teachers to engage in OCB.

2.2.1 Supervisor Support and OCB

Supervisory support can be defined as the degree to which supervisors value subordinates contributions and care about subordinates' well-being (Kottke & Sharafinski, 1988). The importance of supervisory relationship on employee attitude and behavior has been the subject of numerous studies. Past research has demonstrated that in general, higher supervisor support can enhance employees displays of OCB (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine & Bacharach, 2000). The findings from two meta-analyses conducted by Podsakoff, Mackenzie and Bommer (1996) and Le Pine, Erez and Johnson (2002) confirmed a modest positive correlation between supervisor support and OCB. The findings revealed that supervisor support is helpful in motivating employees' OCB. Somech and Ron (2007) conducted a study on 104 teachers in elementary schools in Haifa, Israel and the results showed that there was a positive and significant relationship between perceived supervisor support and four dimensions of OCB which are altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship and civic virtue. According to Blau (1964),

people always seek to reciprocate those who benefit them. When a supervisor engages in helping behavior toward an employee, the employee incur obligations to repay the supervisor so that the exchange is mutually beneficial. On the hand, if an employee's sense of support from the supervisor is violated, he or she will subsequently reduce or withhold OCB (Van Yperen, Berg, & Willering, 1999). Therefore, this study proposes that:

Proposition 1a: Supervisor support will be positively related to teachers' OCBO.

Proposition 1b: Supervisor support will be positively related to teachers' OCBI.

2.2.2 Peer Support and OCB

Studies have connected either positive or negative behaviors originating from coworkers to individual work outcomes other than health (Duffy, Ganster & Pagon, 2002; Sherony & Green, 2002). Based on a study conducted by Shann (1998), it was reported that teachers in high achieving school reported more satisfaction with teacher-teacher relationship than those from the lower achieving schools. A study conducted by Popkewitz and Myrdal (1991) also showed that teacher collaboration leads to increased feelings of teacher effectiveness and satisfaction. Ladd and Henry (2000) conducted a survey among blue-collar and white-collar workers in the United State and the results revealed that coworkers support is significantly related to OCB targeted at individuals. George (1990) and George and James (1993) pointed out that coworkers' behavior is found to influence positive affectivity. From the literature review and discussion, the following propositions are offered:

Proposition 2a: Peer support will be positively related to teachers' OCBO.

Proposition 2b: Peer support will be positively related to teachers' OCBI.

2.3 Job Demands

Job demands refers to those physical, social or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical or mental effort and are therefore associated with certain physiological and psychological costs (Demerouti, et al., 2001). Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) contend that two sets of variables can be distinguished in any kind of job, namely, job demands and job resources. Job demands represent characteristics of the job that potentially evoke strain, in cases where they exceed the employee's adaptive capability. Job demands are the tasks that need to be done. More specifically, job demands refer to physical, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological effort on the part of the employee and are therefore associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs (e.g. exhaustion). Examples of job demands in an organizational environment include: high workloads, role overload, role conflict, time pressures and shift work. Although job demands are not necessarily negative, they may turn into job stressors when meeting those demands requires a high

degree of effort (Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2003; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). In this paper, job demands will focus on role overload and students' misbehavior.

2.3.1. Role conflict and OCB

Role conflict refers to conflict that occur when people face competing role requirements (Rizzo, House & Lirtzman, 1970). When individuals are required to perform two or more conflicting role requirements, they are likely to experience job stress. A large body of empirical evidence has indicated that role conflict and role ambiguity constitutes stress-inducing circumstances across a variety of work organizations (Van Sell, Brief & Schuler, 1981). Interestingly, several research found that role conflict has significant relationships of job performance (e.g. Fried, Ben-David, Tieg, Avital & Yeverchياهو, 1998; Singh, 1998; Soon, 2006).

A number of empirical studies have investigated the impact of role conflict and job performance. However, the findings of these studies have reported mixed results. Brown and Peterson (1993), in their meta-analytic study reported that employees having a lack of information about their job-related duties and responsibilities display decreased performance in the workplace. In their study, these researchers did not find any significant relationship between role conflict and sales person performance. Tang and Ibrahim (1998) conducted a study on two samples of 155 public personnel in the southeastern U.S and 378 workers in the Middle East (Egypt and Saudi Arabia). The findings of both samples revealed that low work related stress is related to compliance. MacKenzie, Podsakoff and Ahearne (1998) showed that salespeople reported lower job performance when they were confronted with role conflict.

Interestingly, other empirical studies demonstrated that a positive relationship between role conflict and job performance (Babin & Boles, 1996; Babakus, Cravens, Johnston & Moncrief, 1999). In addition, Thompson and Werner (1997) conducted a study on 169 individuals of MBA program and the findings revealed that role conflict was significantly related to three dimensions of OCB (interpersonal helping, personal industry, individual initiatives) even when the mediators were added into the relationship. In Malaysia, a study conducted by Yew (2006) in 15 private institutions of higher learning in Penang revealed that role conflict had significant and negative relationship with all five dimensions of OCB (conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, civic virtue and altruism). Therefore, this study proposes that :

Proposition 3a: Role conflict will be negatively related to OCBO.

Proposition 3b: Role conflict will be negatively related to OCBI.

2.3.2. Students' Misbehavior and OCB

Teachers spend most of their working hours with their students. Therefore, it is not surprising that the quality of their students would have an impact on their attitudes and behavior. Students were found to be the major source of satisfaction/dissatisfaction among teachers (Borg & Riding, 1991; Quaglia, Marion & McIntyre, 1991; Dinham & Scott, 2000). Students' behavior is known to be related to the teacher's satisfaction and satisfaction is related to organizational citizenship behavior (Podsakoff et al., 2000). Therefore, it is assumed that when teachers are satisfied with the students, they will be willing to perform OCB.

In a study conducted by Borg and Riding (1991) among secondary school teachers in Malta, it was found that teachers who taught students with higher ability reported greater job satisfaction than those who taught the lower ability group. Quaglia, Marion and McIntyre (1991) found significant differences between satisfied and dissatisfied teachers concerning their attitudes towards their students' academic orientation. Friedman (1995) studied students behavior patterns which included disrespect, sociability and attentiveness. It was revealed that disrespect and inattentiveness (unwilling to study and failing examinations) were salient stress factors for teachers.

In Malaysia, the problem of students' misbehavior is reported to be on the rise (Azizah, 1997). Naina (2004) conducted a study among 386 secondary school teachers and it was revealed that students' quality had significant relationship with turnover intentions. Thus, it is anticipated that students' behavior could be a significant factor in predicting teachers' OCB. The above discussion shows that students' misbehavior usually lead to teachers stress and dissatisfaction. It is assumed that teachers who are stressful and dissatisfied with their students' behavior will not be willing to perform OCB. Therefore, the following proposition is offered:

Proposition 4a: Students' misbehavior will be negatively related to OCBO.

Proposition 4b: Students' misbehavior will be negatively related to OCBI.

2.4 Conceptual model

Based on the preceding discussion, a conceptual framework is proposed as depicted in Figure 1. To conceptualize the relationship between job resources, job demands and organizational behavior, Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll, 1989) will be used. Both job resources and job demands are assumed to predict OCB. It is reasonable to assume that when teachers perceive that there are too many role demands but too little time to fulfill them, there is no clear description about their roles, and there is no compatibility between role expectations and demands, teachers might not be willing to go over and above their call of duty.

Hence, based upon the COR theory, when the teachers feel that their job demands (role conflict and students' misbehavior) are high, they are expected to demonstrate lesser OCB.

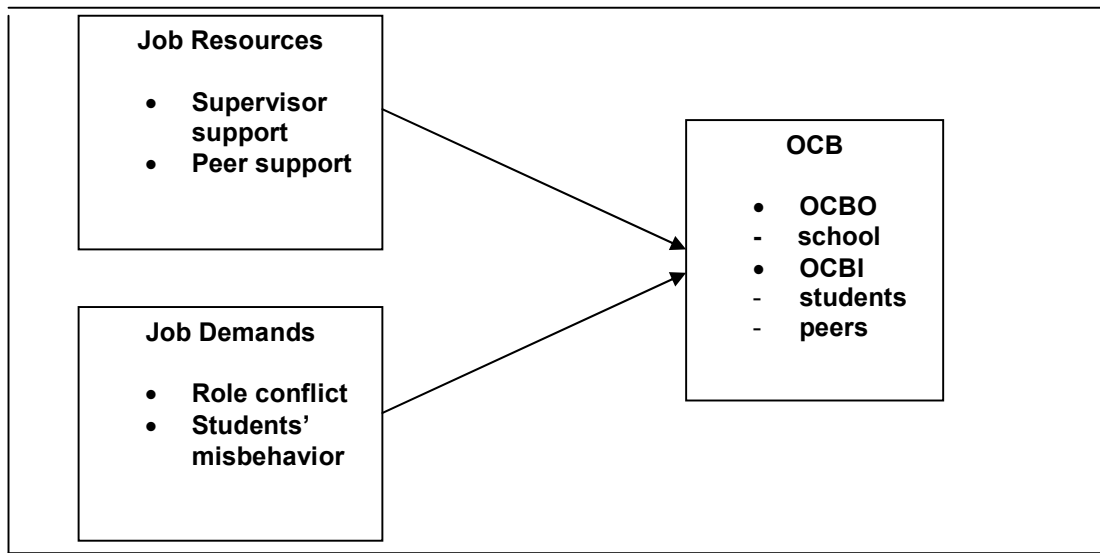


Figure 1: Proposed conceptual framework

3. Conclusion

Successful organizations have employees who go beyond their formal job responsibilities and freely give their time and energy to succeed the task at hand. OCB is generally defined as discretionary behaviors that benefit the organizations and/or one's coworkers (Organ, 1988). Although a teacher may not be required to stay late and assist others, doing so facilitates the smooth flow of work. However, when a teacher's resources are drained, he or she has fewer assets available to dedicate to other people and tasks. Therefore, it is important for policy makers to realize the importance of increasing job resources so that teachers would be willing to perform OCB. On the other hand, job demands should also be reduced and thus promote OCB among teachers.

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