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# An analysis of correlation between Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and emotional intelligence (EI)

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## Abstract

This paper examines the relationship of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) with emotional intelligence (EI) of the followers. Organizational citizenship behavior can be defined as voluntary and spontaneous behaviors that extend beyond employees' normal job duties. In other word, Organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) describe actions in which employees are willing to go above and beyond their prescribed role requirements. A sample of 57 dyads of managers and their supervisors (i.e., 114 respondents) participated in this study. The reliabilities of the scales were .83 organizational citizenship behaviors and .86 emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence was significantly correlated to conscientiousness, civic virtue, and altruistic behaviors of followers. The method suggested by Barron and Kenny (1986) was used to test mediation of organizational citizenship behavior between emotional intelligence, but nothing significant was found. The results indicated that emotional intelligence of the organizational citizenship behavior of followers.

**Keywords:** Organizational citizenship, emotional intelligence, organization

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## 1. Introduction

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) was first illustrated in the work of Bateman and Organ (1983) 24 years ago and has recently been gaining momentum. OCB refers to the individual contributions in the workplace that go beyond role requirements as stipulated in the job agreement (Organ & Ryan, 1995). OCB of the organizational members is becoming increasingly crucial in the businesses nowadays in view of the downsizing, rightsizing in response to the economic pressures of the last decade. Hence, understanding how OCB works in organizations is an important issue of enquiry for both researchers and also practitioners. Recent studies had illustrated the dramatic growth of OCB researches into some other related management areas, for example, strategic management, leadership, human resources management, etc. OCB has been noted to have contributed favorably to organizational outcomes, such as service quality (Bettencourt & Brown, 1997; Bell & Menguc, 2002), organizational commitment (Podsakoff, McKenzie & Bommer, 1996), job involvement (Dimitriades, 2007), leader-member exchange (Bhal, 2006; Lo, Ramayah & Jerome, 2006).

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 Organizational citizenship behavior

OCB has been widely used in the previous studies as it has been found to affect the overall organizational effectiveness (Walz & Niehoff, 1996). OCB is also known as extra-role behaviors which are the act of performing beyond the stated job requirement. Subordinates impulsively go beyond the employment contract and carry out non-obligatory task without expecting explicit rewards and recognition (Organ, 1988). Hence, understanding the determining conditions and reasons that lead to such behaviors is instrumental to yield an insight into when and how these acts happen. In fact, LePine et al. (2002) have demonstrated that leaders' support is the strongest predictor of significant OCB by subordinates. According to Aquino and Bommer (2003), they discovered that OCB can enhance the social attractiveness in a work unit. As OCB is normally labeled as positive behavior, those

who exhibit OCB may become more socially attractive which makes them more likely to be appreciated as friends or partners. Literatures in the past have identified two main approaches known as “role” and “extra-role behavior” in defining the concept of OCB. Extra role means the individual contributions in the workplace which go beyond the specified role requirements and not recognized by the reward system. Castro, Armario, and Ruiz (2004) concluded that it is not easy for a firm to differentiate between “role” and “extra role” performances as managerial and employee perceptions of their subordinates’ performances do not correspond and subject to the satisfaction of the subordinates in the workplace. A great deal of researches have suggested that there are five basic personality factors which affect most of the variance in personality (e.g., Costa & McCrae, 1992) and these dimensions are known as Big Five dimensions which are classified as conscientiousness, altruism, courtesy, sportsmanship, and civic virtue. Hence, this study adopts the repertoire of Organ’s initial definition of OCB with five dimensions and each dimension is discussed more in details in the following sessions:

#### *2.1.1 Civic virtue*

Civic virtue is defined as subordinate participation in organization political life and supporting the administrative function of the organization (Deluga, 1998). It is referring to the responsibility of the subordinates to participate in the life of the firm such as attending meetings which are not required by the firm and keeping up with the changes in the organization (Organ, 1988). This dimension of OCB is actually derived from Graham’s findings which stated that employees should have the responsibility to be a good citizen of the organization (Graham, 1991). These behaviors reflect an employees’ recognition of being part of organization and accept the responsibilities which entails (Podsakoff et al., 2000). Other researchers have found that civic virtue enhances the quantity of performance and help to reduce customer complaints (Walz & Niehoff, 1996).

#### *2.1.2 Conscientiousness*

Conscientiousness is used to indicate that a particular individual is organized, accountable and hardworking. Organ (1988) defined it as dedication to the job which exceed formal requirements such as working long hours, and volunteer to perform jobs besides duties. In addition to that, studies have also revealed that conscientiousness can be related to organizational politics among employees (McCrae & Costa, 1987). Kidder and McLean Parks (1993) posited the fact that males are more like to engage in conscientious behavior than females in view of the fact that males has preference for equity over equality.

#### *2.1.3 Altruism*

Smith, Organ, and Near (1983) defined altruism as voluntary behaviors where an employee provides assistance to an individual with a particular problem to complete his or her task under unusual circumstances. Altruism refers to a member helping other members of the organization in their work. Podsakoff et al. (2000) has demonstrated that altruism was significantly related to performance evaluations and correspondingly, positive affectivity.

#### *2.1.4 Courtesy*

Courtesy includes behaviors, which focus on the prevention of problems and taking the necessary step so as to lessen the effects of the problem in the future. In other words, courtesy means a member encourages other workers when they are demoralized and feel discouraged about their professional development. Early research efforts have found that employees who exhibit courtesy would reduce intergroup conflict and thereby diminishes the time spent on conflict management activities (Podsakoff et al., 2000).

#### *2.1.5 Sportsmanship*

Organ (1988) defined sportsmanship as the behavior of warmly tolerating the irritations that are an unavoidable part of nearly every organizational setting. Podsakoff and MacKenzie (1997) revealed that good sportsmanship would enhance the morale of the work group and subsequently reduce employee turnover. (See in Figure )

### **3. Emotional Intelligence (EI)**

Salovey and Mayer (1990) first introduced the concept of emotional intelligence as a type of social intelligence, separable from general intelligence. According to them, emotional intelligence is the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ emotions, to discriminate among them, and use the information to guide one’s thinking and actions. In a later attempt, they (Salovey & Mayer, 1990) expanded their model and defined emotional intelligence as the ability of an individual to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to access and generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth. Research has shown that emotional intelligence is the common element that influences the different ways in which people develop in their lives, jobs, and social skills; handle frustration; control their emotions; and get along with other people. It has been found that the difference between a simply brilliant person and a brilliant manager is due to a person’s emotional intelligence. Ultimately, it is emotional intelligence that dictates the way people deal with one another and understand emotions. Hence, emotional intelligence is considered important for business leaders because if they are insensitive to the mood of their staff or team, it can create frustration and, therefore, not get the best out of people (Anonymous, 2004). Turner (2004) stated that emotional intelligence is the softer component of total intelligence and that it contributes to both professional and personal lives. Traditional IQ is the ability to learn, understand, and reason. It is now thought to contribute only 20% to one’s success, whereas emotional quotient (EQ), which is the ability to understand oneself and interact with people, contributes 80%. EQ is critical to effective leadership. IQ has been linked to job performance and is a key element in recruitment. However, EQ is evident in the leaders’/managers’

ability to retain their positions and be successful in their roles. The fact is that most firms hire for intelligence (IQ) and sack because of attitude (EQ).

#### **4. Methodology**

##### *4.1 Instruments*

The 24-item scale devised by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, and Fetter (1990) was used to measure the five dimensions of organizational citizenship behavior of the subordinates by the managers. It is a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Using the 33-item composite emotional intelligence scale developed by Schutte et al. (1998), the superiors self-rated their emotional intelligence using a 5-point Likert type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

##### *4.2 Sample*

Data were collected from dyads of 57 managers and subordinates. The respondents, totaling 114, belonged to a diverse set of industries located in Iran. The respondents were predominately male (75%) with an average age of 40.2 years and an average work experience of 15.2 years, holding their current position for 5.5 years on an average. The questionnaires were distributed in separate sets assuring participants of complete confidentiality. One of the authors personally distributed the questionnaires in the various organizations. She made attempts to personally collect as many responses as possible. Those who could not give their responses personally were asked to mail them directly to the author. A total of approximately 100 sets of questionnaires were distributed.

#### **5. Results**

All three scales were found to be highly reliable: .83 (organizational citizenship behavior scale), and .86 (emotional intelligence scale). After the reliabilities were confirmed, the correlation between the dimensions of organizational citizenship behavior and the complete scale of emotional intelligence were calculated. The emotional intelligence of managers was positively correlated with the conscientiousness, civic virtue, and altruism of the subordinates as shown in Table 1. Emotional intelligence were not found to be significantly correlated. Therefore Hypothesis 1 which was concerned with the positive relationship between emotional intelligence was not supported. (See the table 1 in appendix)

Simple multiple linear regressions were used to study Hypothesis 2 concerning the effect of the subordinates' perception on their organizational citizenship behavior. Four out of five organizational citizenship behaviors as dependent variables were regressed on variables. Civic virtue was not taken into consideration as the reliability of the scale was found to be very low. The results did not support the hypothesis. Further regression analysis was performed on the four organizational citizenship behaviors as dependent variables and emotional intelligence of a leader as independent variable to see if emotional intelligence of a leader enhances organizational citizenship behaviors of the followers. Emotional intelligence of leaders did predict the conscientiousness and altruism behaviors of the subordinates. Table 2 presents the regression coefficients. (See the table 2 in appendix)

Regression models as suggested by Barron and Kenny (1986) were tested for mediation analysis. According to them, a variable functions as a mediator when it meets the following conditions: (a) variations in levels of independent variable significantly account or variations in the presumed mediator (i.e., path a); (b) variations in the mediator significantly account for variations in the dependent variable (i.e., path b); (c) and when path a and b are controlled, a previously significant relationship between independent and dependent variables is no longer significant. They further suggested the method given by Judd and Kenny (1981) for testing mediation. According to the method suggested, one should estimate following regression equations: (a) regress the mediator on the independent variable, (b) regress the dependent variable on the independent variable, and (c) regress the dependent variable on both the independent variable and the mediator. Two regression equations were used to test the hypothesized role of emotional intelligence of leader as a mediator between perceived organizational citizenship behaviors of followers. Organizational citizenship behavior was regressed on both emotional intelligence ( $= .50, = .01$ ). Table 3 presents the regression coefficients. Although in the third equation mediator emotional intelligence did affect the dependent variable organizational citizenship behavior, in the first two equations, not affect either the mediator or the dependent variable organizational citizenship behavior. Thus, Hypothesis 3 was not supported. (See the table 3 in appendix)

#### **6. Discussion**

The two specific organizational citizenship behaviors of followers driven by the emotional intelligence of the leader were conscientiousness and altruism. Since the emotional intelligence of leaders did affect the organizational citizenship behaviors of followers, the results indicate that emotional intelligence is an important component for being an effective leader. The emotional intelligence of managers had a positive correlation with the conscientiousness of the subordinates. When understood and appreciated by their leaders, the subordinates may feel motivated and satisfied with their jobs and may reciprocate by being conscientious. In addition, the emotional intelligence of managers was found to have a positive correlation with the altruism of the subordinates. Since the superior believes in creating a work family, holding up a vision that benefits all, the followers are motivated to attain the organizational objectives as a team, thus helping one another to accomplishment. Therefore, the emotional intelligence of a leader plays a significant role in determining the two specific organizational citizenship behaviors of followers. This is also because the emotionally intelligent leader is able to monitor his or her own behavior and understand those of his or her followers, thus enhancing the extra role behavior of the members of the organization. Only when they feel that the leader

understands their needs will the followers be willing to give their best to the organization. By understanding their subordinates, leaders can motivate them and direct them in exhibiting organizational citizenship behaviors. Organizational citizenship behaviors of the followers even though the effects of organizational citizenship behaviors are well established (Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006). Both direct (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000) and indirect (Pillai, Schriesheim, & Williams, 1999; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990) relationships have been found between organizational citizenship behaviors. Most of the research has been performed in contexts different from the present study. This study seems to indicate that we need to establish the relationship between organizational citizenship behaviors in contextual terms also.

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Table 1: Correlations

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Conscientiousness	5.38	0.91	(0.60)					
2. Sportsmanship	4.9	1.15	.39**	(0.75)				
3. Civic virtue	4.64	0.86	0.11	.26*	(0.20)			
4. Courtesy	5.16	1.01	0.21	.51**	.36**	(0.70)		
5. Altruism	4.76	1.18	0.34	.34*	.32*	.57**	(0.88)	
6. Emotional intelligence	3.58	0.46	0.25	0.25	.50**	0.20	0.20	(0.86)

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01

Table 2: Regression Table

	Conscientiousness	Sportsmanship	Courtesy	Altruism
Emotional intelligence	.28 (.55)*	.23 (.23)	.22 (.48)	.44(1.13)**
r <sup>2</sup>	0.83	0.8	0.05	0.19
F	2.43	2.35	1.28	6.42

Note. Unstandardized coefficients with SE are in parentheses.

\*p < .05. \*\*p < .01

Table 3: Regressions for Mediation Analysis

Dependent variables	Emotional quotient (1st equation)	OCB (2nd equation)	OCB (3rd equation)
EI			.50 (0.78)**
r <sup>2</sup>	0.04	0.02	0.26
F	2.19	1.17	9.43

Note. Unstandardized coefficients with SE are in parentheses.

\*p < .05. \*\*p < .01

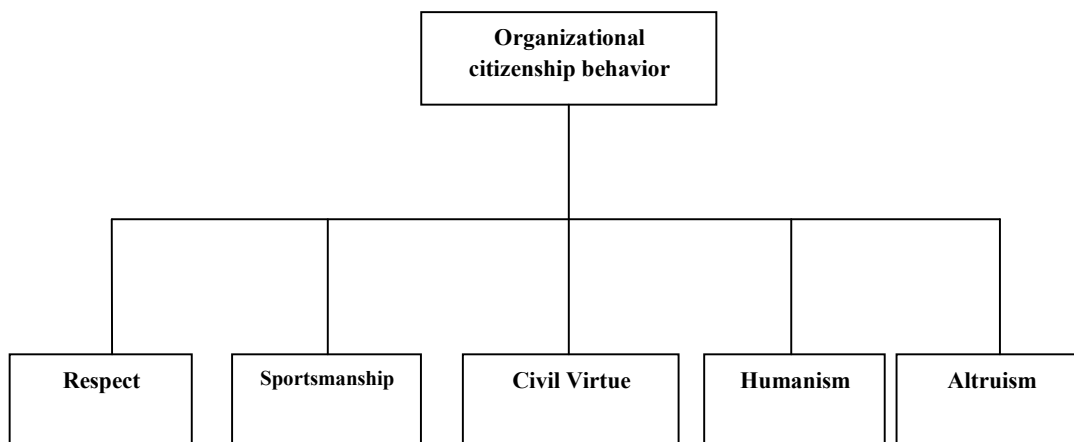


Figure 1. Organizational citizenship behavior pattern