

Exploring the relationship between employees' perception of empowerment and organizational citizenship behavior

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Abstract: Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) has received considerable attention in recent years. It has been studied as behavioral outcome of employees' motivation in organizations. However, the present study sought to discern the relationship between employees' perception of empowerment with OCB as voluntary acts beyond the role specification in 75 employees of sport and youth organization of khorasan Razavi province. Data was collected through organizational citizenship behavior and employees' perception of empowerment questionnaires. Both scales were adapted into farsi. Statistical analysis of the study revealed that mean scores of employees' perception of empowerment and OCB were low. There was a significant relationship between employees' perception of empowerment and its subscales with OCB ($p < 0/05$), a stepwise multiple regression analysis showed that meaningfulness and competence were the strongest predictors of OCB.

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1- Introduction

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) as a voluntary act or discretionary behavior which goes beyond existing role expectations has been the topic of research for many years. Different variables' effects on OCB have been examined such as task interdependence, performance, organizational justice and employees' empowerment. The following sections review employees' empowerment and OCB as the two main variables of the present study briefly.

1-1 Empowerment

Empowerment as a leadership philosophy is defined as a process in which decision making is decentralized in an organization, thus managers give more autonomy to the employees. As Bryner mentions, for employees one of the biggest rewards is the opportunity to be proud of their work. Empowerment opens up many more opportunities for employees to exercise creativity, flexibility and autonomy on the job.

Empowerment enables employees to take risks and try new things. It also helps them to decide on their own in deciding how to recover from problems. It is also considered as an important factor in the process of organizational change. The underlying constructs of empowerment mentioned and defined by Thomas and Velthouse (2) are competence, meaningfulness, self-determination, impact and trust.

The ongoing process of empowerment is described in three procedures including sharing information (information availability to employee), work independence or self determination (which increase job skills that determine boundaries such as the organization mission or philosophy, values, perspectives, objectives and rules) and replacing traditional hierarchical structured with work groups (3). Thus empowerment can be viewed as a new approach for any progressive institution working in a competitive environment.

1-2 Empowerment and OCB

The relationship between empowerment and OCB has been examined by some scholars (4). In this study Hasan and Thamizhmanii (2010) examined the influence of teachers' empowerment on their organizational commitment, professional commitment and OCB in Israeli middle and high schools. Reporting the results of the study they explained teachers' perceptions of their level of empowerment is significantly related to their feeling of commitment (organizational and professional) and their OCB. Based on the research done in various context the present study sought to examine if employees' empowerment Predicts employees' OCB. Male and female employees were also compared in regard to the rate of empowerment and OCB. The unique quality of this study lies in the fact that no such study has been done in sport organizations in

Iran. It is expected to serve as a starting point for future studies.

2- Methodology

2-1 Statistical sample

75 employees including 45 male and 20 female from Khorasn Razavi province sport and youth organization formed the study sample.

2-2 Data gathering instruments

The first instrument in the survey was spreitzer employees ' perception of empowerment (5). One the most widely used mcasures of empowerment. This scale consists of five subscales. There are totality 15 Likert type items in the scale.

The scale used to measure OCB was developed by Farh and his colleagues (6) Has twenty three questions.

2-3- Data analysis

Descriptive statistical such as mean and standard deviation of the employees' responses to variables were calculated in order to determine the employees' perception of empowerment and OCB. After wards, Pearson's correlation coefficient test was used to

determine the relationship between these variables. More ever, independent (t) test was used to determine the differences between male and female employees regarding the mean of empowerment and OCB. A step wise multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the predictors of OCB.

3- Results

3-1-Descriptive statistics results

participants in this study included 45 male (69/2%) and 20 female (30.8%), 46.9% of them were less than 35 years old , 66/9 % of them had work experience of less than 18 years. 38.8% had diploma and associate, 53.85% bacchelor and 6.2% masters degree and 55% of them were majoring in physical education and 45% in other fields. Mean of employees' perception of empowerment (\bar{x} =33.18) was low (Table1). This implies that employees do not feel empowered. Since they are not given power and authority in decision making processes. Mean of employees OCB(\bar{x} =45.68) was also low(table 1). It can be concluded that employees do the work that is dictated by the organizational policy and one's job description and do not go above and beyond that.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of employees' perception of empowerment and OCB

variables	N	Lowest score	Highest score	x	SD	Max possible
Perception of empowerment	65	21	52	33.18	8.12	75
Organizational citizenship behavior	65	26	82	45.68	10.61	115

3-2 Correlation Results

As it is illustrated in table 2, there is a positive and significant relationship between employees' perception of empowerment and its subscales with OCB ($p < 0/05$), therefore, it can be implied that by increasing. Employees' involvement in decision making processes of organization, they put their maximal potential and effort and go beyond the limits in achieving the goals and objectives of the organization.

The findings of this research in this regard is consistent with finding of previous studies reported by Bogler and Somech (4) and chow (7). According to Bogler and Somech (2004) by increasing the level of empowerment in any of its subscales, OCB will also be enhanced in employees. Hasan and Thamizhmanii (8) as well believe that empowerment plays a mediator role in the relationship between leader-member exchange.

Table2: Correlation between empowerment and its subscales with OCB

Statistical Index variable	NO (N)	Correlation (R)	Significant (P)
Empowerment and OCB	65	0.533	0.001
Competence and OCB	65	0.617	0.001
Meaningfulness and OCB	65	0.542	0.001
Self-determination and OCB	65	0.280	0.24
Impact and OCB	65	0.329	0.001
Trust and OCB	65	0.249	0.48

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level
 A step wise multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine predictors of OCB. Results presented in table 3, 4 and 5 show that meaningfulness and competence were the best

predictors of OCB. Meaningfulness ($\beta=0.456$, $t=3.931$, $p< 0.05$) was the strongest predictor of OCB, followed by competence ($\beta=0.283$, $T=2.440$, $P< 0.05$) as the second strongest predictor of OCB.

Table 3: multiple correlation coefficient, predicting employees' OCB

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. Error of the estimate
1	0.659	0.435	0.416	0.35097

a predictors: (constant), meaningfulness, competence

Table 4: Regression analysis of empowerment on OCB

Model	Source of changes	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	sig
1	Regression	5.780	2	2.953	33.825	0.001
	Residual	7.637	6.2	6.123		
	total	13.507	6.4			

a predictor: (constant), meaningfulness, competence

Table 5: coefficient for predictive sources of empowerment

Model	Unstandardized coefficient		standardized coefficient	t	sig
	B	SE	β		
(constant)	0.969	6.162		5.966	0.001
Meaning fullness	6.426	0.108	6.456	3.931	0.001
competence	6.217	0.689	0.283	2.440	0.018

a dependent variable : organizational citizenship behavior

4- Discussion

The results of this study confirms that empowerment has an effect on employees' OCB. As it is stated by chow et al (7) , Hasan and thamizhmanii (8). They believed that employee's empowerment is essential for the effective utilization of resources. By empowerment employees feel a sense of pride in their work and have proactive, cooperative and helping behavior, behaviors that includes helping other colleagues with work-related problems, and doing extra work for the company and clients and conserving organizational resources. It seems that the results (significant positive relationship between empowerment and its subscales with OCB) is in accordance with previous findings such as those of Bogler and Somech (4).

5- Conclusion

From the study of literature it is revealed that employee empowerment is a new approach of management to boost up organization performance and high quality of services as well as inducing and maintaining high level of motivation in employees. By empowerment employees feel a sense of pride in their job that they are trusted and empowered to do their best in their work.

Taking all these into consideration, it seems vital for managers to find ways in order to enhance OCB

through emphasizing employees empowerment, organizational culture and long-term reward plans. This study adds to the growing body of knowledge and research on empowerment as well as OCB, Focusing on physical education and sport science employees.

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