

Perceived Organizational Support and Organizational Citizenship Behavior

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Abstract

This study has attempted to investigate the relationship between perceived organizational support (POS) and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Regarding the research objectives and nature, this study was of applied and descriptive-correlation types respectively. The population of this study was all employees working in the deputy of urban districts. The total numbers of employees working in these centers in 2013 reported up to 311 personnel. The sample size was estimated 173 individuals using Cochran's formula at 95% confidence level. According to the forecast on reduction in the returned questionnaires, 192 questionnaires distributed among the subjects. Furthermore, quota random sampling method as well as questionnaires used for data collection. Questionnaire of Oregon and Kanovsky (1996) used to evaluate organizational citizenship behavior. Furthermore, perceived organizational support assessed via a questionnaire designed by Eisenberger et al. (1986). Experts from university and municipality approved content validity of the questionnaires. Besides, construct validity of the organizational citizenship behavior questionnaire was approved using factor analysis. The reliability of the questionnaire obtained using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The results showed that there was a significant positive relationship between the perceived organizational support and organizational citizenship behavior. In addition, there was a significant positive relationship between components of politeness and courtesy, civic virtue and work conscious with perceived organizational support.

Keywords: Perceived organizational support, organizational citizenship behavior.

Introduction

The environmental changes are taking place very fast in the third millennium. Hence, organizations are attempting to learn and teach organizational behavior to their employees in order to compete in the global arena and adapt themselves to an ever-changing environment. Accordingly, employees are required to go beyond job descriptions; duties and roles stipulated for them. This is because they believe that these behaviors reflected on the performance within the organization and will lead to change representation within the organization. For this reason, managers prefer employees who go beyond their expectations. Furthermore, they willingly engage in behaviors that are not part of their official duties (Zare, 2004). These behaviors are called organizational citizenship behaviors. The structure of organizational citizenship behaviors includes identification, management and evaluation of extra-role behaviors of

employees working in the organizations. In effect, their behaviors improve the organizational effectiveness. In other words, and with regard to this definition, human kinds as organizational citizens expected to go beyond their defined formal roles and duties in order to serve the organizational objectives (Bienstock et al. 2003). Senior experts within the field of organizational citizenship behaviors have concluded that representation of these behaviors provides a framework that reduces the need to expend valuable resources to perform simple tasks on the part of organization. Furthermore, due to time and resource's consumption, this factor empowers individuals to take greater care to conduct their tasks as well as prevalent issues. The result of all these factors leads to increase in success and efficiency within the organization (Podsakoff et al. 2000; Raub, 2008). Accordingly, the implementation of organizational citizenship behaviors should be assisted to achieve

successful, organized and efficient organizations. Nowadays, one of the most-recent subjects within the field of organizational behavior and human management is organizational support and protection expressed by companies to their employees. This subject has been derived from social exchange theory (Russell and Marie, 2005). It seems that perceived organizational support and organizational citizenship behavior are correlated with each other. Actually, this study has also addressed this same issue.

The results from a research conducted by Davila and Finkelstein (2013) showed that organizational citizenship behavior and its motives, particularly altruism, have been strongly correlated with welfare. Furthermore, organizational citizenship behavior has been associated with welfare. This has caused psychological comfort and satisfaction in terms of expressed helps. The results from a research accomplished by Cheung (2013) indicated that perceived organizational support interfaced between individual and information justice and organizational citizenship behavior. Duffy and Lilly (2013) conducted a research and found that medium levels of demand for power and success could influence the relationship established among organizational citizenship behavior, organizational trust and perceived organizational support. Isfahan Municipality, as one of the largest and most influential public institutions within the Isfahan city that is daily engaged in close contact with a large number of citizens, should pay special attention to behavioral variables to be successful in carrying out its activities. It seems that, among all behavioral variables, organizational citizenship behavior is very important for the Municipality because the volume and type of work, and a plurality of communications require employees to go and work beyond their formal roles and duties. Since organizational citizenship, behavior emphasizes on extra-role behaviors, the need for rare and specialist human resources has been reduced and, thus, organizational costs have decreased as well. Accordingly, it is necessary to examine the organizational citizenship behavior among employees working in Isfahan Municipality (Ahmadi, 2013). Subsequently, central and 15 districts of Isfahan Municipality have been

chosen to be included in this research. Hence, this study examines the following hypotheses:

1. Perceived organizational support is associated with organizational citizenship behavior.
2. Perceived organizational support is correlated with different dimensions of organizational citizenship behavior (including politeness and courtesy, civic virtue, work conscious, altruism and sportsmanship).

In addition, organizations can identify and assess the dimensions of organizational citizenship behavior in order to create an environment that encourages and facilitates the representation of organizational citizenship behavior. Accordingly, one can argue that the probable findings from this study can lay the groundwork for strengthening the organizational citizenship behavior upon the part of managers of Isfahan Municipality.

Definition of perceived organizational support

Eisenberger et al. (1986) firstly and formally developed the concept of perceived organizational support to the literature. Since then, scholars have been paying particular attention to the analysis on the formation of organizational support Supportive behaviors of leaders as well as organizational climate may be perceived to provide organizational support. The organizational support refers to feelings and beliefs held by individuals in terms of levels of value and respect directed by organizations towards cooperation, assistance and support to their employees. Furthermore, this concept reflects the fact that the extent to which a given organization is concerned with the welfare and future of its employees. If employees feel that they are backed and respected by their related organization and that the organization is addressing their welfare and future, they will inevitably proceed in a desired path (Eisenberger et al. 1986). Employees who experience a great deal of perceived organizational support will feel that they should develop appropriate behaviors in response to their related organizations to act in line with the objectives of their organizations. In this way, they can compensate for the support provided by their respective organizations (Eisenberger et al. 1997).

Definition of organizational citizenship behavior

According to Oregon (1988), organizational citizenship behaviors are those behaviors that are done by individual desire and will and are not, directly or explicitly, appreciated by a formal organizational reward system. However, they will improve the effective performance. Accordingly, Oregon model was used to examine organizational citizenship behavior as well as its diverse dimensions. Oregon (1988) proposes a five-dimensional scale of organizational citizenship behavior that has explained the structure of organizational citizenship behavior as follows:

1. *Courtesy*: It refers to sensitivity to the effectiveness of personal actions on the fate of others.
2. *Civic virtue*: It represents an individual's participation in social life of organization that includes such behaviors as participation in extracurricular activities, the tendency to read books and magazines, and supporting the development.
3. *Work conscience*: It includes such behaviors as predetermined requirements set out by the organization in the workplace.
4. *Altruism*: It refers to useful and beneficial behaviors such as intimacy, empathy, and sympathy to colleagues.
5. *Sportsmanship*: It refers to patience in the face of inevitable vocational adversity and hardships.

Research methodology

Regarding this fact that the results from this research can be used in a real organization, this study is of applied type. Furthermore, since this study observes and describes a situation and relationship, it is of descriptive-correlation nature. Besides, this is a field study as well. The population of this study was all employees working in the deputy of urban districts. The total numbers of employees working in these centers in winter 2013 was reported up to 311 personnel. The sample size was estimated 173 individuals using Cochran's formula at 95% confidence level. Regarding the 16 districts surveyed, 192 questionnaires were distributed. Since the population of this study was all employees working in the deputy of urban districts, stratified random sampling was used to collect the required data. In this study, each stratum included that same municipality district. Having used simple

random sampling, the sample size was determined proportional to the population of that district and in each district. This study made use of Oregon and Kanovsky Citizenship Behavior Questionnaire (1996) and the questionnaire of perceived organizational support derived from the standardized questionnaire of Eisenberger et al. (1986) in order to collect the required data. Face content validity of the questionnaire was confirmed. Also, the construct validity of the questionnaire on organizational citizenship behavior was confirmed using factor analysis, and the obtained five factors justified about 64.72 % of the total variances. Cronbach's alpha coefficient and SPSS software were used to account at the reliability level of this instrument. The following reliability values were obtained respectively: organizational citizenship behavior equal to 0.766, perceived organizational support equal to 0.886, and diverse dimensions of organizational citizenship behavior, including altruism equal to 0.767, work conscience equal to 0.782, sportsmanship equal to 0.755, civic virtue equal to 0.666 and courtesy equal to 0.706.

Research findings

Regarding the total number of 192 distributed questionnaires, 169 questionnaires were returned questionnaires and were statistically analyzed. The results showed that 13 percent of respondents had the diploma or lower than high school education, 14.8 percent had Associate degree, 53.8 percent had B.A., and 18.3 percent had M.A. degrees. Most respondents had over 40 years old and 15 years of employment experiences. The results of one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test showed that the two variables of perceived organizational support and organizational citizenship behavior had normal data distribution ($p \geq 0.05$). Table 1 depicts the value of Pearson's correlation coefficient for the relationship between perceived organizational support and organizational citizenship behavior (0.399). Actually; this correlation has not been an accidental one and, thus, there has been a direct and significant relationship between these two variables ($p < 0.01$). According to the coefficient of determination, it can be said that perceived organizational support has explained up to 16% of variations in organizational citizenship behavior.

Table 1. Correlation coefficient of perceived organizational support and organizational citizenship behavior

	POS
Pearson Correlation	.399**
OCB Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
N	169
R²	.16

****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 depicts the value of the correlation coefficients in the relationship between perceived organizational support and diverse dimensions of organizational citizenship behavior. Actually, there is not a significant relationship between perceived organizational support and work conscientiousness and sportsmanship ($p \geq 0.01$). Furthermore, there is a significant relationship between perceived organizational support and altruism, civic virtue and courtesy ($p < 0.01$). According to Pearson's correlation coefficient, this factor is directly correlated with these three factors.

Table 2. Correlation coefficient between perceived organizational support and diverse dimensions of organizational citizenship behavior

	Altruism	Work conscientiousness	Sportsmanship	Civic virtue	Courtesy
Pearson Correlation	.223**	.134	.050	.295**	.373**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.083	.515	.000	.000
N	169	169	169	169	169

****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Discussion and conclusion

The results indicate that there is a direct relationship between employee's perceptions of organizational support and organizational citizenship behavior. Furthermore, these two variables are positively and significantly related to each other ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.399$). The results indicate that as the employee's perception of organizational support increases, the degree of organizational citizenship behavior increases (and vice versa). In addition, it perceived organizational support is significantly correlated with altruism, civic virtue and courtesy ($p < 0.01$). According to Pearson's correlation coefficient; this factor is positively correlated with these three factors. It can be said that as the perceived organizational support increases, the degrees of altruism, civic virtue and courtesy increase as well (and vice versa).

The results of researches conducted by Duffy and Lilly (2013), Cheung (2013), Pohl et al. (2012), Miao (2011), Hemati Nejad et al. (2012), Iraj Naqandar and Hamidi (2013) indicate that there is a significant relationship between perceived organizational support and organizational citizenship behaviors that is consistent with the findings from this study. Neves and Eisenberger (2014) conducted a study and found that there was a positive relationship between perceived organizational support and risk-taking. Actually, organizational support influenced risk-taking. Based on the findings from this research and the research results of Neves and Eisenberger (2014), it would be reasonable to conclude that perceived organizational support, organizational citizenship behavior and risk-taking are associated with each other and may explain and justify each other's changes. According to the results from this research, there is a positive and significant

relationship between perceived organizational support and organizational citizenship behavior. Accordingly, as the employee's perception of organizational support increases, the degree of organizational citizenship behavior increases as well. As such, it is suggested that managers fully explain supportive measures and privileges allocated by organizations to their employees in order to dedicate a best perception on organizational support of the part of employees. Furthermore, appropriate and timely notification must be done properly to achieve a better understanding on organizational support. Since the municipality is a large organization, improving the level of support from directors, managers and supervisors of various departments can be considered as one of most effective programs to increase the level of perceived support. Transmission of support from high levels of organization to the central levels and, then, to direct directors of employees will enhance the perceived organizational support of the part of employees because the support of direct superiors increases the levels of perceptions on support of the part of organization. This is because employees tend to generalize the behavior of their superiors to the entire organization and think that their support is equal to organizational support. Accordingly, organizations should support their directors, managers and supervisors and ask them to support their employees. The establishment of appropriate reward systems leads to increase in perceived organizational support and increase in employee's satisfaction. Accordingly, workplace becomes a suitable environment. Therefore, employees should be directed towards doing extra-role behaviors and organizational citizenship behaviors.

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