

# **SPIRITUALITY AND PERSONALITY CORRELATES OF ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR**

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## **Introduction**

An organization's ability to elicit employee behavior that goes above and beyond the call of duty can be a key asset. It will make competitors difficult to imitate (Bolino & Turnley, 2003). Heightened worker participation has been identified as a central strategy for increasing productivity and making effective use of new technology. In the drive for increased productivity, workers are being asked to increase their levels of mental and physical effort (Hodson, 2002).

Management literature (both academic and professional) has started to pay more attention to understanding the dynamics of and to develop normative theories of extra-role employee behaviors that are thought to contribute positively to overall organizational performance (Erturk, Yilmaz & Ceylan, 2004). Paine and Organ (2000), pointed out that an important construct in organizational behavior and in current Westernized business literature is Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB).

OCB has been introduced by Smith, Organ and Near (1983) and has been defined as discretionary behavior that goes beyond one's official role and is intended to help other people in the organization or to show conscientiousness and support toward the organization (Borman, 2004). Ideas about OCB developed from Organ's conviction that job satisfaction affected "people willingness to help colleagues and work associates and their disposition to cooperate in varied and mundane forms to maintain organized structures that govern work" (Motowidlo, 2000).

Behaviors covered by the term “organizational citizenship” can reasonably be expected to enhance co-workers’ productivity, enhance managers’ productivity, free up organizational resources for other productive purposes, help coordinate activities between team members’ and work groups, make the organization a more satisfying place to work and thus help attract and retain productive employees, maintain performance consistency and stability, and improve organizational adaptability. Through all these means, such behaviors should contribute to organizational effectiveness (Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1997).

Cohen and Vigoda (2000) pointed out that OCB improve organizational effectiveness through various ways. According to these authors, some of OCB’s benefits includes:

- a. improved co-worker and managerial productivity
- b. superior efficiency in resource use and allocation
- c. reduced maintenance expenses
- d. better coordination or organizational activities across individuals, groups, and functional departments
- e. improved organizational attractiveness for high-quality new recruits
- f. increased stability in the organization’s performance
- g. enhanced organizational capability to adapt effectively to environmental changes

Empirical research has focused on four major categories of OCB’s antecedents: employee characteristics, task characteristics, organizational characteristics, and leadership behaviors (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine & Bachrach, 2000). Another research concludes that there are three basic types of antecedents affecting OCB: personal factors, perceived situational factors (e.g. job characteristics), and positional factors (e.g. job level) (Holmes, Langford, Welch & Welch, 2003).

A great deal of research has been found that certain types of people are more likely to have good citizenship behaviors than others. Thus, while some determinants of citizenship are under the control of managers and organizations, research also indicates that some individuals may simply be more predisposed to engage in citizenship than others (Bolino & Turnley, 2003). Other research found that in organizational psychology, there is

clearly renewed interest in the role of dispositional affect (Yperen, 2002). Therefore, present research will be focused on personal factor or employee characteristics, and investigate their correlation with OCB. The term employee characteristics will be divided into spirituality and personality.

Employees who view their work as a means to advance spirituality are likely to exert greater effort than those who see it as merely as a means to a paycheck (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003). Accordingly, another research suggests that leaders who view their work as a means to advance spirituality, at the individual or group level, lead the organization to higher levels of performance. Spirituality and spirituality in the workplace have become popular buzzwords today (Smith, 2003). However, the correlation between spirituality and OCB is rarely investigated.

The relationship between personality psychology and industrial and organizational psychology has never been close (Hogan, Hogan & Roberts, 1996). Whereas some personality psychologists have allied themselves with clinical and social psychologist, applied and industrial and organizational (I/O) psychologists have tended to focus on situational explanations of work-related behaviors (Furnham, 2001).

However, some studies has been conducted to investigate the relationship between personality and OCB (e.g. Organ, 1994; Borman & Penner, 2001), but the results show that personality is not a good indicator to OCB, except those of studies using Big Five Personality (Organ, 1994). Borman and Penner (2001) suggest making a more direct approach to studying the links between personality and citizenship performance by developing a personality inventory that directly targets these kind of behavior. In the present research, researcher will not develop such a new personality inventory, but chooses two dimensions of Big Five personality that show a good correlation with OCB based on previous research namely: extraversion and neuroticism (e.g. Organ, 1994; Carlo, Okun, Knight & de Guzman, 2004; Wagner & Rush, 2000).

Beside these two variables, the present research also intends to investigate the role of organizational commitment in

OCB context. Researchers believe that highly committed members are likely to be willing to contribute much effort on behalf of the organization. Strong attachment of the individual to an organization enables better adaptation capabilities and higher responsiveness to changes in customer demands (Freund & Carmeli, 2003). Tompson & Werner (1997) have found that organizational commitment has a strong relationship with OCB, in line with previous researches.

International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) which has great aims at becoming an international center of educational excellence that seeks to restore the dynamics and progressive role of Muslim ummah in all branches of knowledge, needs employees who voluntarily do something beyond their call of duty. Superior organizational performance is not achieved through ordinary employees' effort (Bolino & Turnley, 2003). Its Islamic environment and facilitation is a good workplace to cultivate employees' spirituality and enhance their personality. Thus, present research will be an early work to investigate whether spirituality and personality correlate with employees' OCB.

### *Objectives*

The present research has been designed to investigate the correlation of characteristics of employee with OCB. The type of personality, especially extraversion and neuroticism and the level of spirituality is studied by survey research method. The moderator role of organizational commitment is also probed by survey research method.

### *Hypotheses*

Based on the literature review, the present research is going to investigate the correlation of characteristics of employee with OCB. Some demographic and job related factors have to be considered in OCB research, due to their influences on the motive and tendency to perform OCB. Thus, the present researcher will choose non-managerial employees as participants, with the assumption that their job level does not

demand extra role behavior. Based on that assumption, non-managerial employees could perform OCB. Gender, age, length of services and living background will be investigated for additional data purpose.

The level of spirituality and the type of personality, especially extraversion and neuroticism, are studied by survey research method. The moderator role of organizational commitment is also probed by survey research method. The following hypotheses will be investigated:

1. Meaning of life will be positively correlated with OCB
2. Extraversion will be positively correlated with OCB.
3. Neuroticism will be negatively correlated with OCB.
4. The correlation between the meaning of life and OCB will be moderated by organizational commitment, such that the meaning of life will have a stronger positive correlation with OCB when organizational commitment is high.
5. The correlation between extraversion and OCB will be moderated by organizational commitment, such that extraversion will have a stronger positive correlation with OCB when organizational commitment is high.
6. The correlation between neuroticism and OCB will be moderated by organizational commitment, such that neuroticism will have a weaker negative correlation with OCB when organizational commitment is high.

### *Participants*

The participants of the present research consisted of support group employees of IIUM (the lowest level of employees, such as clerical worker, driver, technician, etc). In this research, the sample was defined as permanent staff member who had been working for more than 2 years in IIUM, and had been staying in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor for more than 5 years. They were men and women, between 22 and 40 years.

One hundred and four questionnaires were returned, but 18 were rejected as they were incomplete. The analysis of this research was based on 86 complete questionnaires.

## **Measurement**

### *Spirituality*

Since this present research using meaning of life as a chosen dimension of spirituality, Life Regard Index (LRI) of Battista and Almond (as used by De Klerk, 2005) is decided to measure this variable. The Life Regard Index was developed by Battista and Almond (De Klerk, 2005) based on Victor Frankl's concept of meaning in life. It is composed of 28 items, responded to on a five-point scale and divided into two subscales: Framework (14 items) and Fulfillment (14 items). The Framework subscale (FR) measures the ability of an individual to see his life within some perspectives or context. It also measures derivation of set of life-goals, purpose in life, or life-view from them. The Fulfillment subscale (FU) measures the individual perspective of the degree he fulfill his framework or life goals (Battista & Almond, as cited by De Klerk, 2005). Some samples of LRI are "I really feel good about my life", "I have a very clear idea of what I would like to do with my life", "I feel like I have found a really significant meaning for leading my life", "I have a lot of potential that I do not normally use".

The construct validity of LRI is reported by Battista and Almond (as cited by De Klerk, 2005) correlated 0.62 with self-esteem as measured by the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. The scores on the index also related in predicted ways to a variety of criteria, including observer ratings of meaningfulness on an individual's life, openness and defensiveness, number and duration of psychiatric visits, family background and work measures, environmental fit and goals (Battista & Almond, as cited by De Klerk, 2005). In term of reliability, Cronbach alphas ranging from 0.84 (Framework) to 0.87 (Fulfillment) and 0.91 (Index) were found (Debats, Van Der Lubbe, Wezeman as cited by De Klerk, 2005).

### *Personality*

Personality variable which will be specified as Extraversion and Neuroticism is measured by selected items from International

Personality Item Pool (IPIP) developed by Goldberg (Buchanan, Johnson & Goldberg, 2005; Gow, Whiteman, Pattie & Deary, 2005). Twenty self report items were selected for this questionnaire, ten items for extraversion and another ten items for neuroticism. Example of extraversion items are "Am skilled in handling social situations", "Have little to say", and "Don't talk a lot". Example of neuroticism items are "Dislike myself", "Rarely get irritated", and "Panic easily". In order to make the items easier to read, "I" was added at the beginning. Participants were requested to read each of the 20 items and then rate how well they believed it described them on a 5-point scale, from "very inaccurate" to "very accurate" (Gow, Whiteman, Pattie & Deary, 2005).

The psychometric properties of this questionnaire have been reported by Gow, Whiteman, Pattie and Deary ((2001). The reliability of Extraversion scales is around 0.84 to 0.90, while the reliability of Neuroticism scales is around 0.85 to 0.89. Extraversion and Neuroticism scales of the IPIP were highly correlated with those of the NEO-FFI (Five Factor Inventory),  $r = 0.69$  to  $-0.83$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . NEO-FFI is one of the well-known inventory to measure Big Five.

#### *Organizational Commitment*

The present study measure organizational commitment based on Modway, Porter and Steers (1979). They define organizational commitment as "the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization", and is measured using the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ). Some examples of OCQ are "I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization", "This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance", "I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined". The reliability of OCQ was calculated by Cronbach alpha and the result was 0.93. OCQ was responded by seven point Likert scales with achors strongly disagree (1) and strongly agree (7).



### *Organizational Citizenship Behavior*

Organizational citizenship behavior in this present research is measured by five dimension scale developed by Organ (LePine, Erez & Johnson, 2002; Podsakoff et. al., 2000), namely altruism, sportsmanship, conscientiousness, and civic virtue. This scale using four-point Likert scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (4) strongly agree.

Reliability of this scale is over 0.60 for each dimension of organizational citizenship behavior (Noraini binti Othman, 2001). Some examples of the scale are "Help others who have been absent", "Does not abuse the rights of others", "Take steps to prevent problems with other workers", "Inform my superior before taking action".

### **Result**

Results of the Pearson correlation and the moderated regression analysis are as follows:

1. There is positive and highly significant correlation between the meaning of life and OCB.
2. There is positive and significant correlation between extraversion and OCB.
3. There is negative and highly significant correlation between neuroticism and OCB.
4. The correlation between meaning of life and OCB is not moderated by organizational commitment.
5. The correlation between extraversion and OCB is not moderated by organizational commitment.
6. The correlation between neuroticism and OCB is not moderated by organizational commitment.

Results of exploratory analysis for some demographic variables and job related factors are as follows:

1. There is no difference in the mean of OCB based on gender.
2. There is no difference in the mean of OCB based on living background.



3. There is no difference in the mean of OCB based on marital status.
4. There are differences in the mean of OCB based on educational background.
5. There is no difference in the mean of OCB based on age.
6. There is no difference in the mean of OCB based on the duration of stay in KL and Selangor.
7. There is no difference in the mean of OCB based on the length of services.

## **Discussion**

### **Meaning of Life and OCB**

Hypothesis 1 which hypothesized that meaning of life would positively correlate with OCB was supported by the finding. The result indicated that those who has high meaning of life reported to have higher OCB. Although the relationship between spirituality, especially meaning of life with OCB was rarely investigated in previous research, this finding is in line with the theory about the consequences of people with a meaningful life in the workplace environment as proposed by Pattakos (2004) and De Klerk (2005).

This finding also support the argument of Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003), that employees who view their work as a means to advance spirituality are likely to dedicate greater effort on work. It also matched with the finding of Guevara and Ord (1996) that the search for meaning would lead employees to give greater contribution to the organization.

### *Extraversion and OCB*

It was hypothesized in hypothesis 2 that extraversion would be positively correlated with OCB. The finding in this study support this hypothesis, which means that those who are extroverts reported higher OCB. This is consistent with previous studies

reported by Organ (1994), and Carlo, Okun, Knight and de Guzman (2004).

Past studies by Organ, Podsakoff and MacKenzie (2005) showed that a greater tendency toward helping exists among people who are socially well adjusted, and extroverted. It is also in line with the arguments of Smith et. al. (1983) that based on conclusion on personality and prosocial behavior literature, extraversion is positively correlated with prosocial behavior or OCB. Extroverts tend to be more sensitive to their external environment, more sensitive to social stimuli, and tend to exhibit spontaneous behavior.

#### *Neuroticism and OCB*

Consistent with hypothesis 3, neuroticism is negatively correlated with OCB. This indicates that people who have high neurotic symptoms were reported to have lower OCB. As Organ (1994) and Wagner and Rush (2000) reported in the previous studies, people who are more neurotic will have less OCB.

This finding is in line with the argumentation of Smith et. al. (1983) that neuroticism is negatively correlated with OCB. People who have high scores in neuroticism tend to be more preoccupied with their own anxieties, and probably do not have the emotional stamina to concern themselves with others' problems or general system requirements that are unrelated to their own immediate needs.

#### *Organizational Commitment Moderates Correlation between Meaning of Life and OCB*

Hypothesis 4, which proposed organizational commitment as a moderator of the correlation between meaning of life and OCB, is not supported by the findings. This indicates that the correlation between meaning of life and OCB is not influenced by organizational commitment.

This finding is inconsistent with Tepper's model (2003) that the relationship between spirituality and OCB is moderated by the target's value. Accordingly, an employee who has high spirituality would have high OCB if the organization (target) has

similar value with the employee's value or identification. Identification itself is a part of organizational commitment.

*Organizational Commitment Moderates Correlation between Extraversion and OCB*

Hypothesis 5, which proposed organizational commitment as a moderator of the correlation between extraversion and OCB, is not supported by the findings. This indicates that the correlation between extraversion and OCB is not influenced by organizational commitment.

This finding is inconsistent with the previous research that organizational commitment was found as a moderator variable in OCB research. Research by Baxter (1993), for instance, found commitment as a moderator of morality-OCB relationship. This research was conducted with 126 full-time employees from various organizations as participants.

*Organizational Commitment Moderates Correlation between Neuroticism and OCB*

Hypothesis 6, which proposed organizational commitment as a moderator of the correlation between neuroticism and OCB, is not supported by the findings. This indicates that the correlation between neuroticism and OCB is not influenced by organizational commitment.

This finding is inconsistent with previous research that organizational commitment was found to be a moderator variable, such as, a moderator of social exchange-OCB relationship in Thailand (Thoongsuwan, 1998) and affective commitment-OCB relationship in China (Chen & Francesco, 2003).

A possible explanation for the present findings that failed to show the moderating effects of organizational commitment on the correlations between meaning of life and OCB, extraversion and OCB, as well as neuroticism and OCB, is that the participants on this research may have special characteristics which differentiate them from the participants of previous studies on a moderator role of organizational commitment. All of the participants of this research are Muslims who are Malaysian and working in Islamic university. It probably develop some values that lead to spirituality, personality and OCB that was not

explored by the present research. Thus, organizational commitment did not play its role as a moderator variable in this kind of participant.

On the other hand, the intercorrelation between each variable shows that organizational commitment correlates positively and is highly significant with OCB. This finding indicates that although organizational commitment did not moderate the correlation between meaning of life and OCB, extraversion and OCB, as well as neuroticism and OCB, this does not mean that organizational commitment is not an important variable in relation to OCB.

#### *Exploratory Analysis*

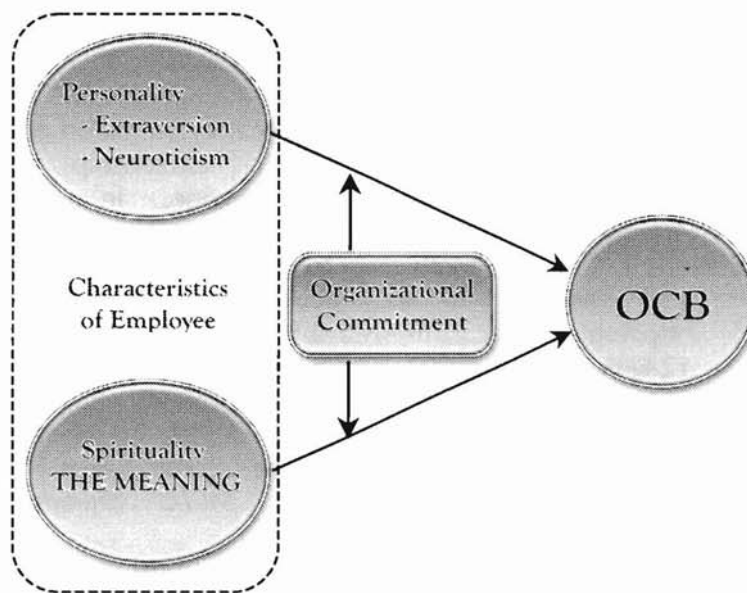
The differences in OCB among IIUM support group employees with regards to their demographic, i.e. living background, gender, marital status, educational background, duration of stay in KL or Selangor, and age, and job-related factor, i.e. length of services, were also explored as additional data in this study. Only level of educational background has significant differences in OCB. Participants with post secondary education have higher OCB than participants who finished only secondary school. These findings contrast with studies reported by Kidder (2002) regarding gender and Smith et. al. (1983) who argue that people from rural areas or small town are expected to display more citizenship behavior.

Based on the discussion, it can be concluded that the main relationships in the theoretical framework proposed by the present researcher was fully supported. Considering these results, a revised theoretical model is proposed with organizational commitment as an independent variable. It is supported by Alotaibi (2001) in his research, which it was found that organizational commitment is one of antecedents of Organizational Citizenship Behavior.

The contribution to the body of knowledge from this study are spirituality which was defined as meaning of life and personality which was defined as extraversion and neuroticism have correlations with OCB. Meaning of life and extraversion have positive correlation, while neuroticism has negative

correlation. Organizational commitment also has positive correlation with OCB.

**Figure 1:** Correlation between spirituality, personality and organizational commitment with organizational citizenship behavior (OCB)



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