The Mediating Role of Organizational Citizenship Behavior between Organizational Identification and Its Consequences

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This study was conducted to assess the impact of organizational identification on consequences like job satisfaction and turnover intention of organizational members. It also explored the mediational role played by organizational citizenship behavior in the relationship. Using a sample (n=127) of Indian employees, this current study makes a significant contribution to the existing and emerging literature on the linkage between organizational identification and behavioral outcomes by utilizing causal modeling in investigating the data for analysis.

Keywords: Organizational identification, Organizational citizenship behavior, Job satisfaction

Introduction

Research concerned with psychological variables in organizational science is replete with studies that establish that employees' attachment with their employing organizations depends to a large extent on the magnitude of their cooperative behavior, particularly when these behaviors are fundamentally extra-role in nature. Theory on organizational identification (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail, 1994; Elsbach, 1999) suggests that such extra-role cooperative behavior of organizational members is founded on the degree to which members identify themselves with their organization and in turn augment their citizenship behavior. To that extent organizational members' level of satisfaction with their jobs and their decisions on duration of attachment with the firm depend directly or indirectly on their level of organizational identification.

The current study undertakes the responsibility of fulfilling the following objectives. Firstly, we establish an empirical model of the impact of organizational identification on level of job satisfaction and turnover intentions of organizational members. Secondly, we examine the mediational role played by organizational citizenship behavior in the relationship between organizational identification, job satisfaction and turnover intention of organizational members. Thirdly, using path analysis we identify the best of the competing models proposed in the study and in the process establish the exact magnitude of direct and indirect effects of the predictor on the criterion variables.

Organizational Identification

Discussions about organizational identity or the relationship of members to their employing organizations seem anachronistic at a time when employment tenure is of shorter duration, tolerance for diversity is relatively high and relational contracts are routinely replaced by transactional contracts between employers and employees (Albert, Ashforth & Dutton, 2000). However, it is this very turbulence in the environment that requires individuals to connect

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themselves to their employing organization in order to maintain their social domain.

The concept of *individual* organizational identity has received consistent attention in relevant literature (Pratt & Foreman, 2000). Conceptually, one may define organizational identity as an individual's perception about his or her relation with the employing organization in a manner that partially leads to their self-definition in terms of the organization's social representation (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Dutton, Dukerich & Harquail, 2000; Elsbach, 1999). The notion of individual's deriving their satisfaction of identity from organizations delineates this construct from other related constructs (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004).

Organizational identification has emerged as a predictor of various individual and organizational level outcomes, either directly or through the mediating role of other variables (Rousseau, 1998). Important consequences of organizational identifications are job satisfaction and turnover intention. (Necowitz & Roznowski, 1994; Mael & Ashforth, 1999).

Given that organizational identification is a form of social identification where one defines self in terms of the attributes of the organization he or she works in, it would prompt individuals to view outcomes through the lenses of the group. In such a situation, individuals would ascribe characteristics of the organization to oneself, and in doing so, would identify his or her job in the organization with 'self' (van Knippenberg & van Schie, 2000). As one assesses oneself positively, this would lead to higher levels of job satisfaction and lower levels of turnover intention. Accordingly, the relevant hypotheses are proposed.

H1a. An individual's job satisfaction would be positively predicted by his or her identification with the employing organization.

H1b. An individual's job satisfaction would be negatively predicted by his or her disidentification with the employing organization.

H2a. An individual's turnover intention would be negatively predicted by his or her identification with the employing organization.

H2b. An individual's turnover intention would be positively predicted by his or her disidentification with the employing organization.

The Role of Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Previous research suggests that rewards and compensation would enhance employees' in-role behavior to a certain extent (Deckop, Mangel & Cirka, 1999). However, problem arises when organizations have to increase their own effectiveness and employees' have to develop their own performance, both of which require individuals to undertake certain extra-role activities (Smith, Organ & Near, 1983). Extra-role activities are those that do not define an employee's job description and neither do employees get paid for doing them, but that are nevertheless desirable to achieve organizational as well as individual effectiveness (Deckop, Mangel & Cirka, 1999; Smith, Organ & Near, 1983). One of the more important forms of extra-role behavior is organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) which are roles played by employees above and beyond their formal role requirements (Netemeyer, Boles, McKee & McMurrian, 1997). It is an optional out-of-role activity performed by employees but for which they do not get any explicit reward.

Such a form of extra-role behavior which is displayed by organizational members and for which they do not get any reward, monetary or otherwise refers to a situation in which individuals identify organizational attributes as their own and perceive benefits accruing to organizations by such extra-role behavior of theirs as though these benefits are occurring to themselves. In other words, individuals would engage in extra-role behavior like OCB, once they have identified themselves with their employing organization. Hence, organizational identification seems to appear as a powerful predictor of organizational citizenship behavior by individual members.

Researches in the past have associated OCB with an individual's job satisfaction (Smith, Organ & Near, 1983). Job satisfaction is conceptualized as the positive psychological disposition of individuals towards their job (Locke, 1969). It may thus be posited that extra-role behavior such as OCB is undertaken by individuals when they want to experience some meaningful outcome of their contribution. To that extent, individuals are willing to expend time and continue their attachment with their current organization in order to enhance the intrinsic satisfaction they would derive from positive outcomes of their extra-role behavior. This implies that individuals who display high levels of OCB would be inclined to demonstrate lower turnover intentions. This is more so as extra-role behavior such as OCB is voluntary and optional on the individual's part.

The above discussion leads us to present our next hypothesis as follows.

H3. Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) would mediate the relationship between organizational identification of an individual and his or her level of job satisfaction and turnover intention.

The current paper makes a significant contribution to the existing and emerging literature on the linkage between organizational identification and behavioral outcomes such as job satisfaction and turnover intention by utilizing causal modeling in investigating the data for analysis. Causal modeling makes a key contribution through a confirmatory analysis of the measures used in analyzing the variables related to the current study. In doing so, it establishes the generalizability of the scales used. Secondly, it provides a directional substantiation of the relationships between the relevant variables. Thirdly, it allows for assessing the goodness-of-fit of the variables within a single framework. Fourthly, and most importantly, it establishes that the model proposed by us is the best representation of the several possible models that would relate organizational identification to individual level consequences such as job satisfaction and turnover intention. Finally, we define here the predictor variable in terms of its time of occurrence. We state that organizational identification is the predictor variable as because it occurs previous in time to the criterion variables which in this case are the individual's job satisfaction and his or her turnover intention. Thus, we hypothesize that

Hypothesis 4: Paths emerging from the predictor variable leading to the criterion variables through the mediating variable follow a definite time.

Research Method

A survey research method was used for investigating the relationship between organizational identification, organizational citizenship behavior, job satisfaction, and turnover intention the relationships between organizational political variables and program development behaviors in organizations.

Sample

The sample consisted of 127 full time employees, in both private as well as public sector, including general management, academics, consulting, and government service professionals with minimum work experience of three years. The sample consisted of 82% men and 18% women. The age profile of the sample were as follows 56% below 30 years of age, 37% between 30-40 years of age, 32% between 40-50 years of age and only 2% above 50 years of age. Each one had minimum graduate level educational qualification.

They provided responses to a standardized questionnaire, which consisted of demographic information and previously used inventories dealing with organizational identification, organizational citizenship behavior, job satisfaction, and turnover intention. Ratings were made by self.

Measures

Organizational disidentification and identification. The items for organizational identification and disidentification were studied were adapted from Kriener and Ashforth (2004). Both organizational identification and disidentification were adapted from Mael and Ashforth (1992).

Organizational citizenship behavior. An inventory comprising three dimensions of Organizational Citizenship Behavior such as participation, loyalty, and obedience was adapted from Dyne, Graham and Dienesch (1994).

Job satisfaction. Job satisfaction was measured with three items as used by Edwards and Rothbard (1999), measured on a 7-point scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. A sample item is "In general, I am satisfied with my job."

Turnover intention. Turnover intention was measured with two items on a 6-point scale ranging from 1= not at all to 6 = almost always. A sample item is "I will probably look for a new job in the coming months."

Results

Table I shows the means, standard deviations and correlations for all the variables used in the analysis. Though the highest correlation was between organizational identification and organizational citizenship behavior (γ = .68), the correlation between disidentification and organizational citizenship behavior (γ = -.26) was also found to be significant. Expectedly the correlation between disidentification and organizational identification was found to be negative and significant (γ = -.38).

Table I Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Disidentification (DI)	1.48	1.06	1.00				
2. Organizational identification (OI)	4.15	1.23	-.38**	1.00			
3. Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)	3.70	.69	-.26**	.68**	1.00		
4. Job Satisfaction (JS)	1.67	.86	-.07	.04	-.01	1.00	
5. Turnover Intention (TI)	4.51	.52	-.01	.12	.08	.02	1.00

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

Structural Models

The proposed model covering the hypothesized relationship among the variables was evaluated using AMOS 4.0 SEM procedure (Arbuckle & Wothke, 1999). The data used for analysis in this study was found to be univariately normal. As a result, maximum likelihood estimation algorithm was applied and the fit indices were determined.

AMOS 4.0 produces a broad range of fit indices of which the most usual is the chi-square distribution. Non-significance of the chi-square suggests a good fit because it indicates that the covariance matrix if the specified model is not significantly different from that of the sample covariance matrix (Parry & Proctor-Thomson, 2003). However, since the chi-square results vary with the sample size, alternative fit-indices have to be developed. The fit-indices used for analyzing data in this paper were the goodness-of-fit indices (GFI), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), The Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), and the Adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI). Though the

recommended fit value for GFI and AGFI are 0.9, a value of over 0.85 may be considered to suggest a tolerably good fit (Hair, Andersen, Tatham & Black, 1998). An RMSEA of 0.0 indicates perfect fit, and values below 0.8 are considered good fits. For TLI and AGFI, values ranging between 0.8 and 0.9 indicate tolerable fits, while values over 0.9 suggests good fit (Hair, Andersen, Tatham & Black, 2003).

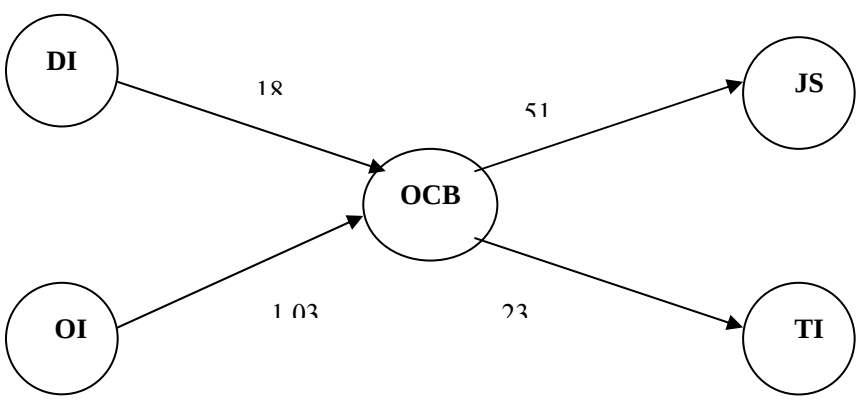
Table II shows the fit measures between the proposed model and the associated independent model.

Table II Comparative Fit Indices

	χ^2	df	GFI	AGFI	TLI	RMSEA
Proposed Model	136.9	67	.88	.83	.78	.09
Independence	455.20	78	.56	.48	.00	.20

For the proposed model as depicted in Figure I, the χ^2 value is 136.9 (df = 67, p = 0.000). The GFI being .88 indicated a moderately well fitting model. With the AGFI value at .83 and the TLI value at .78, it indicates, as far as these two fit measures are concerned a marginally fitting model. The RMSEA was found to be .09.

Figure I. The proposed model of OCB as a mediator of relationships between disidentification and organizational identification and job satisfaction and turnover intention. Values represent standardized estimates (N = 127). All coefficients are significant at actual levels.



Discussion

The results above show that the hypotheses regarding the relationships between the variables are established empirically. While disidentification with one's organization leads to employees displaying less of citizenship behavior, organizational identification enhances their organizational citizenship behavior. This in turn determines that the effect of organizational citizenship behavior on the outcome variable. In absence of OCB, the direct effect of the predictor variables is not as strong as in presence of the mediating variable.

Given that OCB refers to role behaviors for which the employees are free to opt out, if they do not identify with their organization they would be more than inclined to skip such extra-role behavior. On the other hand, employees

who do identify with their organization would feel affectively committed to display role behavior. This is in keeping with the suggestion of Kreiner & Ashforth (2004) that employees who identify themselves with their organization often identify themselves as their organizations. Hence, when employees identify themselves with their organizations, they would display higher levels of OCB because in that case employees do not consider that behavior as extra-role.

Practical Implications

Goal congruency of individuals' *vis-à-vis* their organizations require methods that appeal to the emotional, non-rational and affective elements within them. This is more so because it was found earlier (Robbins, 2003) that bureaucratic as well as humanistic methods of management failed to generate motivations among individuals to identify themselves with their organizations. There was a call for non-compulsory behavior generating from within individuals as a result of their identification with their organization. These discretionary behaviors, not required by formal job descriptions, but arising from within the individuals lead to satisfied individuals who are less intent on leaving their current employment.

In so far as shaping human resource policies and practices are concerned, this study indicates that HR managers should consider creating such an organizational climate that fosters individuals to feel at home even on-the-job. Training and development, compensation and rewards and other HR systems need to be suitably customized for employees in a manner that evokes a sense of belongingness among the latter thus promoting citizenship behavior among them.

Concluding Notes

Certain limitations should be borne in mind when interpreting the results. The study relied on cross-sectional and self-report data, thus raising concerns about causality and common method variance. But it was able to contribute to the preliminary research and theorizing by Elsbach (1999), Ashforth (2001) that suggest that organizational identification may predict a host of cognitive, affective and behavioral outcomes like job satisfaction, turnover intentions and organizational citizenship behavior. Identification with one's organization brings about a change in the social attributes of an individual where the self is defined in terms of the organization one is working for. The current paper establishes the effect of organizational identification on individuals in the form of higher levels of job satisfaction and lesser intentions to quit the current employer. The paper further highlights that such a cause and effect relationship between the predictor and the criterion variables is strengthened by the mediating role played by organizational citizenship behavior. Given that organizational citizenship behavior refers to optional behaviors on part of individuals marked by positive contributions to wards enhancing organizational effectiveness and actively preventing harm to one's fellow employees as well as one's organization, it is posited that such a behavior will immediately result when one defines the self in terms of the organization one works for.

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