THE POWER OF MEANINGFUL WORK:
EXTRA MILE TEACHERS

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between meaningful work and organizational citizenship behaviour. This study employed a quantitative approach using a cross-sectional survey strategy to obtain data from 395 teachers in Malaysia. Proportional stratified sampling was applied to ensure equal probability for respondent selection. Data analysis included descriptive statistical analysis and structural equation modelling analysis. The results indicate that the path coefficient from meaningful work to organizational citizenship behaviour was significant and in an expected positive direction. The use of a self-administered questionnaire and single-source data may lead to concerns about bias. The cross-sectional survey employed in this study may also contribute to data inaccuracy. The findings of this study imply that principals should assist teachers to engage with meaningful work in order to motivate them to exhibit organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) which involves going above and beyond their formal job requirements. Thus, the results of this study offer insight on the importance of teachers' experiences with meaningful work and enhanced OCB. These findings also contribute to the limited literature exploring the relationship between meaningful work and OCB in educational organizations in the Malaysian education context.*

Keywords: organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB), meaningful work, teachers, structural equation modelling

Introduction

Growing international demands for high education performance are among the factors that drive school organizations to become more effective. In line with schools' efforts to provide quality education to the students, the Malaysian government has introduced various programmes and policies to enhance school effectiveness. However, despite this huge expenditure, the quality of Malaysia's education system remains lower than other Asian countries such as Singapore and Thailand (World Bank, 2013). This suggests that higher education budgets and various education reforms are not the most crucial factors promoting school effectiveness.

Organizational citizenship behaviour is a voluntary behaviour exhibited by teachers who undertake jobs beyond their prescribed tasks without expecting any official reward from the organization (Oplatka, 2009). According to Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin, and Schwartz (1997), employees who feel that their work is a calling are more likely to spend their discretionary hours working than their colleagues who do not hold this view. Thus, enhanced perceptions of meaningful work would result in high levels of OCB (Chen & Chiu, 2009).

As front-line workers, teachers hold primary roles in enhancing school effectiveness. Teachers' willingness to go above and beyond their prescribed jobs can improve their schools' performance and effectiveness (Begolovsky & Somech, 2010). According to Organ (1998), voluntary additional-role behavioiur is termed organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB). The voluntary additional role efforts contributed by teachers can include conducting extra classes and preparing additional learning materials for students. These voluntary efforts are expected to improve the students' academic achievement. Furthermore, teachers who assist their colleagues with their teaching and

administrative tasks may also enhance organizational efficiency.

School organizations need to cultivate OCB among teachers in order to ensure their survival. Thus, it is vital to recognize the determining factors that could encourage teachers to engage in OCB, since educators who exhibit OCB are great assets to their school organization. Research conducted by Scroggins (2008) revealed that meaningful work plays a significant role in stimulating employees' OCB. Teachers must feel that their work is meaningful, and believe it is their calling in order for them to commit to their work and go beyond their prescribed job scopes (Somech & Oplatka, 2014). This study attempts to investigate the effects of meaningful work towards OCB among teachers in Malaysia.

Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

Organ (1988) defines OCB as "individual behaviour that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization" (p. 4). In school contexts, OCB refers to teachers who are voluntarily helpful, introduce functional organizational changes related to work, and are innovative in their teaching and learning activities. This behaviour is not part of the formal teaching requirements, nor is it a part of the mandatory or prescribed functions of the job. OCB is not explicitly or formally rewarded by the organization, nor is it intended to consciously impress others (Bettencourt, 2004; Choi, 2007; Morrison & Phelps, 1999; Motowidlo, 2000; Oplatka, 2009, 2006; Organ, 1997; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998).

OCB differs from organizational behaviours as it cannot be imposed on the basis of formal job requirements. OCB consists of teachers' informal contributions that are enforceable without regard to formal incentives. Their voluntary contributions, which are aggregated over time, will enhance school effectiveness (Organ & Konovsky, 1989). As empirically substantiated by DiPaola and Hoy (2005) and by Shaiful Annuar Khalid et al., (2010) in relation to the Malaysian setting, teachers' willingness to be productive, helpful, flexible, go beyond their prescribed job, and comply with changes could help students achieve academically and make their schools function effectively. Presumably, teachers' OCB would also result in better learning processes for students as it may foster positive attitudes towards their teachers, subjects, classroom, and school (e.g., minimal student absenteeism or tardiness, increased student voluntary involvement in school or social activities) (Oplatka, 2009). At the same time, teachers' OCB can generate a positive school image due to high ratings of service quality and increased parental levels of satisfaction (Oplatka, 2009).

In their meta-analysis, Podsakoff, Whiting, Podsakoff and Blume (2009) reported that teachers who voluntarily help novice teachers utilize the best practices in the classroom, or who assist and support their colleagues who are sick or having difficulty in work related matters, will increase their colleagues' performance. Due to these voluntary behaviours, school operations will run efficiently and principals' supervision time could be allocated for other productive tasks. In addition, teachers' OCB might also influence strong team spirit, morale, cohesiveness, and minimize conflicts among organization members. As a result, schools are more likely to retain the effective teachers, experience less staff turnover, and receive fewer applications for relocation.

Meaningful Work and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

Employees who regard their tasks as significant are more likely to understand the importance of their work environment and value the mutually dependent relationships among employees. Thus, enhanced job meaning would enable employees to consider the needs, problems, and perspectives of other members from an organizational perspective. As a result, employees display higher levels of OCB to facilitate effective functionality in the organization (Chen & Chiu, 2009). This

notion was supported by Wrzesniewski et al. (1997) who asserted that people who believe that their work is a calling would spend more discretionary, unpaid hours working. In his conceptual framework, Tepper (2003) pointed out that employees with high spiritual values who experience greater meaning at work are likely to perform frequent acts of OCB. In this way, employees' experience of finding meaning in their work and developing a sense of connectedness with organizational members can be viewed as a new perspective towars understanding employees' OCB and improving organizational performance (Manu Gupta, Kumar, & Singh, 2014).

In the school setting, Poshariati, Dousti, and Moosavi (2014) examined the relationship between dimensions of workplace spirituality (i.e., employees' experiences of transcendence, connectedness, completeness, and joy through the work process) and OCB among 222 physical education teachers in Tehran. Their study revealed that teachers who experienced meaningful work may exhibit OCB.
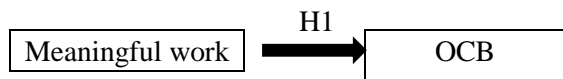
Meanwhile in Malaysia, Aizzat Mohd Nasurdin et al. (2013) investigated the effects of workplace spirituality dimensions on the OCB among academic staff at 15 private higher learning institutions. They found that only meaningful work was positively related to all OCB dimensions. Other dimensions of workplace spirituality may not affect OCB, having either a partial or insignificant relationship with OCB dimensions. This finding indicated that the experience of meaningful work may lead to greater voluntary extra-role behaviour (OCB).

Research Question

Based on the research framework of this study (Figure 1), meaningful work serves as an independent variable while OCB serves as a dependent variable. Based on this empirical evidence, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H1: Meaningful work has a positive and significant relationship with organizational citizenship behaviour.

Figure1. Research question.

Methodology

Participants

The pilot study and the actual study were conducted between March 2015 and August 2016. Initially, the sample for this study was supposed to be drawn from 327 secondary school teachers in Selangor (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). However, the sample size was increased to 395 respondents since survey response rates are often less than 100% (Bartlett, Kotrlik, & Higgins, 2001). A proportional stratified sampling technique was employed, with respondents stratified based on school locations. Based on the proportional stratified sampling technique, 15 secondary schools from multiple urban areas and 5 secondary from multiple rural areas were selected to form a sample of 395 secondary school teachers. The sample of this study was selected using the following criteria: a) participants were permanent

teachers who had a minimum of 1 year of teaching and work experience and (b) participants did not hold any administrative positions such as principal, senior assistant, or subject head.

Procedure

This study employed a cross-sectional survey to obtain the teachers' perceptions of meaningful work and OCB. Based on 395 distributed questionnaires, 384 questionnaires were returned, with 375 questionnaires considered valid and usable. The number of responses was considered sufficient for further analysis as it exceeded the required sample size suggested by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). This study was approved by the Educational Planning and Research Development Unit, Ministry of Education, Malaysia and Selangor State Education Department.

Instrument

The first part of the questionnaire consisted of demographic details, the second part consisted of measures about meaningful work, and the final part consisted of measures about OCB. Test-items for meaningful work and OCB were assessed using a 7-point Likert scale, where 1= strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree.

This study adapted the *Meaning at Work Scale* developed by Ashmos and Duncan (2000) to measure teachers' meaningful work. This study adapted scales developed by DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2001), Hussin and Chin (2014), Oplatka (2006), Somech and Drach-Zahavy (2000), and Williams and Anderson (1991) to develop a psychometrical measurement for OCB.

The questionnaire was reviewed and refined by five experts with at least 10 years experience in human resource development, education, and psychometrics evaluation before being tested in a pilot study. A pilot study was administered to 360 secondary school teachers in Selangor, with 305 questionnaires being useable for reliability and validity assessments.

Validity assessment was conducted by using the exploratory factor analysis, through the principal axis factoring with varimax rotation method. Items with less than 0.5 factor loading were dropped. Table 1 and Table 2 summarize the loadings of each factor for meaningful work and OCB. As shown in Table 1, there was only one factor with an eigenvalue exceeding 1, accounting for 61.58% of the variance.

Table 1
Factor Loadings for Meaningful Work

	Component 1	**Communality**
F03	.878	0.772
F04	.832	0.693
F01	.819	.67
F02	.788	0.621
F07	.780	0.609
F05	.745	0.555
F06	.626	0.392
Eigenvalue	4.31	4.31
% Variance	61.576	61.576

Table 2 shows that factors explained a total of 61.78% of the variance, with Factor 1 contributing 21.78%, Factor 2 contributing 20.73%, and Factor 3 contributing 19.26%.

Table 2
Factor Loadings for Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

	Component 1	**Component 2**	**Component 3**	**Communality**
B08A	0.731			0.627
B10C	0.727			0.69
B11C	0.697			0.57
B12C	0.669			0.572
B09C	0.619			0.595
B13C	0.554			0.542
B15IT		0.788		0.715
B14IT		0.768		0.682
B16IT		0.698		0.551
B17IT		0.595		0.529
B19IT		0.586		0.54
B02A			0.788	0.678
B03A			0.775	0.692
B04A			0.72	0.633
B18IT			0.623	0.651
Eigenvalue	6.91	1.228	1.129	9.267
% Variance	21.783	20.731	19.262	61.776

After performing a validity analysis, both variables were subjected to reliability analysis. The Cronbach's *a* values for meaningful work and OCB were 0.889 and 0.783 respectively. The results indicated that the scales used in this study are reliable, as the Cronbach's *a* values were greater than the 0.7 threshold.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistical analysis was employed to examine the respondents' demographic profiles. For the hypothesis testing, a structural equation model with a two-step approach was utilized to assess the reliability and validity of the constructs. In the first step, a measurement model was applied to the confirmatory factor analysis to assess the validity of meaningful work and OCB constructs. Meanwhile, the structural model was assessed in the second step, in order to test the hypothesize structural model.

Results

Participant Profiles

The descriptive analysis shows that most respondents were female (74.6%). The majority of the respondents were between 31 to 40 years of age (40.7). Most respondents were Malays (82.3%), held Bachelor degrees (84.1%), and had 6-to-10 years of teaching experience (26.2%). Most participants were employed at their current school for 1-to-5 years (42.1%).

Assessment of Measurement Model

Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted using the AMOS version 21. All loadings in the model were statistically significant (p<0.001), and the loaded indicators fit very well on their respective factors. The fit indices also reveal that the fit level for this model was acceptable, $\chi2/df = 2.79$, p=0.00; comparative fit index (CFI)=0.96; Tucker-Lewis index (TLI)=0.94; and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)=0.069.

Assessment of Structural Model

As the measurement model exhibited an adequate fit model, the hypothesized structural model as shown in Figure 1 was tested. The model's fit was acceptable: $\chi2/df = 2.509$, p=0.00, comparative fit index (CFI)=0.924; Tucker-Lewis index (TLI)=0.915; and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)=0.063. In addition, it was found that meaningful work significantly affected OCB (β=.65, p<0.001), thus providing support for H1 (Figure 2).

.65***

Meaningful work workwork → OCB
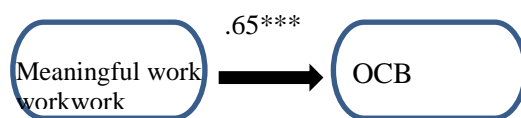
*** p<.001
Figure 2. Structured path model.

Discussion

The results of this study support the hypothesis that meaningful work has positive and significant direct effects on organizational citizenship behaviour. Previous research findings have documented that individuals who experience meaningful work exhibit OCB across various contexts including those who work in banks (Bhorbanifar & Azma, 2014), municipal offices (Yazdanfar & Memarzadeh, 2015), and schools (Poshariati et al., 2014). The findings imply that teachers who regard their tasks as significant are more likely to understand the importance of their work environment and value the mutually dependent relationships within them. Thus, enhanced meaning in the job could prompt teachers to consider the needs, problems, and perspectives of other members from an organizational perspective. As a result,

teachers who display higher degrees of OCB are likely to facilitate effective functionality in the organization (Chen & Chiu, 2009). This notion is supported by Wrzesniewski et al. (1997) who asserted that teachers would spend more discretionary unpaid working hours if they deem their work as a calling. Milliman et al. (2003) and Tepper (2003) also indicated that teachers who hold high spiritual values and who experience meaning at work are likely to perform OCB. Considering teachers' experiences of finding meaning in their work and how they develop a sense of connectedness with organizational members (Manu Gupta et al., 2014) offers a useful perspective to understand teachers' OCB and enhance organizational performance.

Conclusion

This study has provided insights about how engagement in meaningful work could positively impact teachers. Future research could investigate other factors affecting teachers' OCB such as job characteristics, personality traits, and organizational commitment as this study only discussed the relationship between meaningful work and OCB. Future studies could also extend the research framework of this study by exploring the positive role of principal support in strengthening the relationship between meaningful work and OCB. Moreover, since this study relied only on cross-sectional data and single source data, future studies could employ a longitudinal study and use multiple respondents (e.g., principals, teachers) in order to investigate additional factors affecting teachers' OCB.

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