Organizational Citizenship Behavior in Schools: Special Reference to Schools in Trincomalee District in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) has received much attention in the past decade as scholars have recognized its significant impact on the success of organizations. The research study seeks to enrich our understanding of citizenship behavior in the school setting by identifying the main factors that may enhance this behavior among teachers. Specially, the research study examines the direct effect of teachers' participation in decision making on their Organizational citizenship behavior, and the impact of teacher empowerment, as a mediating variable, on this relationship. Data were collected from 150 teachers in 04 schools in Trincomalee District. Hierarchical regression analyses revealed that teacher empowerment played an important role in mediating the relationship between teachers' participation in decision making and Organizational citizenship behavior. Involvement in decision-making processes encourage teachers to take on new roles and have a more direct impact on school life, which in turn might lead them to invest extra efforts in achieving school objectives. Principals and school administrators should acknowledge the importance of empowerment to teachers, and involve teachers in decision making within the managerial field too. The results of the study contribute to our understanding of the way participation in decision making and Organizational citizenship behavior interact in schools, and the importance of teachers' sense of empowerment in explaining this relationship. Future research should further investigate the organizational citizenship within schools as little research has been conducted to date.

Keywords: Empowerment, Citizenship, Decision making, Teachers, Schools.

1. Introduction

As working under changing circumstances becomes an essential feature of schools (Lee et al., 1991; Rinehart et al., 1997; Sweetland and Hoy, 2000), they will necessarily become more dependent on teachers who are willing to contribute to successful change, regardless of formal job requirements. In the organizational literature, these non-prescribed organizationally beneficial behaviors and gestures are distinguished from organizational behaviors that can be enforced on the basis of formal role obligations (VanYperen et al., 1999). Bateman and Organ (1983) denoted these non-prescribed behaviors "organizational citizenship behaviors" (OCBs). Scholars have recognized the significant impact of OCB on the success of an organization, because organizations cannot anticipate through formally stated job descriptions the entire array of behaviors needed to achieve goals (George, 1996). Therefore, the practical importance of OCBs is that they improve organizational efficiency and effectiveness by contributing to resource transformation, innovation, and adaptability (Organ, 1988; Podsakoff et al., 2000; Williams and Anderson, 1991). OCB has received a great deal of attention in business and organizational studies for several reasons (e.g. Tepper and Taylor, 2003; Turnipseed and Murkison, 2000). OCBs can enhance an organization's success by permitting it to more effectively allocate its financial and human resources (Organ, 1988; VanYperen et al., 1999). OCB provides the organization with additional resources and eliminates the need for expensive formal mechanisms otherwise crucial to successful restructuring processes (George, 1996; Katz and Kahn, 1966; Organ and Konovsky, 1989). The current study seeks to enrich our understanding of OCB in the school setting by identifying the main factors that may enhance these behaviors among teachers. Specifically, I propose a model that links participation in decision making (PDM) and OCB, and suggest that teacher empowerment will serve as a mediator between teacher's PDM and OCB.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Organization Citizenship Behaviour definition

OCB is defined in the present study as discretionary behavior directed at individuals or at the organization as a whole, which goes beyond existing role expectations and benefits or is intended to benefit the organization (Organ, 1988). This definition stresses three main features of OCB. First, the behavior must be voluntary; that is, neither role-prescribed nor part of the formal duties. Second, the behavior benefits the organization from the organizational perspective. The important point here is that OCBs do not simply occur randomly within an organization, but are behaviors directed towards, or seen as, benefiting the organization (Van Dyne et al., 1995). Third, OCB has a multidimensional nature. Empirical and conceptual work in this area suggests two broad categories of OCB (Williams and Anderson, 1991).

OCB type 1: behaviors that immediately benefit particular individuals and thus indirectly contribute to the organization. For an example, teachers could be staying after school hours to help a student with learning

materials; or helping a colleague who has a heavy workload.

OCB Type 2: behaviors that benefit the organization as a whole. For an example, volunteering for unpaid tasks, or making innovative suggestions to improve the school.

The distinction between the two is important because it has been suggested that these two forms of OCB may have different antecedents (e.g. Williams and Anderson, 1991; McNeely and Meglino; 1994; Somech and Drach-Zahavy, 2004).

2.2 The relationship between PDM and OCB

This study suggests that the link between PDM and OCB in the school setting is mediated by the teachers' sense of empowerment. Specifically, I suggest that teachers' opportunity to participate in the process of decision making enhances their sense of empowerment, which in turn encourages them to engage in OCBs.

In general, PDM is defined as joint decision making or at least shared influence in decision making by a superior and his or her employee (Koopman and Wierdsma, 1998). Theoretically, PDM is linked to OCB in a number of ways. First, teachers' participation can enhance a sense of fairness and trust in the organization both because teachers can defend their own interests and because they get information on the shaping of decisions to which they would not otherwise be privy. This sense of fairness enhances teachers' willingness to engage in OCBs. Second, because teachers understand work processes and challenges better than administrators or policymakers, their participation ensures that better information will be available for making decisions to facilitate successful teaching (Conley and Bacharach, 1990).

Regarding teachers' PDM, most educational scholars (e.g. Duke and Gansneder, 1990; Herriott and Firestone, 1984; Somech, 2002) identify two main domains of decision making in school: the technical domain, which deals with students and instruction (e.g. instructional policies, classroom discipline policies, resolving learning problems), and the managerial domain, which deals with school operation and administration (e.g. setting school goals, hiring staff, allocating budget, evaluating teachers).

> - Technical decisions are those decisions that have an immediate relevance to the teacher's own classroom. Teachers, as professionals, work normatively to improve classroom performance, to enhance their ability to deal with student discipline, and to strengthen their awareness of student needs (Blase, 1993; Soodak and Podell, 1996). Therefore, participation in the technical domain could lead to beneficial behaviors which are oriented toward colleagues and students. Since OCB type 1 refers to individuals (students and colleagues) who are engaged in educational aspects of teaching and learning, hypothesized that participation in technical decisions would be positively related to OCB type 1 behaviour.
> ### *H1: participation in technical decisions would be positively related to OCB*
> - The managerial domain includes those activities that relate to the school as a whole. Being involved in the organization environment might expand the teachers' viewpoint and their role perception. This approach may thereby lead them to invest extra efforts in the organization as a whole by making innovative suggestions to improve the organization, and/or volunteering for roles and tasks that are not obligatory (OCB type 2haviour). Thus, based on the above justification following the hypothesis is proposed:
> ### *H2: participation in managerial decisions would be positively related to OCB*
> - In the educational setting, teacher empowerment is defined as "a process whereby school participants develop the competence to take charge of their own growth and resolve their own problems" (Short et al., 1994, p. 38). Teacher empowerment serves as a vehicle whereby participation in decision making enhances organizational citizenship behaviors. Thus, based on the above justification following the hypothesis is proposed:
> ### *H3: teacher empowerment would mediate the PDM-OCB relationship*

3. Method

The data for this study were collected from Trincomalee District schools. The participants, the research instruments and the measures are described below.

Participants the sample for this study includes 150 teachers in four schools in Trincomalee District, who teach in variety of schools- T/Sri Vikneshwara Maha Vidyalayam, T/Methodist Girls College, Kalaimahal Maha Vidyalayam and St.Josephs College, Trincomalee. Of the teachers, 65 percent were female and 35 percent were male. The mean of age of the teachers was 38. Regarding educational background, 64 percent of the respondents held a Bachelor's degree and 36 percent of the respondents had the college diploma with teaching credentials.

Research instrument is questionnaire with five point likert scales that measured their participation in decision making, organizational citizenship behavior, and perceived level of empowerment in the school in which they worked.

3.1 Teacher participation in decision making

Teacher participation in decision making is the opportunity for teachers to take part in the decision-making process on issues that influence their school life. The questionnaire used to measure teacher participation on 19 decision items. Two factors emerged, the first factor reflected decisions related to issues concerning teaching and student discipline and grades, thus this factor corresponds to technical PDM. The technical domain included nine items: what to teach, how to teach, texts/workbooks available, texts/workbooks used, student discipline codes, standardized testing policy, grading policies, reporting student achievement and students rights. The second factor represents managerial PDM. The managerial domain included ten items: teacher's assignment to school, teacher's subject/grade assignment, students' assignment to class, removal for special instruction, designing facilities, budget developing, spending priorities, staff hiring, staff development, and teacher's performance evaluation. Teachers were asked to specify their level of PDM with regard to each of the above issues. Each sub-scale was measured by the average response to the appropriate item, rated on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (very seldom), through 3 (sometimes), to 5 (very often).

3.2 Organizational citizenship behavior

OCB is defined as discretionary behavior that is directed at individuals or at the organization as a whole. This type of behavior goes beyond existing role expectations, and benefits the organization, or is intended to benefit it (Organ, 1988). To measure teachers' OCB, The questionnaire consisted of three sub-scales: (1) OCBs towards the student (eight items; e.g. "stay after school hours to help students with class materials"), (2) OCBs towards colleagues (seven items; e.g. "help an absent colleague by assigning learning tasks to the class"), and (3) OCBs towards the school as a whole (eight items; e.g. "make innovative suggestions to improve the school"). Each sub-scale was measured by the mean response to the relevant items rated on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree), through 3 (neither agree nor disagree), to 5 (strongly agree).

3.3 Teacher empowerment

Empowerment is defined and measured in relation to the teachers' power to influence key decisions regarding the teaching and learning environment (Sweetland and Hoy, 2000). In this study, teacher empowerment was measured by five-point Likert-type scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Factor analysis of the School Participant Empowerment Scale revealed six dimensions. The dimensions and their internal coefficient alphas are: involvement in decision making (0.89); opportunities for professional growth (0.83); status (0.86); self-efficacy (0.84); autonomy (0.81); and impact (0.82).

4. Findings

A strong correlation was found between empowerment and PDM in the technical domain (r 0.61), and a weaker correlation, though still high (r0.45), between empowerment and PDM in the managerial domain. The six sub-scales of teacher empowerment were also positively correlated with technical PDM (ranging from 0.42 to 0.52); and with managerial PDM, though the range of correlations here was greater (0.10 to 0.63). The higher teachers scored on any of the teacher empowerment components, the more they reported on performing organizational citizenship behaviors, and the more they reported on participating in technical decision making and most aspects of the managerial level of decision making.

An examination of the means of the sub-scales of the School Participant Empowerment Scale revealed that the sub-scales that received the highest scores were status (Mean 4.1), professional growth (Mean 3.8), impact (Mean 3.7), and self-efficacy (Mean 3.7). The lowest average score was ascribed to decision making (Mean 3.1). The Pearson correlation matrix revealed that all six sub-scales were significantly ($p , 0.0001$) and positively correlated with OCB-I (ranging from 0.20 to 0.58) and with OCB-O (ranging from 0.19 to 0.57). With regard to the PDM domains, the mean of technical PDM was found to be higher than the mean of managerial PDM (3.2 and 2.1, respectively; $p , 0.0001$). This finding implies that the teachers perceived themselves as more involved in decisions relating to their day-to-day teaching tasks than to the managerial aspects of their job.

The first two hypotheses assumed that participation in technical decisions would be positively related to OCB, and that participation in managerial decisions would be positively related to OCB. The correlation between technical PDM and OCB type 1 was higher than the correlation between technical PDM and OCB type 2, but both correlations were statistically significant and relatively high. In relation to managerial PDM, the correlation with OCB (individual and organization) was almost the same (0.48 and 0.49, respectively). Finally, the correlation between OCB type 1 and OCB type 2 was relatively high (0.78), implying that the two constructs share similar characteristics. The more teachers exhibited OCBs toward individuals (students or colleagues), the more they exhibited such behaviors toward the school as an organization. The correlations between technical and managerial PDM and OCB (individual and organization) did not confirm hypotheses regarding the relation between technical PDM and OCB type 1, and managerial PDM and OCB type 2.

Hierarchical regression analyses were conducted to test the mediating effect of teacher empowerment on

the relations between the predicting variable, teacher PDM, and the dependent variable, OCB. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis extracts the variance of the variable included first, and continues to build up the regression solution by adding portions of variances of other predictors, uncorrelated with predictors already included. Thus, the order of inclusion of variables into the regression is crucial. Variables included earlier account for more variance than they would account for, were they included at a later point in the analysis. A complete mediating effect can be demonstrated when the following conditions hold: the predictor (participation in decision making) is related to the output (OCB); the mediator (teacher empowerment) is related to the output (OCB); and the relation between the predictor and the output is eliminated when the mediator is controlled (Baron and Kenny, 1986).

Two hierarchical regressions were computed to test the mediating effect of teacher empowerment on the relation between teacher PDM and OCB; each analysis regressed the dependent variable (OCB type 1 behaviour, OCB type 2 behaviour) on teacher technical and managerial PDM and the mediator, teacher empowerment.

The results showed that both technical and managerial PDM were statistically significant and entered the equation, though their contribution to the explained variance of OCB type 1 behaviour, after the inclusion of teacher empowerment, was minor and The results of this set of regression analyses suggest that teacher empowerment mediated the relationship between teacher PDM and OCB type 1 behaviour only partially. The findings suggest both a direct and an indirect relationship between PDM and OCB. As expected, teacher empowerment was found to mediate the PDM-OCB relationship, though only partially (Hypothesis 3).

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine the direct effect of teachers' participation in decision making on their organizational citizenship behavior, and the impact of teacher empowerment, as a mediating variable, on this relationship. More specifically, we expected to find two relationships: first, between technical PDM and OCB on the individual level, and second, between managerial PDM and OCB on the organizational level. The results did not support our hypotheses in this regard. The data analyses showed that each type of PDM was significantly correlated with each type of OCB. With regard to OCB, it should be noted that because the correlation between OCB type 1 and OCB type 2 was found to be relatively high (r0.78), the construct of organizational citizenship behavior may not be clearly distinguished. It is feasible that the teachers in our sample viewed their citizenship behaviors in helping students as much the same as their citizenship behaviors in assisting the school, and vice versa: helping the school to perform more effectively is a way of helping the students.

The PDM-OCB relationships also imply that teachers who are involved in decision making, whether on issues related to their own classroom or to the school as an organization, will tend to exhibit OCBs toward their students and colleagues, as well as toward the school as a whole. The findings suggest that teacher empowerment plays an important role in mediating the relationship between PDM and OCB. The effect of PDM on empowerment may explain the role that empowerment plays in the PDM-OCB relationship. Involvement in decision-making processes induces teachers to take on new roles and "go the extra mile". This is reflected in the teachers' motivation to have a more direct impact on the school life, feel a sense of self-efficacy and autonomy in making personal and school decisions, raise status, and strive for professional growth.

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