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The Organizational Citizenship Behaviour of Academic Staff in North Cyprus

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Abstract

Due to its contribution to the effective functioning of organizations the topic of Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) has gained much attention over the past years and has been studied in a diversity of settings. The purpose of this study was to examine OCB in the higher education sector. More specifically, the study investigated the degree of OCB that exists amongst the academic staff at a private university in North Cyprus. The study instrument utilized was the “Organizational Citizenship Behaviour Scale” developed by Podsakoff et al. (1990) which is the most widely used OCB study instrument in the literature. The 24 item scale measures the five subscales/dimensions of OCB, namely altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, and civic virtue. The average of all 24 items calculates overall OCB. The study results indicate that OCB does exist amongst the academic staff at the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences; however the results are only partial in that the study is still ongoing. The complete study results will enable the researcher to conclude whether academic staff from different faculties indicates different levels of OCB.

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1. Introduction

The effective functioning of any organization heavily depends on the extra role/voluntary behaviours of the organizational members (Katz and Kahn, 1966). This indicates that organizations seek members who display

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“Organizational Citizenship Behaviour” (OCB), which Organ (1988) described as “discretionary behaviours, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system and that in aggregate promote the effective functioning of the organization”. In other words, what is necessary for organizational survival and effectiveness is organizational members who contribute to the functioning of their organization by engaging in extra role/voluntary behaviours. Such extra role behaviours includes helping co-workers that has a heavy workload, not complaining about minor issues or problems, and voluntarily attending and participating in meetings.

In 1983 Bateman and Organ introduced the term “citizenship” to describe the behaviours that lubricate the social machinery of the organization and labelled employees who engage in such behaviours as “good citizens”. The literature indicates that research conducted has shown that OCBs benefit organizations in many ways such as job satisfaction, customer satisfaction, quality and quantity of the service or product, sales performance, customer complaints, and revenue (Podsakoff and MacKenzie, 1994; Podsakoff, Whiting, Podsakoff, and Blume, 2009). OCB has been studied in a diversity of disciplines including human resources management, marketing, and economics (Lievens and Anseel, 2004).

The effects of OCB are difficult to measure because OCB is generally not included as part of any standard performance measures that an organization gathers about its employees (Greenberg, 2002).

It is well known that higher education institutions play a fundamental role in achieving social equity and promoting higher levels of economic and social development (Pienaar and Bester, 2006). Higher education institutions are however characterised by constant change and turbulence due to national policies and globalization. The success of any educational system depends upon the involvement, effort and the contribution of the academic staff or their professional expertise (Noordin and Jusoff 2009). Universities are the only organisations focused on dual core functions of knowledge creation and knowledge transmission through the process of research and teaching. The realities and changes within higher education do not only affect the image and status of an academic career, but also contribute to problems such as increased job dissatisfaction and work stress and a decline in commitment to the institution (Pienaar and Bester, 2006).

Today the academic staff of any educational institute is the main value creators in their higher education institutions. Therefore identifying the engagement of academic staff in OCB makes sense. In this respect the main aim of the present study is to determine the existence of OCB in a private university in North Cyprus. Studies that examine OCB in the Turkish cultural context are few thus providing an ideal opportunity for research aiming to fill the gap in this area. The study is significant in that it provides university authorities and management with an insight into the current situation of their academic staff. This insight will give them the opportunity to take the necessary measures to improve conditions where required in order to encourage OCB and preserve the existing ones.

2. Methodology

In order to identify the existence of OCB amongst the academic staff at the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences at a private university in North Cyprus an adapted version of the Organizational Citizenship Behaviour Scale (OCBS) (Podsakoff et al., 1990) was used. This scale is one of the most widely used instruments used to measure OCBs and is based on Organ’s (1988) five dimensional taxonomy. The 24 item scale measures the five subscales/dimensions of OCB, namely altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, and civic virtue. Items include “I help others who have heavy workloads”, “I take steps to try to prevent problems with other workers”, “My attendance at work is above the norm” and “I obey company rules and regulations even when no one is watching”. The average of all 24 items calculate overall OCB. The original OCBS was translated into Turkish by the author and tested on ten academics to test its validity and reliability. The original scale includes five reverse coded items (i.e. “I consume a lot of time complaining about trivial matters” and “I always find fault with what the organization is doing”), however the author realized that the reverse coded items were misunderstood so decided to change them into positive statements to reduce confusion (for instance, the item “I consume a lot of time complaining about trivial matters” became “I do not consume a lot of time complaining about trivial matters” and “I always find fault with what the organization is doing” became “I do not always find fault with what the organization is doing”). Respondents are asked to rate each of the 24 items on a five-point scale (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree). The internal consistency reliability of the adapted scale was found to be 0.87 for this study. The scale was accompanied with a personal information form in order to determine the demographic variables of the study respondents.

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