

ENGAGEMENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR: DOES GENDER MAKE DIFFERENCES?

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Abstract

Although number of scholars attempted to show the gender differences in many organizationally relevant areas over the past decades, treatment and expectations of female and male at their workplace are still observed as differentiated. Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) is the behavior that employees engage in actions that are organizationally significant and not prescribed in their formal job description. OCB has been related to number of positive consequences at both individual and organizational level. Therefore, scholars have paid their attention in studying this growing area. The amount of engagement in OCB may vary based on the gender differences. The objective of this study was to examine the gender differences in engagement of OCB. A sample of 160 employees (N=180, 80 Males and 80 Females) was drawn from public service sector in Sri Lanka. Validated questionnaire was used to collect the data. Five dimensions of OCB namely conscientiousness, sportsmanship, civic virtue, helping behavior, and courtesy have been used to test the differences. The findings revealed significant gender differences on three dimensions of OCB. While conscientiousness and helping behavior have shown female on the higher side, sportsmanship has shown male on the higher side. But, in terms of other dimensions civic virtue and courtesy the differences were insignificant falling far away from the probability level of .05. However, analysis on overall OCB shown negligible gender differences suggest that males and females are both almost equal in engaging in OCB. Nevertheless, the results supporting in case of the dimensions of helping behavior females are on the higher side suggesting that female are generally more empathic or sympathetic than male and therefore, they are more helpfulness, kindness, and compassion than male. However, in case of dimension of sportsmanship male are on the higher side suggesting that males are willing to tolerate inconveniences without complaining petty grievances. This is consistent with the previous findings that male possess certain characteristics such as happily taking risk, stillness in a crisis situation, and the ability to work under pressure. Findings of this study have number of implications and have shown new avenues for future research.

Keywords: OCB, Gender, Public Sector, Sri Lanka

Introduction

Calhoun et al (1997) defined gender as “the set of characteristics, roles and behavior patterns that distinguish female from male which are constructed not only biologically but socially and culturally”(p.240). Gender

has been identified as one of the social categories and this category has been considered as the most important social category by social psychologists (Weatherall & Gallois, 2003). Certainly when someone meets a new person gender is the first thing he or she notices. On the one hand, gender

differences has been the popular topic studied by social psychologists. On the other hand, gender has been considered as an important factor which could affect the performance of employees (Anbazhagan & Kotur, 2014). Because male and females are differ in their physical and psychological outlook. However, some scholars argues that male and female are treated equally in all aspects of life (Moore, 1990; Kimmel, 2002) and it is also true in the context of organizations. It is obvious that irrespective of gender both male and female compete in the world of work. Gender equity and equality has been given priority in the modern globalization and equal opportunity is obviously given to all.

Furthermore, now the trend has been changed from traditional personnel management to human resource management. Since human resources are inimitable and tacit by nature, it is considered as most valuable asset (Rauf, 2015a). The degree of engagement and extra role behavior by human resource such as organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) is imperative for the development of organizations (Rauf, 2015b). OCB has been the popular topic to study among present scholars. OCB is defined as “individual behavior 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” (Organ, 1988, p. 4). Although complete consensus regarding the dimensionality of OCB is not available, five dimensions namely conscientiousness, sportsmanship, civic virtue, helping behavior, and courtesy have been well known (Bateman & Organ, 1983; Organ, 1988; Organ, 1997). They defined “*Altruism*: Discretionary behavior on the part of employees that have the effect of helping a specific other with an organizationally relevant problem. *Conscientiousness*: Discretionary behaviors on the part of the employee that go well beyond the minimum role requirements of the organization in the areas of attendance,

obeying rules and regulations, taking breaks, and so forth. *Sportsmanship*: Willingness of the employee to tolerate less than ideal circumstances without complaining to avoid complaining, petty grievances, railing against real or imagined slights, and making federal cases out of small potatoes *Courtesy*: Discretionary behavior on the part of an individual aimed at preventing work related problems with others from occurring. *Civic virtue*: Behavior on the part of an individual that indicates that he/she responsibly participates in, is involved in, or is concerned about the life of the company” (Podsakoff et al., 1990, p.115). These five categories have then been grouped into two broader dimensions that represent two distinct aspects of OCB. The first dimension focuses on behaviors that are directed toward the organization and is called OCB-O while the second dimension focuses on behaviors that are directed toward the individual and is called OCB-I (Williams & Anderson, 1991). Courtesy and helping behavior combine to represent OCB-I while civic virtue, conscientiousness, and sportsmanship combine to represent OCB-O (Williams & Anderson, 1991). Although many conceptualizations of OCB (Podsakoff et al., 2000) emerged, above two are common (Rauf, 2016). The concept of OCB is also related to other concepts such as organizational spontaneity, prosocial organizational behavior, contextual performance and extra-role behavior. OCB is thought to contribute positively to organizational performance. Many predictors determine the level of OCB.

The framework identified by Rauf (2016) from a review of literature highlighted number of organizational and individual level positive consequences. Considering the positive consequences of OCB in the literature on performance, OCB has received much attention (Rauf, 2014; Rauf, 2015a) for the past decades, and has become an important and growing area of research (Ozturk, 2010).

On the other hand, employees of organizations are much diverse. Especially

in terms of gender percentage of female workforce are increasing in many organization all over the world. In this context scholars has a question of whether female and male are differ in their performance. This debate has been an interesting hot topic among scholars in behavioral science (Anu & Radhey, 2017). In order to get the maximum out of the workforce, management of organizations need to understand their workforce and their behavior. In this context understanding workforce also entails understanding the basic gender differences underlying behavior (Anu & Radhey, 2017). They studied about whether the female and male employees in an organization differ in displaying OCB among a sample from India and found a difference in display of OCB by female and male employees. Similarly, Podsakoff et al (2000) conducted a review and reported that there were no gender differences in OCB. Consequently, using gender role theory Kidder and McLean Parks (2001) suggest that some dimensions of OCB may be in-role for female, while others may be more in-role for male.

While equal opportunity is given to both male and female they are physically and psychologically differ. Hence, it is obvious that the level of efficiency at work also may vary based on these differences. Goleman (1995) argues that male and female are psychologically different and their work performance also depends on their emotional intelligence. Although studies on gender differences exists in the literature, findings are inconsistent. While some authors (eg., Brush, 1992) argue that there are remarkable differences between the male and female employees, some other authors (eg., Ahl, 2002) argue that there are no difference in the productivity of male and female. Kimmel (2004) argues that although some decades ago male and female are treated differently, nowadays there is a gender convergence rather than divergence. Boundaries between the life style of both male and female are removed in the present modern society. Ahl (2002) indicates that female are the “engine

of economic growth” (p.125). Solem and Blekesaune (2005) state that female show better performance against male.

Close review of literature on gender and dimensions of OCB, there are number of evidence to support to the argument of females engagement in helping behavior. Social scientists say that female place the needs of others, especially those of family members, before their own (Bernard, 1981; Chodorow, 1978; Miller, 1976). The implicit female gender role includes norms encouraging certain forms of helping. Another scholar Gilligan (1982) emphasize that female are oriented toward caring and responsibility. Furthermore, other scholars also revealed that female are more empathic or sympathetic than male (Feshbach, 1982; Hoffman, 1977). Spence and Helmreich (1978) argued that female have been rated more favorably than male, not only on helpfulness, but also on kindness, compassion, and the ability to devote oneself completely to others. Ehrhart and Godfrey (2003) also found the relationship between gender and OCB. According to this study, OCBs were considered more in-role for female than they were for male. However, it was true only for the dimensions of helping behavior, self-development, and organizational compliance. But the dimensions of sportsmanship, civic virtue, and individual initiative were considered more in-role for male.

Eagly, Karau, and Makajani (1995) state that according to gender role theory, individuals follow cultural expectations about their gender roles because of social pressures. According to culture in American society the role of the woman is to show concern and selflessness, both of which are traits that are consistent with altruism and courtesy dimensions of OCB (Kidder & McLean Parks, 2001). Eagly (1987) and Schulte-Ruther et al. (2008) support the argument that female are more altruistic in their helping. Heilman and Chen (2005) also found similar results which indicates helping behavior dimension were considered as in role for female than male. They also found

that civic virtue and individual initiative dimensions were considered as in role for male than female.

However, the role of the man is to show aggression and competitiveness (Schein & Mueller, 1992), which are more consistent with sportsmanship and civic virtue dimensions of OCB (Ehrhart & Godfrey, 2003). Many studies found a relationship between gender and OCB (Farrell & Finkelstein, 2007; Heilman & Chen, 2005). Farrell and Finkelstein (2007) found that female were generally expected to engage in more helping behavior and civic virtue than male. Contrary to this findings Kidder (2002) found no gender differences in reporting altruism dimension of OCB. However, female exhibit less civic virtue dimension of OCB than male.

Studies on gender differences (Bern, 1974; Broverman et al., 1972; Ruble, 1983; Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1974) have highlighted that male possess certain characteristics such as happily taking risk, stillness in a crisis situation, and the ability to work under pressure. These characteristics are attributes of sportsmanship dimension of OCB. Some authors argue that female score somewhat higher than male on some facets of conscientiousness, such as order, dutifulness, and self-discipline (Feingold, 1994; Costa et al., 2001). However, Costa et al. (2001) also state that the gender differences are not consistent across cultures, and no significant gender difference has typically been found in conscientiousness. In support of this conclusion, Joel et al. (2015) also revealed that there is no any difference between male brain and female brain.

Abdullahi and Kumar (2016), conducted a study about the gender differences in prosocial behavior. Prosocial behavior is a related concept to OCB. They found that both males and females are almost equal on most of the prosocial behavior dimensions. Similarly, another study by Chadha and Misra (2006) indicated no significant influence of gender on prosocial behavior. Eisenberg and Fabes (1998) suggest that

gender and culture are important indicators of prosocial behavior and they suggest females are slightly high in prosocial behavior than males. The study by Afolabi (2013) examined the relevance of five factor personality factors, gender difference, and emotional intelligence on prosocial behavior. The results of their study indicated a significant relationship within the variables with respect to prosocial behavior. Erdle et al. (1992) also found that female tend to be on higher side on the measures of helping behavior. Further they suggested that gender differences prevail in personality correlates of prosocial behavior. Bihm et al. (1979) also revealed that females are more inclined to helping mind than males. Einolf (2001) also suggested that in general females are more prosocially motivated than males. However, some other studies have come to somewhat conflicting conclusions. Feinman (1978) suggested on the basis of his research that male have been found more helpful than female. The studies conducted by Boice and Goldman (1981) suggested no gender differences in helping behavior. Eagly and Crowley (1986) conducted a meta-analytic review of gender differences in prosocial behavior and suggested that overall males helped more than females and females got more help than males. However, gender differences in prosocial behavior were conflicting across different researches.

In Sri Lanka both male and female enjoy relatively high standards in health, status and education, much in contrast to most other developing countries. Now Sri Lankan female enjoy a relatively higher status than their counterparts in many other developing countries (Gunawardane, 2016).

Female in Sri Lanka form approximately 57% of a total estimated population of 21 million (Sri Lanka Department of Census and statistics, 2017). As reviewed in the previous sections many studies are conducted on gender differences and OCBs in other cultural context. However, Sri Lanka provides a unique culture compared to west and other countries. Culture and, social roles and norms in Sri Lankan context is

considerably different from other countries. Further studies on gender difference and engagement of OCB in Sri Lankan context is scarce as far as the published literature is available. In addition to that, nowadays gender equity and equality have become main concern in Sri Lanka. Both male and female equally compete for employment. But there is no systematic evidence to support whether all the individuals can work and compete at the same rate irrespective of their gender. This is even not sure in engaging in OCBs which is also important behavior for the organizations for its success. Hence, the aim of this study is to investigate the influence of gender in engagement of OCBs, especially the influence of gender on OCB performance of the employees in the public service sector in Sri Lanka.

Methods

Total sample of 160 (n=160, 80 male & 80 female) have been selected by convenient sampling method from public service sector in Sri Lanka for this study. The respondents were from various categories of employment such as lower, middle and top levels. They were between the age group of 25 to 54 years. Six percent of the respondents have either postgraduate degree or diploma, 22% percent of the respondents hold bachelor degrees. Thirty four percent hold a diploma and the rest have high school qualification (38%). A majority, 82% of them have experience period of less than 10 years, whereas 18% of the respondents have more than 10 years of experience.

Five dimensions of OCB proposed by Organ (1988) have been used for this study. Five dimensions have been widely accepted and used (Gonzalez & Garazo, 2006). The questionnaire consists of twenty items which measure all five dimensions and each item was measured in Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). To validate the questionnaire an exploratory factor analysis was carried out to confirm the construct validity of the instrument. Convergent validity analysis was tested using KMOs. Results confirms convergent

validity of the instrument with explaining sufficient percentage of variations for each dimensions. As all factors are not perfectly correlated and their correlation coefficients range from 0 to 1, discriminant validity of the instrument is established. Reliability test was done using Cronbach alpha and confirmed that the measures have acceptable reliability as every dimension shown a reliability coefficient of more than 0.70 as proposed by Nunnally (1978). The validated questionnaires were issued to participants with a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study and asking their cooperation. A brief introduction on the topic and the objectives of the study was also given while distributing the questionnaire. In addition to that a self-addressed stamped envelope to send the completed questionnaire also handed over to the participant personally. Collecting the completed questionnaire was done through post and by hand.

Findings and Conclusions

To analyze the data to know if there is a difference in engaging OCB and its specific dimensions between male and female, an independent sample T Test is performed using SPSS. The results are presented in Table 1. The results revealed significant gender differences on three dimensions of OCB, i.e. conscientiousness ($t = 2.45, p < .05$), sportsmanship ($t=2.71, p < .05$) and helping behavior ($t=2.40, p < .05$).

While, in terms of conscientiousness and helping behavior females are on the higher side, in terms of sportsmanship males are on the higher side. But rest of the dimensions have shown no any significant differences as those fall away from the probability level of .05. However, overall OCB in general shown no significant differences among males and females ($t=0.41, p > 0.05$). This findings is consistent with the findings of previous literature (Boice & Goldman, 1981; Chadha & Misra, 2006; Anu & Radhey, 2017) which studied on gender differences in prosocial behavior which is a similar concept to OCB.

Table 1. Means, SDs, t – value and p-value for OCB and its dimensions among male and female participants

Dimensions of Organizational Citizenship Behavior	Male		Female		t value	P value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Conscientiousness	2.62	0.63	3.34	0.97	2.45	0.02**
Sportsmanship	3.66	0.97	2.83	0.78	2.71	0.01**
Civic virtue	3.13	0.83	3.00	0.75	0.45	0.65
Helping behavior	2.60	0.73	3.40	1.05	2.40	0.02**
Courtesy	3.14	0.83	3.06	0.70	0.23	0.81
OCB	3.33	0.35	3.25	0.64	0.41	0.67

** Significant at .05 level

Further, the results revealed that the OCB dimension of helping behavior scored significantly higher side which indicates that females are more helpful minded than males. This finding is consistent with the previous studies (Afolabi, 2013; Erdle et al., 1992; Bihm et al., 1979; Einolf, 2001) which also concluded that females are more likely to help than males. However, some other studies (Feinman, 1978) found that male are more helpful than female.

Implications and Avenues for Future Research

Overall, the findings are consistent with the previous findings. However, studies on gender differences in engagement of OCB by different researchers have shown conflicting findings. It can be concluded that more or less males and females do not differ in engagement of overall OCB. Although few previous studies shown females are more inclined to OCB than males, the present study reveals conflicting views suggesting that on two dimensions (conscientiousness and helping behavior) of OCB females are higher and on one dimension (sportsmanship) of OCB males are higher, but on rest of five dimensions (civic virtue and courtesy) both males and females seem to be equal. But there are female employees who willingly engage in sportsmanship dimensions of OCB. However overall OCB does not show any gender differences.

This study is important because it helps us reexamine the workplace gender role in terms of organizational citizenship behavior. While tempting to think of no difference in performance especially contextual performance, this study shows that there are differences in terms of various dimensions of OCB. Therefore, this study provides a clear picture on how gender makes differences in performing various dimensions of OCB which can enrich individual work life as well as organizational outcomes. Findings of this study may also be useful for human resource practitioners for their policy making. However, fundamentally female and male have shown no differences. Organizations should improve performance of human capital through other ways of better human resource practices for sustaining its growth and competitiveness. Some authors suggest that culture of origin or social roles and norms influence gender differences. Exactly how culture impacts in gender differences is a complex question, worthy for future study.

As the sample size of the current study is comparatively small, more relevant inferences can be drawn by future researchers by studying among large sample size. Although there were few significant findings in this study, there are still many avenues are left for studying on OCBs. OCBs are accepted as important as task performance in organizations. Considering the importance of this behavior this study can be extended with gendered job as well.

As this study was limited to only public sector, a similar study can also be conducted among a sample drawn from private sector. Such future studies may shed light on how male and female perform and how findings ultimately impact outcomes of organizational performance.

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