

Original Article

The Relationship between Job Attachment, Cultural Intelligence, and Organizational Citizenship Behavior among Shiraz Municipality Employees

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Abstract

Background and Aim: Organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) create a more positive and productive work environment. Understanding what factors influence OCB allows organizations to develop strategies to promote these desirable behaviors. This study aimed to predict OCB based on job attachment and cultural intelligence among Shiraz municipality employees.

Materials and Methods: The research method was descriptive-correlational. The research population was 303 employees working in Shiraz Municipality's Cultural-Social Organization in 2023. The sample was 108 employees selected using a convenience sampling method. Data were collected using questionnaires for OCB, job attachment, and cultural intelligence. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation coefficient, and stepwise regression.

Results: The results showed significant positive relationships between job attachment and OCB ($P < 0.01$) and cultural intelligence and OCB ($P < 0.01$). Additionally, there was a multiple relationship between job attachment, cultural intelligence, and OCB among Shiraz municipality employees ($P < 0.01$).

Conclusion: These findings indicate a positive association between higher levels of job attachment and cultural intelligence and increased engagement in OCBs. Specifically, employees who feel more attached to their jobs and demonstrate greater cultural intelligence are more likely to exhibit behaviors that benefit the organization beyond their formal job duties. This study contributes to understanding the factors influencing employee OCB by highlighting the importance of affective (job attachment) and cognitive (cultural intelligence) factors.

Keywords: : Job attachment, Cultural intelligence, Organizational citizenship behavior, Employees

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Introduction

In today's competitive organizational landscape, fostering organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) among employees has become increasingly important (1). OCB encompasses discretionary actions that extend beyond formal job requirements and contribute to organizational effectiveness. Although crucial for organizational success, these behaviors are often less prevalent in some sectors, including municipalities (2). OCB plays a vital role in enhancing an organization's capacity to attract, retain, and engage top talent. A strong presence of OCB cultivates a positive and supportive work environment, making the organization a desirable destination for skilled and experienced professionals (3). Consequently, organizations with robust OCB cultures are more likely to attract and retain high-performing employees, ultimately leading to improved organizational performance (4).

OCB encompasses a range of discretionary behaviors undertaken by employees that extend beyond their formal job descriptions, contributing to overall organizational success (5). These actions stem from a genuine desire to assist colleagues, supervisors, and the organization (6). In contrast to job performance, which centers on fulfilling specific tasks and meeting prescribed expectations, OCB transcends these requirements, reflecting an employee's commitment to organizational success (7). The positive influence of OCB on organizational outcomes is well established. Employees who exhibit OCB are more likely to experience job satisfaction, feel a sense of connection to their organization, and demonstrate a heightened motivation to contribute their best efforts (8).

Job attachment, a psychological state in which an individual's job or organizational role plays a central part in their identity and self-concept, is a crucial factor influencing OCB (9). From the organizational standpoint, job attachment is considered a driver of employee motivation and enhanced growth and productivity (10). It positively influences organizational effectiveness, output, and employee morale by fostering deep employee engagement in their work, transforming it into a meaningful and fulfilling experience (11). Cultivating deep employee engagement with their work and responsibilities,

effectively managing talent, and ultimately creating a meaningful, valued, and satisfying work experience significantly enhance organizational effectiveness, productivity, and morale (12). Individuals develop deep engagement in their jobs when they perceive the potential to satisfy salient psychological needs, such as growth, meaning, achievement, recognition, and security, among others (13).

In today's increasingly globalized world, cultural intelligence has emerged as a critical factor influencing OCB. As organizations extend their operations across diverse cultural contexts, the capacity to effectively interact and collaborate with individuals from different backgrounds becomes essential for success (14). Cultural intelligence encompasses the skills and knowledge necessary to navigate cross-cultural interactions effectively, fostering positive OCB among employees. Individuals with high cultural intelligence demonstrate a strong ability to work effectively with people from diverse cultural backgrounds, mitigating potential workplace conflicts and misunderstandings (15, 16). Cultural intelligence transcends mere cultural awareness; it involves the capacity to adapt one's behavior, communication style, and expectations to suit the specific cultural context (17). Culturally intelligent individuals are adept at interpreting unfamiliar or ambiguous behaviors and recognizing the complex and interconnected nature of cultural influences. They understand that while cultural norms play a significant role, situational context and individual personality also shape behavior (18, 19).

OCB is crucial for organizational success, fostering a positive work environment, enhancing productivity, and improving employee engagement. Understanding the factors influencing OCB enables organizations to develop strategies to promote these desirable behaviors. While prior research has explored the independent effects of job attachment and cultural intelligence on OCB, a gap remains in understanding their combined influence. This study investigates the potential synergistic effect of these factors on OCB within the specific context of Shiraz municipality employees. There is a need to explore how job attachment and cultural intelligence might interact to create a more robust foundation for OCB among employees in this particular organizational setting. By addressing this knowledge gap, the study aims to provide valuable

insights for the municipality and similar organizations to develop targeted strategies for promoting OCB among their employees, ultimately fostering a more positive and productive work environment. This research investigated the effects of job attachment and cultural intelligence on OCB among Shiraz municipality employees.

Methods

The present study employed a descriptive, correlational research design to examine the relationships among job attachment, cultural intelligence, and OCB among employees of the Shiraz Municipality's Cultural and Social Organization. The study population comprised all 303 employees of this organization in 2023. A sample of 120 employees was selected using convenience sampling, and research questionnaires were administered to these participants. After removing incomplete questionnaires, 108 participants remained for the final analysis. Inclusion criteria for participation stipulated a minimum of five years of work experience, an age range between 25 and 50 years, and the provision of informed consent. Participants were excluded if they did not express willingness to participate or failed to complete all items on the research questionnaires. To ensure ethical conduct, participants were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their research data. To protect individual privacy and prevent the compromise of personal information, results were reported at the aggregate level.

Materials

Organizational Citizenship Behavior Questionnaire (OCB-Q)

The OCB-Q consists of 27 items assessing six dimensions of OCB: civility (4 items), altruism (4 items), conscientiousness (5 items), interpersonal coordination (4 items), resource protection (3 items), and civic virtue (3 items). The OCB-Q utilizes a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) (20). The minimum and maximum scores for each respondent are 27 and 135, respectively. In the current study, the internal consistency of the OCB-Q was assessed using

Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a value of 0.86.

Job Attachment Questionnaire (JAQ)

The JAQ measures the level of attachment individuals have to their jobs. The questionnaire consists of 20 items assessing three dimensions of job attachment: affective, cognitive, and normative attachments. The JAQ utilizes a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Very Disagree) to 5 (Very Agree). The minimum and maximum scores for each respondent are 20 and 100, respectively (21). In the current study, the internal consistency of the JAQ was using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a value of 0.83.

Cultural Intelligence Questionnaire (CIQ)

The standardized CIQ developed by Prado (2006) consists of 19 items and four subscales measuring the components of cultural intelligence strategy, cultural intelligence knowledge, cultural intelligence motivation, and cultural intelligence behavior. Responses are scored on a 5-point Likert scale, with a minimum and maximum total score of 19 and 95, respectively (22). In this study, Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the reliability of the CIQ, yielding a coefficient of 0.87 for the overall scale.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis. Correlation analysis examined the relationships between job attachment, cultural intelligence, and OCB. Multiple regression analysis was used to predict OCB from job attachment and cultural intelligence.

Results

Of the participants, 56 (51.85%) were undergraduates, 36 (33.33%) were master's students, and 16 (14.82%) were doctoral students. Of them, 69 (63.89%) were married and 39 (36.11%) were single. Table 1 shows the means, standard deviations (SD), and minimum and maximum scores of the research variables.

Table 2 presents the correlation coefficients of the study variables. The results indicated a significant positive correlation between job attachment and OCB ($r=0.37$, $P=0.001$). It suggests that individuals with higher levels of job attachment tend to exhibit greater OCBs. In

addition, a significant positive correlation was between cultural intelligence and OCB ($r=0.26$, $P=0.007$). It implies that individuals with higher levels of cultural intelligence tend to engage in more OCBs. As shown in Table 3, the stepwise regression analysis included the variables of job attachment and cultural intelligence. In the first step, only the variable of job attachment was entered, yielding an F-value of 16.82 and a P-value of 0.001. In the second step, with the addition of the variable of cultural intelligence, the F-value was 11.66, and the P-value was 0.001. In this model, the adjusted R-squared for job attachment in the first step was 0.37, and the adjusted R-squared for job attachment and cultural intelligence in the second step was 0.43, indicating that these two steps explained 14.0% and 18.0% of the variance in OCP, respectively.

Discussion

This research examined the relationships among job attachment, cultural intelligence, and OCB among Shiraz municipality employees. The findings suggest a multiple relationship among job attachment, cultural intelligence, and OCB in municipal employees. A primary finding of this study was that OCB can be predicted by job attachment in municipal employees. This finding is consistent with previous research by Saeidzaker and Zbihi (23) and Islam et al. (24). In explaining this finding, it should be noted that recent decades have witnessed significant changes in work and the work environment. These changes have contributed to the creation of unpredictable and

uncertain work environments. Emerging trends in organizational downsizing and restructuring have negatively impacted employee morale and commitment, with many employees experiencing insecurity and studies indicating a decline in OCB in the workplace (25).

The contemporary business paradigm of transformation, mergers, cost reduction, and increased efficiency, driven by economic pressures, has engendered growing anxiety and concern among employees and managers (26). Consequently, many individuals avoid or withdraw from modern, high-anxiety work environments. Therefore, a key challenge in contemporary workplaces is the restoration and promotion of employee satisfaction (27). Job attachment is likely a salient construct for addressing these challenges.

Organizational managers and supervisors can cultivate job attachment within work environments by employing non-material resources, insight, and prudent human resource management practices to foster a sense among employees that their work is meaningful, purposeful, and challenging, thereby facilitating organizational growth and progress (28). Individuals possessing this characteristic engage with complex tasks, utilizing their creative and diverse skills and completing work units within their working hours. They maintain positive relationships with supervisors and managers who provide them with constructive performance feedback. Moreover, beyond mere job commitment, individuals with strong job attachments demonstrate a high commitment to their work and career advancement.

Table 1. Mean and standard deviation (SD) minimum and maximum scores of the research variables

Variables	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.
Organizational citizenship behavior	81.07	12.11	55	108
Job attachment	61.71	10.68	40	80
Cultural intelligence	63.02	9.52	39	88

Table 2. Pearson correlation coefficients of the research variables

Variables	Organizational citizenship behavior	
	r	P
Job attachment	0.37	0.001
Cultural intelligence	-0.26	0.007

Table 3. Stepwise regression analysis indices for predicting OCP based on job attachment and cultural intelligence

Predictor variable	F	R	R ²	B	β	t	P
Job attachment	16.82	0.37	0.14	0.42	0.37	4.10	0.001
Job attachment and cultural intelligence	11.66	0.43	0.18	0.39	0.34	3.85	0.001

The second finding revealed that OCB could be predicted by cultural intelligence in municipal employees. This finding is consistent with the results of previous research by Mohammadi Shahroodi et al. (29) and Zúñiga et al. (30). By the aforementioned research, this finding can be explained by the fact that cultural intelligence, as defined by Garamvölgyi and Rudnák (31), is a business management concept and an intercultural competency for employees. Aririguzoh (32) posited that when confronted with novel cultural situations, identifying familiar cues to guide communication becomes challenging. Cultural intelligence is associated with enhanced OCB. OCB can strengthen an organization's capacity to attract and retain skilled and competent employees. Elevated levels of OCB within an organization can render it an attractive workplace; consequently, organizations exhibiting high levels of OCB are more likely to attract more competent employees and achieve improved performance (29).

Employee cultural intelligence can foster increased OCB toward colleagues by cultivating cultural empathy among them. Within a multicultural work environment characterized by diverse cultures and subcultures and low levels of cultural intelligence, it is evident that employees may struggle to behave appropriately toward their colleagues. Such behaviors may encompass empathizing with colleagues or assisting with tasks related to their assigned roles and those beyond their formal responsibilities (33). Individuals with lower cultural intelligence are less likely to establish constructive communication with their colleagues and tend toward withdrawal, which, in turn, diminishes their propensity to engage in discretionary behaviors such as OCBs (34).

Overall, the results of this study indicated that job attachment was a stronger predictor of OCB than cultural intelligence among municipal employees. This finding can be explained by the fact that OCB encourages employees to prioritize group and organizational interests over individual concerns. To ensure organizational effectiveness, organizations require generous participation, dedication, and selflessness of their employees, often including contributions beyond their prescribed duties. Consequently, voluntary contributions from employees are crucial for organizational success.

Organizational effectiveness depends on employee commitment to innovation, proactive behaviors, and exceeding role expectations. Given the positive consequences of OCB, such as enhanced organizational effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity, this behavior is desirable and significant for all organizations. Therefore, organizations seek to provide a conducive environment and leverage factors influencing OCB to enhance employee productivity and individual performance, which, in turn, contributes to organizational productivity.

The present study has some limitations, which should be acknowledged to inform future research and efforts to mitigate or eliminate them. This study was conducted on municipal employees in Shiraz, Iran; therefore, caution should be exercised when generalizing the results to other occupational groups in different cities and regions. Additionally, the absence of controls for personality characteristics may have influenced the results. Another limitation was the reliance on questionnaires and self-report measures, which may increase the potential for bias. Finally, due to the correlational nature of this study, causal inferences cannot be drawn.

Conclusion

The findings revealed significant positive relationships between job attachment and OCB and between cultural intelligence and OCB. Furthermore, a multiple relationship was found among these three variables, indicating that job attachment and cultural intelligence interactively influence OCB. These findings contribute to the expanding body of research on the factors influencing OCB. Job attachment, characterized by a sense of meaning, purpose, and challenge in one's work, emerged as a stronger predictor of OCB compared to cultural intelligence within this specific context of municipal employees. It suggests that fostering a work environment that cultivates employee attachment may be a more efficacious strategy for promoting OCB than focusing solely on cultural intelligence development. Nevertheless, cultural intelligence still exerts a positive influence, and future research could explore the specific mechanisms through which job attachment and cultural intelligence interact to influence OCB.

Ethical Considerations

The study was approved by the Ethical Committee of Islamic Azad University- Shiraz Branch (Code: IR.IAU.SHIRAZ.REC.1402.318).

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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