INTERPERSONAL TRUST AT WORK AND EMPLOYEES' ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR

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ABSTRACT: *The study empirically investigated how employees' perception of interpersonal trust at work affects the extent to which they go beyond formally prescribed roles, Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB). The survey design was employed for the study. Two dimensions of interpersonal trust at work (Trust in co-workers and trust in Management) and OCB were studied. Social Exchange Theory was utilized in describing potential relationships between trust and citizenship behaviour. Data were obtained from 152 employees randomly sampled from various organizations and analyzed using Pearson's r and multiple regression analysis, and the hypotheses were tested at .05 and .01 levels. The major findings of the study suggested that employees' interpersonal trust at work significantly influences their discretionary behaviour. A very vital finding was that employees' trust in co-workers influenced their organizational citizenship behaviour more than their trust in management. Understanding personal and organisational factors associated with OCB have important implications for the training, and development of employees to facilitate the smooth operation of any organization. There is paucity of published studies in Ghana on how interpersonal variables, such as trust, affect employees' work attitude and behaviour as well as organisational outcomes. This study is therefore very invaluable in providing insight into the Ghanaian context in this area.*

KEYWORDS: Citizenship Behaviour, Discretionary Behaviour, Social Exchange, Interpersonal Trust, Ghana

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

The Ghanaian business environment, just like any other, has become very turbulent and businesses organizations consequently need to be forward looking and strategic in order to be ahead and succeed. Van Dyne, Graham and Dienesch (1994) aptly observed that :

> *"work behaviour that is in some way beyond the reach of traditional measures of job performance but holds promise for long-term organizational success is receiving increasing theoretical attention as the challenge of global competition highlights the importance of organizational innovation flexibility, productivity, and responsiveness to changing external conditions" (p. 2).*

In view of these changes, organizations have greater expectations for workers to become self-regulating and self-managing (Bassi, 1998). According to Kegan (1994), today's workers are expected to invent their own work, be self-initiating, self-correcting, self-evaluating; and take

responsibility for what happens to them at work. Lawler (1994) also observed that in a rapidly changing environment, individuals need to rapidly change what they are doing and in some cases, to change the skills that they have in order to perform in new and different ways. These changes and high expectations require employees to be more proactive and willing to go beyond their formal job requirements. The act of going beyond the formal job requirement in an organisation by an employee is referred to as Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB). It is intuitive to conclude that productivity would be enhanced if employees exceed their formal job roles and engaged in acts that promote productivity. A number of researchers (e.g. Organ, 1988) have also postulated that the effectiveness of organizations would be enhanced if employees go beyond the call of duty to assist co-workers to achieve organizational goals. Such behaviours have become crucial in today's corporate world where organizations essentially must be effective to survive.

A critical review of the literature indicated that variety of terms are used to describe OCBs, including prosocial organizational behaviour (Brief and Motowidlo, 1986); extra-role behaviour (Van Dyne and Cummings, 1990); organizational spontaneity (George and Brief, 1992); extra-role behaviours (Organ, Podsakoff, and MacKenzie, 2006) and contextual performance (Borman and Motowidlo, 1993). It is important to note that OCBs are not and cannot be required from or forced on employees. Again, employees do not or cannot expect any kind of systematic rewards for these behaviours. Despite these, organisations often reward OCBs both directly and indirectly (Organ, 1997). For instance, employees who exhibit OCBs regularly receive preferential treatment, better performance ratings, promotions, etc. Another important observation is that citizenship behaviours are often internally motivated and sustained by employees' intrinsic need for a sense of achievement, competence, belonging or affiliation. Evidence in the literature suggests that exhibiting OCB enhances the pleasantness of work settings, and can contribute to increased performance and efficiency (Organ, 1990). Padsakoff and MacKenzie (1994) noted that OCBs provide a means of managing the interdependencies among the members of the work unit, which increases the collective outcomes achieved, and also reduce the need for an organization to devote scarce resources for simple maintenance functions, which frees up resources for productivity. It was further noted that OCBs improve the ability of co-workers and managers of an organisation to perform their jobs by freeing up time for more efficient planning, scheduling, problem solving etc. (Organ, 1988).

The employee-employer relationship, being a human relations issue, is influenced by a number of variables, both individual and organisational. Analyses of human relations suggest that *trust* is an integral feature of effective and healthy human relationship. Trust is generally defined as a belief by a person in the integrity of another (Ferrin and Lee, 2006). Various Scholars have observed that trust is highly beneficial to the functioning of organizations (e.g., Argyris, 1962; Likert, 1967; McGregor, 1967). Trust has enormous effect on employees' attitude and behaviour at the workplace. Interest in trust research has been hyped because of its significant implications for organisational behaviour and outcomes. As Kramer (1999, p. 569) observed, "this interest has been fueled, at least in part, by accumulating evidence that trust has a number of important benefits for organizations and their members". Welch (1993) says that interpersonal trust is enormously powerful in an organization, and that people will not do their best without it. This study therefore aimed at examining whether employees' perception of interpersonal trust contributes to the enhancement of employees' OCB at the workplace.

Statement of the Problem

There a myriad of antecedents of OCB (Podsakoff et al, 2000), yet most of these efforts to explain OCB have focused on situational causes, which grow from an employee's interpretation of the nature of his/her job or his/her working differences. There is therefore the need for investigations into personal and interpersonal variables from different cultures. This study focused on one crucial personal factor (interpersonal trust at work) to find out how it relates to employees OCB. Though various studies related to this subject were found in the literature, there is paucity of same in the African context. This line of study has been side-stepped particularly in Ghana, and one can hardly come across any published study in this very important area. Trust has been found to be very important variable in employee-employer relationships and other organisational outcomes (Welch, 1993). Ferrin and Lee (2006) observed that in the contemporary fast-paced world, it is very important for organisations to promote trust building, which is the bedrock for group effectiveness. This study is therefore meant to bring the Ghanaian context of interpersonal antecedents of OCB to the fore to fill that knowledge gap in the literature.

Significance of Study

Understanding conditions that foster OCB in the workplace will help organizations in their quest to stimulate and encourage its development. Individuals will benefit by understanding how engaging in OCB enables them to "take control" of their work and initiate "action" toward desired results. The findings will help organisational practitioners to design and facilitate interventions that lead to successful development of OCB.

Understanding the personal and organizational factors associated with OCB also have important implications for the selection, training, and development of employees. Again, OCBs are very crucial for the smooth operation of any organization. In view of this, identifying the personal factors, for example, how interpersonal trust and other organizational variables that enhance OCBs is very instrumental in selection and training of individuals in organizations in an effort to enhance productivity. This will also enhance interpersonal relationships between employees and employers, which will consequently improve the quality of work life in organizations. It will also help human resources managers to know which types of behaviours or the sort of action they should encourage in order to bring about smooth operation of their organizations.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Theoretical Framework

Social Exchange Theory, Norm of Reciprocity, and OCB

Van Knippenberg, van Prooijen, and Sleebos (2015) observed that social exchange plays a significant role in the nature of the relationship between employees and their organisation. Social exchange processes have been found to vital in explaining the occurrence of important employee attitude and behaviour (Shore, Coyle-Shapiro, Chen and Tetrick, 2009). Social exchange implies an informal contract between an employee and an organization. Organisational citizenship

behaviour has a high level of dependence on socialization and so it is appropriate to consider social exchange theory and the norm of reciprocity for potential constructs that may influence the development of OCB. Blau (1964) describes social exchanges as interactions between two individuals in which one party does another a favour with the expectation of a favour in return. Social exchange involves trusting that the other party will fulfil his or her part of the obligations (Blau, 1964). Konovsky and Pugh (1994) also observed, in line with the social exchange theory and the norm of reciprocity, that "fairness and trust as two important situational factors critical to social exchange" (Konovsky and Pugh, 1994, p. 657). A key assumption in the social exchange perspective is that the employer-employee relationship is established on the trade (exchange) of effort and loyalty for benefits (such as pay, support, recognition, promotion etc). An employee has one social exchange relationship with the organization and another social exchange relationship with his or her immediate supervisor (Masterson, Lewis, Goldman, and Taylor, 2000).

Rousseau and Parks (1993) described contracts as agreements that create an obligation to do or not do something. They stated that contracts vary along a continuum anchored on one end by transactional contracts, and at the other end by relational contracts, which include the exchange of socio-emotional elements, are open-ended, and are often long-term. Relational and transactional contracts respectively correspond to the underlying dynamics of social and economic exchange. Konovsky and Pugh, (1994) therefore suggested that one manifestation of social exchange is reliance on relational contracts and that one manifestation of economic exchange is reliance on transactional contracts. This study focused on the effect of social exchange or relational contract on employees' behaviour, specifically, organizational citizenship behaviour.

Interpersonal Trust at Work and Citizenship Behaviour

According to Ferrin and Lee (2006), trust is an expectation that another party will not allow you to be harmed at a time when you are vulnerable. Your willingness to trust another party is affected by your history with that party and your personality. Cook and Wall (1980) defined trust as the extent to which one is willing to ascribe good intention to and have confidence in the words and actions of others. A distinction is made between faith in the intentions of others and confidence in the ability of others, and measures of these two aspects of trust with respect to peers and supervisors. Ferrin and Lee (2006) noted that as we become familiar with an individual or a group, we gradually allow ourselves to be vulnerable to them and as long as no injury comes from that vulnerability, our trust increases. However, sometimes some people advertently or otherwise, violate this trust. The violations of trust breach the confidence and believe we repose in them and we feel they have let us down and disappointed. An employee who finds him or herself in this situation is not likely to cooperate with co-workers, and spends valuable time and psychological resources to verify information from the distrusted party. One is also inclined to be careful not to share too much information with them (Ferrin and Lee, 2006). This situation would invariably harm the working relationship and people would not be willing to go beyond their formal job requirements.

A number of organizational, relational and individual variables have been found to act as antecedents to support and encourage managerial trustworthy behaviour (Whitener et al., 1998). Organizational variables such as company policies regarding employee rewards and promotions may promote or inhibit managerial trustworthiness, depending on how they are managed. Another

organisational variable is the organisational culture. This tends to provide information on how employees are treated in the system and therefore, may also contribute or inhibit managerial trustworthiness (Whitener et al., 1998). Relational variables describe behaviour associated with an exchange relationship between a manager and subordinate. High quality exchange relationships are characterized by mutual trust (Dansereau, Graen, and Haga, 1975; Dienesch and Liden, 1986). Initial interactions between managers and subordinates that are favourable set the tone for future interactions and provide the impetus for a trusting relationship. Managers are more likely to initiate exchanges with employees whom they expect are willing to reciprocate. Managers weigh the cost of initiating an exchange in order to determine if an employee will or will not reciprocate. Managers are more likely to engage in trustworthy behaviour if the employee is likely to reciprocate (Whitener et al., 1998). Trust in organizations was hypothesized to have a direct effect on OCB. As stated above, one manner in which social exchange relationships have been conceptualized is an exchange relationship between employees and the organization (Wayne, Shore, and Liden, 1997). Employees feel an obligation to reciprocate when they believe the organization trusts them and values their effort (Settoon et al., 1996).

Hypotheses

In view of the literature reviewed above, and the aims of this study, the following were hypothesized:

H_1: Employees' interpersonal trust at work will be positively related to organizational citizenship behaviour.

H_2: Employees' trust in organization (management) will have a positive effect on their OCB.

H_3: Trust in management will influence employees' OCB more than trust in co-workers

H_4: Organizational tenure will mediate the relationship between interpersonal trust and OCB.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design adopted for the study was the survey. The survey design was employed or deemed appropriate because the study sought to collect data from a sample of employees from various organisations regarding their perceptions of interpersonal trust and citizenship behaviour through the use of questionnaire.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

The data for this study were obtained from 152 employees in ten organizations in the Accra and Tema Metropolises of Ghana. Eighteen organizations were initially given letters of introduction; together with a set of the questionnaire to seek their consent for the study. Ten organizations consented and were therefore used for the study. The systematic random sampling procedures was used to sample 200 employees from the ten organizations, using different skip intervals, depending

on the number of employees in a particular organization. One hundred and fifty-two, representing 77% of the original total sample for the study fully completed and returned their questionnaires. Ninety-five were males, and fifty-seven were females, representing 62.5% and 37.5% for males and females respectively. The ten organizations consisted of 3 service organizations, 1 manufacturing organization, 2 educational institutions and 4 financial institutions. Different types of organizations were included to ensure greater external validity of the findings. The ages of the respondents ranged from 18-56 years, with the average age being 32.38 years and standard deviation of 7.42.

Table 1: Educational levels of respondents

Level	Freq	Percentage(%)
Secondary	23	15.1
Diploma	40	26.3
First degree/equivalent	82	53.9
Master's	7	4.6

Table 1 shows the educational distribution of the respondents in the study. Fifteen percent had secondary education, 26.3% hold various diplomas; 53.9% hold degrees and only 4.6% had master's degree. In all, 84.9% of the employees had a post-secondary education. Thirty-two percent of the respondents had been with their current organization for a period less than a year. Most of the respondents, (43.4%) had been with their organizations for a period ranging from 1-5 years; 19.1% for 5-10 years, 5.3% for 10 -15 years and 9.2 for 15 years or more.

Cognizance that the relationships between individual perceptions of interpersonal trust and OCB are individual, but not organization dependent, the data were aggregated, and no analysis was conducted linking individual responses to a specific organization. Respondents included subordinates, supervisors, and middle managers. Top management was not included because they invariably, represent their organization in various capacities.

Instrument and Measures

Interpersonal Trust at work

A 12 item instrument developed by Cook and Wall (1980), consisting of four three-item sub-scales which may be treated separately or combined into a single score, was used to obtain employees' interpersonal trust. Responses were obtained on a seven-point, agree-disagree dimension with scale and sub-scale scores being the sum of item scores. The four sub-scales were: Faith in peers, Faith in management, Confidence in peers and Confidence in management. The minimum and maximum scores that could be obtained on this scale are 12 and 96 respectively. In a pilot testing of 120 participants in connection with this study, an alpha coefficient of .89 was obtained, and .79 for the main study.

Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB)

The four dimensional self-rating scale developed by Moorman and Blakely (1995) was used to obtain OCB data. The four dimensions consisting of 19 items are interpersonal helping (5 items), individual initiative (5 items), personal industry (4 items), and loyal boosterism (5 items). The

alpha coefficient obtained in this study was .82. All items were scored on seven-point agree-disagree response format, just like the interpersonal trust scale. The maximum score on this scale is 133 and the minimum is 19 for each respondent.

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to find out the influence of interpersonal trust on employees' organizational citizenship behaviour.

Data Analysis procedure

Correlations were run to determine the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Thereafter, regression analyses were performed to determine the amount of variance in the dependent (criterion) variable accounted for by each predictors. Hierarchical regressions were run to determine the effect of predictor and mediator variables on the criterion variable. Baron and Kenny's (1986) three step hierarchical regression procedure was used to test for mediation variables.

Presentation of Results

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of variables

Variable	Mean	SD
Interpersonal trust	58.19	10.25
OCB	105.36	16.95

The descriptive statistics of the main independent and the dependent variables are presented in Table 2. The mean for interpersonal trust was 58.19; and that of OCB was 105.36. The standard deviations and variances of the variables are also shown in the table. The results show that the respondents exhibited high citizenship behaviour and interpersonal trust at work, since all the means were above average (half of the sum of the minimum and the maximum scores).

H₁: Employees' interpersonal trust at work (Trust in co-workers and in management) is positively related to their OCB

The Pearson's correlation was used to analyze the significance of the influence (relationship) of interpersonal trust and OCB, and to test the hypotheses. The result indicated that there was a relatively weak but statistically significant relationship between the two variables ($r = .340$, $p < .01$). Further regression analyses also show that interpersonal trust accounted for 11.5% of the variance in OCB ($R^2 = .115$). This suggests that employees' interpersonal trust had a good influence on their citizenship behaviour.

H₂: Employees' trust in management will have positive effect on their OCB.

H₃: Employees' trust in management influences their OCB more that trust in co-workers

Having found interpersonal trust to be significantly related to OCB, the relative importance of the two sub components of interpersonal trust (trust in management and trust in co-workers) to OCB was explored. The results indicated that interpersonal trust in management has a relatively weak but statistically significant relationship with OCB (r = .162, p <.05). This finding also supports the research hypothesis. Interestingly enough, trust in co-workers was found to relate positively and stronger (r = .365, p <.01) to OCB than trust in management. Thus, the proposition that employees' trust in management influences their OCB more that trust in co-workers was not support. This implies that, employees' believe and confidence in their co-workers influenced their extra- role behaviour more than their believe and confidence in management did.

Regression analysis (presented in table 6) to determine the amount of variance in OCB accounted for by each of the sub-categories of interpersonal trust indicated that trust in management accounted for 2.6% of the variance in OCB. When trust in co-workers however, was added, the amount of variance in OCB increased sharply from .026 to .278, an increase of 25.2%. This was very significant. Thus, as afore-stated, trust in co-workers was a very essential contributing factor in employees' citizenship behaviour, but trust in management was not so important regarding employees citizenship behaviour.

H4: Organisational tenure of employees mediates the relationship between their interpersonal trust at work and OCB

The analysis of the correlations between organizational tenure and interpersonal trust at work and OCB indicated no significant relationship between organizational tenure and OCB. It however, related negatively to interpersonal trust (r = -.154, p <.05). These findings suggest that, as employees remain longer with their employing organization, their interpersonal trust reduces.

Test for mediator variables

According to Baron and Kenny (1986), a given variable functions as a mediator to the extent that it accounts for the relation between the predictor and the criterion; and to establish mediation, the following conditions must hold: a) the predictor variable(s) must affect (significantly relate linearly to) the mediator variable in regression 1; b) the predictor variable (s) must affect the criterion variable in regression 2; and c) the mediator variable must affect the criterion variable in regression 3. In addition, the predictor variable must account for less than or no variance when the mediator variable is in the regression model (Baron and Kenny 1986, p. 1,177). Organizational tenure was hypothesized to be a mediator of the relationship between interpersonal trust and OCB.

To test this, the three step hierarchical regression procedure was used. First, organizational tenure was regressed on interpersonal trust. The result indicated that there is no significant relationship between interpersonal trust and organizational tenure (p = .817). This means that interpersonal trust did not affect employees' organizational tenure. Thus, the test of mediation did not hold. Accordingly, H4 was not supported. This indicates that organizational tenure did not mediate the relationship between interpersonal trust and OCB.

DISCUSSION OF RESULT

In view of current global trends in the corporate world, organizations need employees who are willing to exceed their formal job requirements. The aim of this study was to find out how interpersonal trust influences organizational citizenship behaviour of employees. Social exchange theory and the norm of reciprocity were utilized in describing potential relationships because of their association with the concept of trust and socialization.

Considering the effect of interpersonal trust on OCB, the results indicate that interpersonal trust significantly relate to OCB. Trust is said to be the basis of relational contract and social exchange. And relational exchanges between supervisors and subordinates lead employees to expend much time and energy on tasks, to be innovative in completing tasks and to accept responsibilities in addition to those specified in their employment contracts (Dansereau and Green, 1975). Rousseau and Parks' (1993) findings further explain the relationship between interpersonal trust and OCB observed in this study. They observe that relational contracts encourage employees to behave in ways that are not strictly mandated by their employers and are directed toward collectivity.

Contrary to the expectation that organizational tenure will mediate the influence of interpersonal trust and OCB, the result shows that tenure does not mediate the two variables. In fact, organizational tenure related negatively to interpersonal trust.

According to Van Dyne et. al (1990), when individuals are involved with organizations for a longer period of time their attitudes (positive or negative) crystallize based on repeated interactions. Given the importance of ongoing relationships to the notion of social exchange, it is expected that tenure in the organization would influence the quality of the relationship within the organization. If over time, members develop good personal relationships with others in the organization and feel as though they were making important contributions to the organization, they will most likely develop a sense of intrinsic motivation and become more attached to the organization (Rousseau, 1989). On the other hand, if over time, individuals have negative experiences in the organization; these negative feelings most likely become stronger over time and lead to less organizational involvement.

Considering the Ghanaian labour situations where employees are frequently dissatisfied and complaining about working conditions, it is not surprising that the result indicated that those who stay longer with their organizations have less interpersonal trust at work. Trust is generally a belief by a person in the integrity of another (Ferrin & Lee, 2006). So that in an environment where employees are frequently dissatisfied, they are apt to lose confidence in the people and the systems around them the longer they live in the frustrating environment. People generally become dissatisfied when their expectations are frustrated or not met. They however develop trust when their expectations from people and systems around them are met. It is worth noting that the level of trust and confidence reposed in others and systems tend to diminish with time as expectations are continuously violated and frustrated. And frustration of expectations may come from co-workers or management; therefore if employees stay longer in a given organization and their expectations are continuously frustrated, the consequence would be diminishing trust in the people around them or the system they work in.

According to Van Dyne et. al. (2000), as tenure increases, individuals develop a better understanding of organizational practices and routines as well as better ideas of their own roles within the organizational system. However, the findings suggest that tenure does not relate to, or influence employees' organizational citizenship behaviour. As Organ (1988) aptly observed, OCBs are behaviours that are internally motivated, arising from and sustained by an individual's intrinsic need for a sense of achievement, competence, belonging or affiliation, irrespective of the number of years an employee has been in an organization. Karambayya (1991) has also suggested that certain contextual factors such as work unit size, stability or unit membership, and interpersonal interaction may also influence an individual's decision to perform citizenship behaviour. The lack of relationship here may be that tenure on its own does not influence OCBs, rather, these other factors suggested by Organ and Karambayya are responsible.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Employees are the most essential resource of any organization. For any organization to survive in the current global trend in any industry, the employees need to be treated with care and respect. Management-employee relationship must be very cordial, and employees' interpersonal relationship needs to be enhanced and taken seriously. Management must be careful not to foster mistrust and enmity among employees. If employees are suspicious of each other, they would end-up holding back and stabbing each other in the back, which would invariably hurt the organisation.

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