Original Paper

The Impact of Empowering Leadership Behaviors on Organizational Citizenship Behavior

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Abstract

The current study examines the impact of empowering leadership behaviors (namely, enhancing the meaningfulness of work, fostering participation in decision making, expressing confidence and providing autonomy) on organizational citizenship. The data was collected through a questionnaire from a sample consisting of 200 employees in governmental institutions in Alhaha region. Pearson correlations indicated that OCB had statistically significant positive relation with all factors of leadership empowerment behavior, ranged between 0.432 and 0.655. The study provided practical implications and suggested some directions for future research.

Keywords

empowering leadership, organizational citizenship, decision making, autonomy

1. Introduction

Employees’ empowerment is pivotal to organizational effectiveness and productivity. Therefore, successful organizations often seek to foster a positive, dynamic work environment through departing from the conventional hierarchical management structure to a more empowering leadership style. Empowering leadership allows more freedom for employees to participate in making decisions and choices regarding work situations and responsibilities. Empowering leaders decentralize and grant more autonomy to employees, get them more engaged in decision making, and give them more trust to handle workplace challenges (Kirkman & Rosen, 1999; Konczak et al., 2000). Consequently, employees willingly perform duties and tasks beyond the boundaries of their job, and lend hand to support their co-workers, and contribute immensely to organizational effectiveness.

Previous research revealed that Empowering Leadership Behaviors (ELB) are related to different organizational outcomes (Ahearne, Mathieu, & Rapp, 2005; Raub & Robert, 2010). For example,
empowered employees are expected to demonstrate a high level of organizational citizenship (Farooqui, 2012; Humphrey, 2012; Organ & Konovsky, 1989). OCB encompasses a set of activities and behaviors that employees do beyond their formal roles and capacities. Individuals with high OCB tend to help other employees, do extra tasks and sacrifice their time and efforts to serve organization. Based on my search, research that examine the relationships between ELB and OCB in Saudi Arabia is narrow. Therefore, the prime aim of this study was to provide a better understanding of how ELB impacts the organizational citizenship behavior in public sector institutions in Al-Baha province. The investigation was extended to examine the relationships between the dimensions of ELB and OCB.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Empowering Leadership

ELB can be defined as a leadership style that grants more responsibilities and latitude to employees and eliminate bureaucratic constraints to increase their efficiency and latitude (Ahearne, Michael, John Mathieu, & Adam Rapp, 2005). In this scenario, leaders focus on enabling and supporting employees to unleash their potential by allowing more independence in decision making, providing them with proper information, guiding and mentoring them, and respecting their choices and preferences (Pearce & Sims, 2002).

Empowerment can provide several advantages. It enhances employees’ motivation, enables them to be more responsive to their environment, and increase constructive attitudes and behaviors (Ahearne et al., 2005; Amundsen & Martinsen, 2015; Forrester, 2000). According to Ahearne et al. (2005) empowering leadership has four dimensions: enhancing meaningfulness of work, fostering participation in decision making, confidence in high performance, providing autonomy from bureaucratic constraints. Previous research on empowerment demonstrated that ELB had a positive correlations with a higher level of satisfaction and individual performance (Ahearne et al., 2005; Sigler & Pearson, 2000); lower role ambiguity (Cheba & Kollias, 2000), and higher employee adaptability (Ahearne et al., 2005; Cheba & Kollias, 2000). In addition, leadership research show that empowering leadership directly influence employees’ organizational citizenship behavior (Humphrey, 2012; Podsakoff et al., 2000). Empowered employees feel more confident and more proficient which drive them to behave in a proactive manner to lend hand to their colleagues and assist them, take responsibility and go the extra mile without the micromanagement from their leaders.

2.2 Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Organ (1988) defined organizational citizenship behavior 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” (p. 4). Thus, OCB encompasses extra activities and behaviors that employees carry out voluntarily to help other co-workers and increase effectiveness and organizational success. OCB contributes to the organizational efficiency by promoting a positive social and psychological climate (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Organ, 2006; Williams & Anderson, 1991). For
example, employees perform extra duties and responsibilities to help and motivate others, get engaged, behave in a cooperative manner to inspire collaboration and pursue the collective interest (Bateman & Organ, 1983; Whiting, Podsakoff, & Pierce, 2008). At the organizational level, OCB inspires healthy and comfortable organizational environment (Podsakoff et al., 2006). The research on OCB proliferated to investigate the causes that drive employees to perform OCB. Studies provided several models linking OCB to job attitudes such as job satisfaction (Bateman & Organ, 1983; Williams & Anderson, 1994), perception of fairness (Moorman, 1991), organizational commitment (Becker, 1992) and interpersonal trust (Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990). Another stream of studies has investigated the antecedents of OCB. Results of past research showed that OCB is influenced by leaders' behaviors such as trust in leadership (Podsakoff et al., 1990), transformational leadership (Judge & Piccolo, 2004), empowering employees (Farooqui, 2012; Organ & Konovsky, 1989), and leadership style (Podsakoff et al., 1990, 2006; Vondey, 2008).

3. Method

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey methodology to address the following overarching question of this study: What effects do the ELB factors have on OCB? To answer this question effectively, the variables of this study were divided into dependent variable (OCB) and four independent variables enhancing the meaningfulness of work, fostering participation in decision making, expressing confidence and providing autonomy) and one dependent variable (OCB). The participants were asked to complete the questionnaire after reading and agreeing on a consent letter containing detailed information about the purpose of the study.

3.2 Hypothesis Development

Leadership research in regard to OCB revealed that leader’s behaviors influence followers OCB (Humphrey, 2012). In a study conducted by Podsakoff et al. (2000), the findings showed that leadership and characteristics of workplace environment affect OCB more than employee’s personality. They found that supervisor’s productive styles of leadership end in an increased frequency of organizational citizenship behavior. Similarly, Smith et al. (1983) found that individuals’ OCB is related their leader’s supportiveness. Cushman (2001) conducted a study on empowerment and the modifying impact of organizational citizenship behavior on personal hygienic activities in food industries. His study indicated a positive relationship between empowerment and OCB. In another study in India, Ahearn (2000) investigated the impacts of leadership empowerment behaviors and organizational citizenship behavior among sale team performance. His research revealed that leadership empowerment behavior positively influences organizational citizenship behavior.

Bogler and Somech (2004) research examined the relationship between teacher empowerment and teachers’ organizational commitment, Professional Commitment (PC) and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB). The findings showed that empowered employees are more loyal to the organization.
and show higher organizational citizenship behaviors. This results are congruent with Greasley et al., (2004) findings which pointed that people show more OCB when they are involved in decision making. In a recent study, Park (2016) examined the relations among empowering leadership, self-efficacy and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) in social welfare organizations and he found that empowering leadership has a significantly positive impact on OCB.

Based on the previous discussion, this paper proposes that leadership empowerment behaviors increase employee OCB. Moreover, the investigation will be furthered to examine the impact of ELB dimensions (namely enhancing the meaningfulness of work, fostering participation in decision making, expressing confidence in high performance, providing autonomy from bureaucratic constraints) on organizational citizenship behavior. The following hypothesis were formulated

Hypothesis 1: enhancing the meaningfulness of work has a significant positive impact on organizational citizenship behavior.

Hypothesis 2: Fostering participation in decision making has a significant positive impact on organizational citizenship behavior.

Hypothesis 3: Expressing confidence has a significant positive impact on organizational citizenship behavior.

Hypothesis 4: Providing autonomy has a significant positive impact on organizational citizenship behavior.

3.3 Participants
The sample of this study was extracted from the government employees at Albaha City. The study adopted convenient sampling method and the sample size was 200 employees. About 70 participants responded to the survey. Almost 64% were male and 35.7% were female, about education; 44.3% of the total sample had Bachelor’s degree, 30% had Master’s degree and 25.7% had Doctorate degree, about experience; the highest percent 41.4% of the sample had experience (6 to 10) years, while the lowest had above 20 years with 2.9% of the total sample.

3.4 Data Collection
This study used a online survey method to gather date. Two surveys were emailed to the human resource managers in the selected institutions who in turn emailed it to the participants. The survey included a consent letter that participants had to read and agree to before they accessed the surveys. Short demographics section was included. Demographic section has three questions about gender, education and years of experience. In addition, there are two main sections including OCB scale and ELB scale.

3.4.1 Organizational Citizenship Behavior Questionnaire
Employees OCB was measured using the Organizational Citizenship Behavior Scale created by Podsakoff and colleagues (1990). This is a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The scale has 24 items that encompasses the most well-known dimensions of OCB: conscientiousness (5 items), sportsmanship (5 items), civic virtue (4 items), courtesy (6 items), and
altruism (5 items). All sportsmanship items were reversed scored; meaning lower scores indicated participants engaged in more sportsmanship behaviors.

3.4.2 Leadership Empowerment Behavior Questionnaire
LEB was assessed using Ahearne et al.’s (2005) 12-item measure. This is a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The scale reflects four components of LED: (1) enhancing the meaningfulness of work (three items), (2) fostering participation in decision making (three items), (3) Expressing confidence in high performance (three items), and (4) providing autonomy from bureaucratic constraints (three items).

3.5 Data Analysis
The collected data was checked for outlier and missing values to make it ready for analysis, then data was analyzed through various ways. Factor analysis (EFA) was used to extract factors; using principal component analysis method which reduce the dimensionality of a data set consisting of a large number of interrelated variables, while retaining as much as possible of the variation present in the data set by transforming to a new set of variables, the Principal Components (PCs), which are uncorrelated, and which are ordered so that the first few retain most of the variation present in all of the original variables. Then, Cronbach’s Alpha was employed to test the reliability of the extracted factors; since Cronbach’s alpha is commonly used to measure the reliability or internal consistency of a dataset. Finally, correlation analysis was evaluated to assess the correlations between factors and measures the strength and direction of the association between variables.

4. Results

4.1 Factor Analysis
Factor analysis was performed with (1) as the Eigen value to improve the strength of the factors. Then, five factors were extracted when the rotation converged in six iterations. The five factors named as:

- Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)
- Enhancing the Meaningfulness of Work (EMW)
- Fostering Participation in Decision Making (FPDM)
- Expressing Confidence in High Performance (ECHP)
- Providing Autonomy from Bureaucratic Constraints (PABC)

Out of 36 items in the questionnaire, the first 24 items were categorized as (OCB) and the remaining 12 under leadership empowerment behavior (ELB) factors: (EMW, FPDM, ECHP and PABC).

The analysis extracted a five-factor solution, each with Eigen values above one, which explains 80.03% of the total variance. The KMO was (0.849) indicating a meritorious level based on Kaiser and Rice (1974) and the Barlett’s test for sphericity was significant ($\chi^2=3860.091$, $p=0.000$). The Measure of Sampling Adequacy (MSA) was found to be above (0.70) for all 36 items, based on the rotated component matrix (Table 2).
### Table 1. Rotated Component Matrix

| Component | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   |
|-----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| I help others who have heavy workloads | 0.498 |
| I am the classic “squeaky wheel” that always needs greasing. | 0.742 |
| I believe in giving an honest day’s work for an honest day’s pay | 0.863 |
| I consume a lot of time complaining about trivial matters | 0.618 |
| I try to avoid creating problems for coworkers | 0.942 |
| I keep abreast of changes in the organization | 0.755 |
| I tend to make “mountains out of molehills”. | 0.902 |
| I consider the impact of my actions on coworkers | 0.870 |
| I attend meetings that are not mandatory, but are considered important. | 0.802 |
| I am always ready to lend a helping hand to those around me. | 0.972 |
| I attend functions that are not required, but help the company image. | 0.888 |
| I read and keep up with organization announcements, memos, and so on. | 0.877 |
| I help others who have been absent. | 0.647 |
| I do not abuse the rights of others. | 0.939 |
| I willingly help others who have work related problems | 0.640 |
| I always focus on what’s wrong, rather than focusing on the positive. | 0.954 |
| I take steps to prevent problems with other coworkers. | 0.849 |
| My attendance at work is above the norm. | 0.954 |
| I always find fault with what the organization is doing. | 0.945 |
| I am mindful of how my behavior affects other people’s job. | 0.967 |
| I do not take extra breaks. | 0.972 |
| I obey company rules and regulations even when no one is watching. | 0.957 |
| I help orient new people even though it is not required. | 0.901 |
| I am one of the most conscientiousness people in this organization | 0.904 |
| My manager helps me understand how my objectives and goals relate to that of the company. | 0.912 |
| My manager helps me understand the importance of my work to the overall effectiveness of the company. | 0.981 |
| My manager helps me understand how my job fits into the bigger picture | 0.862 |
| My manager makes many decisions together with me. | 0.791 |
| My manager often consults me on strategic decisions. | 0.687 |
| My manager solicits my opinion on decisions that may affect me. | 0.982 |
| My manager believes that I can handle demanding tasks. | 0.869 |
My manager believes in my ability to improve even when I make mistakes. 0.947
My manager expresses confidence in my ability to perform at a high level. 0.773
My manager allows me to do my job my way. 0.715
My manager makes it more efficient for me to do my job by keeping the rules and regulations simple. 0.445
My manager allows me to make important decisions quickly to satisfy customer needs. 0.791

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis, Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization, a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

4.2 Reliability Analysis
The calculated Cronbach’s Alpha was 0.987 for the Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) factor, for ELB’ factors; Cronbach’s Alpha were ranged between 0.771 and 0.927; these results indicate a good reliability, Cronbach’s alpha ranges from r=0 to 1, with r=0.7 or greater considered as sufficiently reliable (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994) (Note 1). (Table 3)

Table 3. Reliability Results

| Factor                                           | No. of item | Cronbach alpha |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB)        | 24          | 0.987          |
| Enhancing the meaningfulness of work (EMW)       | 3           | 0.927          |
| Fostering participation in decision making (FPDM)| 3           | 0.892          |
| Expressing confidence in high performance (ECHP) | 3           | 0.849          |
| Providing autonomy from bureaucratic constraints (PABC) | 3           | 0.771          |

4.3 Descriptive Statistic
The descriptive statistics show that Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) had Mean score (5.2219) out of 7 in the interval [4.44-5.29] corresponding to (Slighty Agree) according to 7-point Likert scale while the Mean score for ELB’ factors ranged between 3.7716 and 3.8573 in the interval [3.40-4.19] corresponding to (Agree) according to 5-point Likert scale (Note 2) (Table 4).
Table 4. Descriptive Statistic

|                                      | Minimum | Maximum | Mean    | Std. Deviation |
|--------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|----------------|
| Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) | 1.88    | 7.00    | 5.2219  | 1.36952        |
| Enhancing the meaningfulness of work (EMW) | 1.00    | 5.00    | 3.8096  | 1.05534        |
| Fostering participation in decision making (FPDM) | 1.00    | 5.00    | 3.7806  | 1.08299        |
| Expressing confidence in high performance (ECHP) | 1.33    | 5.00    | 3.8573  | 1.04008        |
| Providing autonomy from bureaucratic constraints (PABC) | 1.67    | 5.00    | 3.7716  | 0.96906        |

4.4 Correlation and Regression

In order to examine the relationship between Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) and Leadership Empowerment Behavior (ELB) factors, correlation were employed, OCB had statistically significant positive relation with all factors of leadership empowerment behavior, ranged between (0.432) and (0.655) (Table 5).

Table 5. Correlation Matrix

|        | OCB    | EMW    | FPDM   | ECHP   | PABC   |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| OCB    | 1      | 0.432**| 0.655**| 0.512**| 0.570**|
| EMW    |        | 1      | 0.271* | 0.139  | 0.471**|
| FPDM   |        |        | 1      | 0.513**| 0.506**|
| ECHP   |        |        |        | 1      | 0.318**|
| PABC   |        |        |        |        | 1      |

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**
Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

Multiple Linear Regression analyses were employed. The four variables (EMW, FPDM, ECHP, and PABC) were used as independent variables with (OCB) as a dependent variable. The regression model was fitted. The model explains 57% of the variance of (OCB) and model found to be significant with (F=21.472, sig=0.000).

By referring the F value and its P-value, it may be concluded that the model is valid and there is a correlation between (OCB) and the four factors of (ELB). To verify the existence of the mentioned relationship, a multi collinearity test was carried out. The result revealed that (VIF<3) with (Tolerance<1) indicating the non-existence of multi collinearity problem. Also, the assumption of
normality for the residual were met, as shown in the histogram and P-P Plot of regression standardized residual.

Table 6. Regression Results

| Model   | Unstandardized Coefficients | Standardized Coefficients | Collinearity Statistics |
|---------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
|         | B          | Std. Error | Beta | T  | Sig. | Tolerance | VIF |
| (Constant) | 0.163     | 0.585     | 0.279 | 0.781 |
| EMW     | 0.256     | 0.120     | 0.197 | 2.137 | 0.036 | 0.776 | 1.289 |
| FPDM    | 0.479     | 0.132     | 0.379 | 3.617 | 0.001 | 0.605 | 1.654 |
| ECHP    | 0.292     | 0.125     | 0.222 | 2.331 | 0.023 | 0.731 | 1.367 |
| PABC    | 0.304     | 0.146     | 0.215 | 2.077 | 0.042 | 0.619 | 1.615 |

Multiple linear regression model show that the four factors were good explanatory variables for the dependent variable (OCB). The results of the regression model demonstrated that there was a significant relationship between OCB and (ELB)'s factors. This can be inferred from the T-value and its associated P-value. The four factors explain 0.569 of variations in OCB (R² value = 0.569) showing that the strength of relationship between (OCB) and the four factors of (ELB) were up moderate. The highest effect was for (FPDM) by Coefficients Beta (0.479) with (P=0.001<0.05), indicate that for every one unit increase in (FPDM) then (OCB) will increase by (0.479), followed by (0.304) with (P=0.042<0.05) for (PABC), followed by (0.292) with (P=0.023<0.05) for (ECHP), while the lowest effect was for (EMW) with Coefficients Beta (0.256) and (P=0.036 <0.05) (Table 6).

Thus the results indicate a relationship between (OCB) with (ELB) according to the next equation:

\[ OCB = 0.163 + 0.256\times EMW + 0.479\times FPDM + 0.292\times ECHP + 0.304\times PABC \]

5. Discussion

This aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between leadership empowerment behaviors on employees’ OCB. This investigation was furthered to examine the impact of ELB dimensions (namely enhancing the meaningfulness of work, fostering participation in decision making, expressing confidence in high performance, providing autonomy from bureaucratic constraints) on OCB. The main hypothesis predicted that there is a significant positive relationship between empowering leadership and organizational citizenship behavior. The findings supported main hypothesis. Furthermore, the findings of this study indicated that OCB has statistically significant positive relation with all factors of leadership empowerment behavior. The strength of relationship between (OCB) and the four factors of (ELB) was high. These results supported all other four hypotheses. The significant positive relationship
between empowering leadership and organizational citizenship behavior has been confirmed by
previous researchers (Ahearn, 2000; Park, 2016).

As shown in the finding of the second hypothesis, there was a significant positive relationship between
EMW and OCB. Evidence from previous research confirms the significance of meaningfulness of work
to a myriad of positive organizational outcomes. This result is consistent with the findings of previous
research. For instance, Piccolo and Colquitt (2006) found positive association between meaningfulness
of work and organizational citizenship behavior. In a more recent studies, Lam et al. (2016) and
Jamshidi and Rajabi (2015) confirmed the positive association between Enhancing the Meaningfulness
of Work (EMW) and Organizational citizenship behavior. The researchers also found that employees
who experience work meaningfulness at the end of the day also experienced more vigor, which
basically means feeling more energized.

In terms of the third hypothesis, the result confirmed the significant positive relationship between
FPDM and OCB. This result denotes the importance of individuals’ engagements in decision making
process. According to Singh (2009) employees’ involvement in decision making is profound to current
organizations to remain effective and competitive. Therefore, organizations should sustain a work
environment that fosters individuals’ participation in making decision to exploit their potentials and
energy. Recent research findings support the association between FPDM and OCB. For example, Ike et
al. (2017) conducted a study to examine employee citizenship behavior and counterproductive
workplace behavior as correlates of employee participation in decision making among workers in the
private sector establishments in Awka city, Nigeria. They found that organizational citizenship
behavior was significantly and positively correlated with employee participation in decision making at
r (1, 496)=.653, p<.05.

In terms of the fourth hypothesis, the result confirmed the significant positive relationship between
Expressing Confidence in High Performance (ECHP) Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB).
This outcome is consistent with the findings of Ahearn (2004) who found that confidence is related to
OCB.

In terms of the fifth hypothesis, the result confirmed the significant positive relationship between
Providing Autonomy from Bureaucratic Constraints (PABC) and (OCB). Randhawa and Kaur (2015).
This result is coherent with some previous researchers’ findings that confirmed the significant positive
correlations of job autonomy with organizational citizenship behavior (Krishnan et al., 2010; Chen &
Chiu, 2009; Krishnan, Ismail, Samuel, & Kanchymalay, 2013; Randhawa & Kaur, 2015).

The findings of this study are significant and practical to managers. Sometimes manager view
individuals as just sub-ordinates who should follow the instructions and orders given to them.
Managers need to build effectiveness by empowering employees to maintain a focus on acting
autonomously and collaboratively. They also need to demonstrate a high level of confidence in
individuals’ performance and create a sense of meaningfulness at work to promote employees OCB.
Employees with high OCB can contribute immensely to enhance productivity and effectiveness. This is profound for organizations that work in competitive climates that are changing rapidly. These findings have some practical implications for organizations. Organizations need to be strategic about developing future leaders. Effective leadership training can assist in implementing the appropriate leadership styles that enhance employees’ empowerment and engagement. Furthermore, leaders should invest in the development of employees through nurturing workplace environment

6. Conclusion
This study suggests some directions for potential future research. For example, future research may consider the mediating variables that might have impact on the relationship between ELB and OCB. Also, the study can be replicated within other industries in order to further examine the generalizability of the results. The findings of this study focused on the relationships between managers and employees. However, there could be other important factors and attributes effecting organization citizenship behaviors. A longitudinal study can be more helpful to reflect the leadership styles followed by the leaders and the feelings of employees toward empowerment.

There are several limitations for this study that should be noted. First, the data were obtained from a single source and might cause some of the biases. A second limitation is that the data was collected through questionnaires and consisted of self-reported data only. Employees may not fully understand whether their manager’s behaviors are empowering. Thirdly, this study is cross-sectional and accordingly experimental and longitudinal studies should be conducted to eliminate the possibility of other causal explanations for the relationships between the variables (Mathieu & Taylor, 2006).

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**Notes**

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