The mediating effect of organizational culture on the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational citizenship behavior

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Contemporary studies of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) are recognized as essential for modern organizations. These studies indicate that organizations with more emphasis on the OCB are healthier and more successful. The results also show that employees, who act beyond their job duties and exert OCB, belong to high productivity workgroup and enterprise with excellent quality in comparison to employees with low level of OCB. Therefore, the investigation of antecedents of organizational citizenship behavior can help the organizations to improve and reinforce it. Thus, the present study aimed at investigating the mediating effect of organizational culture on the relationship between transformational leadership and OCB.

Method: A descriptive correlation research method was employed in this study. A total of 160 experts at Shiraz University were selected as the research sample through simple random sampling method using Cochran's formula. Moreover, the study employed three instruments, namely Bass and Avolio's transformational leadership questionnaire, Podsakoff's et al.'s (1990) organizational citizenship behavior scale, and Denison organizational culture survey (2006). It is noted that the reliability of all the scales was obtained through Cronbach's alpha coefficient. To analyze the research data, Pearson coefficient and structural equation modeling were used through SPSS 22 and Lisrel 8.8 software.

Results: The results indicated that of dimensions of transformational leadership, inspirational motivation ($\beta=0.33$), and individualized consideration ($\beta=-0.23$) directly influenced OCB. Moreover, these two dimensions indirectly influenced OCB through organizational culture (dimension of involvement). The direct and indirect ($\beta=0.16$) effect of inspirational motivation on OCB was positive whereas individualized consideration directly had a negative and indirectly ($\beta=0.14$) a positive effect on OCB. Two other dimensions of transformational leadership (intellectual stimulation and idealized influence) influenced OCB only indirectly and through organizational culture (dimension of involvement). It was also found that among various dimensions of organizational culture only involvement ($\beta=0.35$) positively and significantly influenced OCB.

Conclusion: When transformational leaders provide close, intimate, supportive and developed relationships, workers tend to more exhibit high levels of OCB and are motivated to fulfill tasks beyond their formal roles to benefit the organization. We can conclude that employees who act beyond their job duties and show OCB have a high productivity with excellent quality in comparison to employees with low level of OCB. Also, organizations with more emphasis on the OCB are healthier and more successful.

Keywords: Organizational culture, Transformational leadership, Organizational citizenship behavior

Introduction

Transformational leadership is a paradigm of leadership in organizational psychology and has been the subject of extensive research throughout the world. If today's organizations are not able to adapt to environmental changes, they will be quickly out of the competition taking place between competitors. Therefore, in such situation organizations need leaders who transform them into organizations with higher ability to grow and survive. Indeed, domination of the transformed situation on today's organization, increasing competition and necessity of efficiency reveal the requirement of a worthwhile generation of employees which are remembered as organizational soldiers (1).

Undoubtedly, these employees are the distinct point of effective and non-effective organizations and tend to be beyond role and job description. These behaviors which go beyond organizational duties of the employees imply the term organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) that has been the focus of many researches in recent years (2). Batman and Organ (1983) used the term organizational citizenship behavior for the first time, thinking of it as a beneficial behavior which has not been mentioned in the job

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description of the employees (3). However, the employees manifest them while fulfilling their duties in order to help others (4, 5). Contemporary studies of OCB are recognized as essential for modern organizations. These studies indicate that organizations with more emphasis on the OCB are healthier and more successful. The results also show that employees, who act beyond their job duties and exert OCB, belong to high productivity workgroup and enterprise with excellent quality in comparison to employees with low level of OCB. On the other hand, some organizations can be seen, in which beliefs, values and assumptions underlying organizational members and leaders are not aligned in the same direction. This problem can affect an employee's attitude towards various issues and the occurrence or non-occurrence of OCB (6-8). Denison (1990) claims that management behaviors reinforce the underlying culture (9).

Transformational Leadership

According to Aydogdu and Asikgil (2011), transformational leader has an important role in creating organizational culture. The values adopted by transformational leader can be easily employed by his followers (10). Therefore, transformational leader must have the skills for being a role model for his subordinates. If the leader has a personality and deviant behavior, then this deviation will affect the organizational culture. The transformational leader is one who is able to create organizational culture, help the employees to get involved in the culture and contribute to creating stable organizational culture (11). Transformational leaders are those who motivate the followers via inspiration. The followers are offered challenges and support the personality development.

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)

In any work environment, it is possible to detect individuals who contribute beyond specified job requirements. These are some people who provide certain useful behaviors such as company resources. They normally admit reasonable inconvenience without any objection, provide good suggestions, and act in a manner consistent with good team players. Such desirable discretionary contributions are called organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) and it is described as "beneficial behavior of workers, which was not prescribed but occurred freely to help others achieve the task at hand" (12, 13). OCB develops effective performance of organization, elevates organization as a whole, and recommends it to other parties (14).

Organizational Culture

In each organization, there are values, symbols and myth that steadily change. These common values, as the origin of movement and dynamism, show how the personnel understand and react to their environment (15). Organizational culture is described by Robbins and Coulter (2005) as the shared values, beliefs, or perceptions held by the employees within an organization or organizational unit (16). Because organizational culture reflects the values, beliefs and behavioural norms used by employees in an organization to give meaning to the situations they encounter, it can influence the attitudes and behaviour of the staff (17).

A review of the literature on transformational leadership,

organizational culture, and OCB indicated that most of the researches conducted in this area had addressed two-way relationships between the concepts. Thus, considering organizational culture as a mediating factor, the present study aimed to examine the relationship between transformational leadership and OCB in a more comprehensive way.

Investigating the relationship between leadership styles and OCB, Podaskoff (2000) showed that transformational leadership behaviors have a positive and significant relationship with each one of the five OCBs of Organ's Model (18). Guh (2008) showed that transformational leadership directly and positively influenced both affective and normative commitment, while it directly and negatively influenced continuance commitment. Transformational leadership also directly and positively influenced OCB (6). Results obtained by Jiao et al. (2010) indicated that there is a positive and significant relationship between transformational leadership, conditioned reward, and OCB (7). In this regard, Bass (1985) demonstrates the relationship between leadership and culture by examining the impact of different styles of leadership on culture. He argues that transactional leaders tend to operate within the limits of the existing culture, while transformational leaders frequently work towards changing the organizational culture in line with their vision (19). Casida and Pinto-Zipp (2008) showed that there was a correlation between leadership and organizational culture (20).

Previous research conducted by Aydogdu and Asikgil (2011) revealed that transformational leadership had a positive relationship with organizational culture (21).

Based on the research results, Hutahayan et al. (2013) showed that the direct effect of transformational leadership had no significant effect on OCB. However, the use of mediating effect of Organizational Culture and Organizational Commitment showed that transformation leadership had a significant effect on OCB (11).

A review of the literature on variables such as transformational leadership, organizational culture, and OCB showed that a plethora of studies were carried out to examine the relationship between two of these three variables. However, no study has been conducted in Iran to investigate the relationship between transformational leadership and OCB with an emphasis on the mediating role of organizational culture. Therefore, to bridge the gap, Fig. 2 presents the theoretical framework of the study. In the framework, transformational leadership, organizational culture, and OCB are considered as independent variable, mediating variable, and dependent variable, respectively.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework
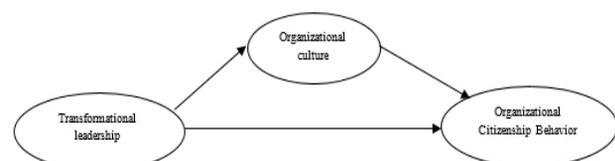
Methods

The present study was conducted using a descriptive-correlation method. The statistical population included the Shiraz University experts. 160 experts were selected using simple random sampling (in other words, each experts was chosen randomly and entirely by chance so that each expert had the same probability of being chosen at any stage during the sampling process) through Cochran's formula.

The research instruments included: A: Bass and Avolio's Transformational Questionnaire (2000) which examines four dimensions (Intellectual Stimulation, Idealized Influence, Individualized Consideration and Inspirational Motivation) which are organized in 20 items on the basis of Likert's five-point scale (1-5). B: Podsakoff's et al.'s Organizational Citizenship Behavior Scale (1990) which encompasses five components (Altruism, Conscientiousness, Sportsmanship, Courtesy, Civic Virtue) and 24 items on the basis of Likert's five-point scale (1-5). C: Denison's Organizational Culture Survey (2000) prepared in four dimensions (Involvement, Adaptability, Mission, and Consistency) on the basis of Likert's five-point scale (1-5) (21). The survey was made up of 60 items encompassing 12 indexes (Empowerment, Team Orientation, Capability Development, Core Values, Agreement, Coordination/Integration, Creating Change, Customer focus, Organizational Learning, Intent/Strategic Direction, Goals/Objectives, and Vision). Face and content validity of the questionnaires and their reliability were calculated.

The latter was obtained through Cronbach's Alpha and values for Transformational Leadership Questionnaire, Organizational Citizenship Behavior Survey and Organizational Culture Scale equaled 0.87, 0.84, and 0.84, respectively.

The inclusion criteria were those who were working as experts at the Shiraz University and willingness to participate in the study. An expert, more generally, is a person with extensive knowledge or ability based on educational level, experience, or occupation in a particular area of organization. In this study, experts are employees who had a high degree of knowledge and expertise and worked as expert in Shiraz University. Also, exclusion criteria included those who answered the questionnaires incompletely and were not willing to participate in the study.

The first ethical consideration was asking for permission of a study's subjects before performing the survey. Anonymity of the participants was ensured; ethical considerations included accurate reporting of the research results, and making valid conclusions that we considered. Finally, to analyze the research data, Pearson coefficient and structural equation modeling (SEM) were adopted by using SPSS 22 and Lisrel 8.8 software.

Results

Table 1 depicts mean, standard deviation, and correlation matrix concerning the research variables. In accordance with the results, of transformational leadership dimensions, only inspirational motivation was positively and strongly correlated with OCB.

Table 1. Mean, Standard Deviation, and Correlation Matrix of the Research Variables

	Variable	Mean/(SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Inspirational Motivation	9.71 (1.32)	1								
2	Intellectual Stimulation	7.12 (1.29)	-0.02	1							
3	Idealized Influence	21.45(2.18)	0.25**	-0.15*	1						
4	Individualized Consideration	9.49 (1.56)	0.34**	0.22**	0.06	1					
5	Involvement	33.93(3.51)	0.52**	0.30**	-0.09	0.56**	1				
6	Consistency	40.21(3.17)	0.18**	-0.08	0.66**	0.14	-0.08	1			
7	Adaptability	33.56(4.07)	0.26**	0.17**	0.23**	0.41**	0.27**	0.20**	1		
8	Mission	42.18(5.51)	0.20**	-0.34*	0.10	0.19*	0.16*	0.19**	0.27**	1	
9	OCB	42.18(5.51)	0.44**	-0.02	0.05	0.13	0.39**	0.07	0.16*	0.15*	1

Figure 2. Examination of the mediating role of organizational culture dimensions on the relationship between transformational leadership and OCB
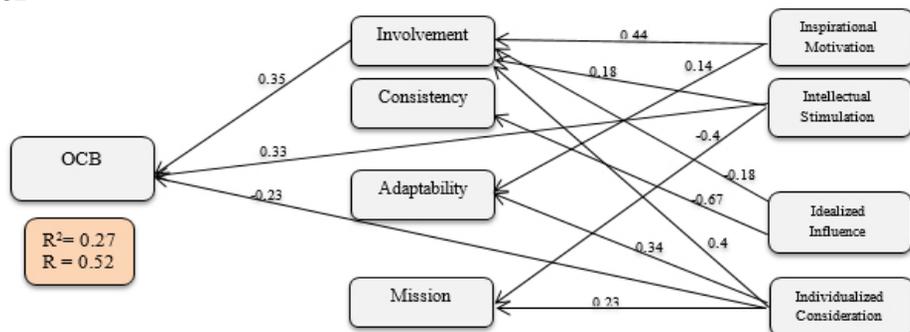
Likewise, of organizational culture dimensions, involvement, adaptability and mission were positively related with OCB. Even though involvement was strongly correlated with OCB, adaptability and mission were nearly weakly correlated with OCB.

Moreover, to examine the mediating role of organizational culture dimensions on the relationship between transformational leadership and OCB, path analysis method was used. Figure 2 illustrates the modified pattern of the path between variables after removal of insignificant paths.

As indicated in Figure 1, among the dimensions of transformational leadership, only inspirational motivation and individualized consideration influenced OCB. The former was positively and the latter negatively related with OCB. Moreover, they also indirectly impacted the OCB through organizational culture (Involvement dimension). It should be noted that both direct and indirect effects of inspirational motivation on OCB were positive while with regard to individualized consideration the effect was directly negative and indirectly positive. Two other dimensions of transformational leadership (Idealized Influence and Intellectual Stimulation) influenced OCB only indirectly through organizational culture (Involvement dimension). Intellectual stimulation positively affected OCB while idealized influence did so negatively. Furthermore, among various dimensions of organizational culture, only involvement was positively related with OCB. The research variables explained 27 percent of the variance in OCB. Table 2 presents standardized values of direct and indirect effects as well as the sum of the research model effects.

Table 2. Direct, Indirect Effects and the Sum of the Research Model Effects

Independent Variable	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Sum of Effects
Inspirational Motivation	0.33	0.16	0.49
Intellectual Stimulation	-	0.06	0.06
Idealized Influence	-	-0.07	-0.07
Individualized Considerations	-0.23	0.14	-0.09
Involvement	0.35	-	0.35

As indicated in Table 2, dimensions of inspirational motivation ($\beta = 0.49$) and involvement ($\beta = 0.35$) were the strongest predictors of OCB, respectively. Intellectual stimulation, idealized influence, and individualized consideration weakly influenced OCB.

It should be noted that to improve the fitness of model, the path between adaptability and mission was released. Then, the coefficients were calculated and insignificant paths were removed. Table 3 presents the indexes of the research model fitness. As indicted, the research model enjoys a favorable fitness.

Table 3. Fitness Indexes of the Research Model

AGFI	GFI	RMSEA	X2/df	df	X2
0.91	0.96	0.07	1.85	17	31.47

Discussion

As previously stated, OCB is one of the new concepts of organizational behavior management which puts an emphasis on workers and managers' meta-role behaviors and plays a crucial role in changing the traditional environment of an organization to a dynamic and efficient one. Such behaviors are often exhibited by workers so as to support organization resources although it is likely that no direct personal benefits resulted (22). Researchers have named many factors effective on improvement of OCB which include transformational leadership (6, 7, 18, 23-26) and organizational culture (27-29). The present study examined the mediating role of organizational culture on the relationship between transformational leadership and OCB, the results of which are discussed and analyzed here. The strong relationship between inspirational motivation and OCB indicates that a manager and/or a leader, who encourages the workers to believe in their goals and be optimistic about future, can create and improve the employees' OCB. Such managers place emphasis on internal motivations rather than external motivations; that is, by stimulating and increasing their workers' motivation, they increase OCB, and their sense of interest and attachment to the organization. Moreover, when transformational leaders provide close, intimate, supportive and developed relationships, workers tend to more exhibit high levels of OCB and are motivated to fulfill tasks beyond their formal roles to benefit the organization. However, when managers have a weak relationship with their workers and employees think of their managers as unaware, they are less involved in OCB. Successful organizations need leaders who specify the future path for their organization, guide people, and create transformational motivation in them. Transformational leaders provide a new path of growth and development for their organizations and improve the workers' OCB by creating ideas and new promising visions.

Likewise, the results showed that involvement dimension nearly strongly influenced the employees' OCB, indicating that if an organization encourages the workers' involvement in such a way that their involvement in various activities is admired by the managers and a sense of possession and responsibility is created in them, the workers become more committed, leading to an increase in their OCB capabilities. In such a culture, workers constantly empower themselves and improve their abilities at all organizational levels. Consequently, all the workers possess the skills and capability needed for job-related decision-making. Likewise, their tendencies towards accepting and following the organizational rules and regulations increase. By sacrificing their personal benefits for the organization, they tend to support the organization instead and have a more effective presence in organizational meetings and discussions so as to improve it through suggestions, innovation, and free expression of beliefs. Such people like their work and task and also enjoy it and keep friendly relationships with their coworkers. They also have a sense of belonging to their organization and enjoy working there. Moreover, they more and more exhibit behaviors called OCB.

Conclusion

In general, it should be noted that OCB requires the former variables that provide the grounds for such a behavior. Transformational leadership and organizational culture are of the main variables. On the basis of the present research findings, in relation to the dimensions of transformational leadership and organizational culture, inspirational motivation and involvement respectively had the highest effect on OCB, leading to an increase in efficiency and effectiveness of the organization and promotion of positive relationships between workers. Therefore, to achieve its vision and long-term goals, Fars Province Department of Education needs employees who perform beyond pre-determined organizational roles and have an active presence in events and processes of the organization. Transformational leadership and dynamic as well as favorable organizational culture are of the most important prerequisites to achieving this goal. Also, the findings of the present study show that unless workers have a good feeling about the managers and their organizational culture, they will not exhibit citizenship behaviors beyond their roles such as sacrifice, courtesy, respect and conscientious. Accordingly, to create, encourage, and institutionalize the workers' OCB, it is suggested that managers should seek potential motivations in their workers. They should also aim to attract the attention of their workers towards higher needs and changing personal benefits to collective ones. The findings also present a favorable and appropriate path for the managers to free the workers from autocratic leadership. Instead of constant supervision and direct control of workers and giving orders, managers can provide the grounds for transformational leadership as well as OCB in such a way that workers no longer need autocratic supervisor, attend their workplace on time, have conscientiousness, respect rights and privileges of others, comply with organizational rules and regulations even when there is no supervision, and fulfill their organizational roles without any need to punishment, threat, and force. Meanwhile, dynamic and cooperative organizational culture is highly contributing and guiding. The findings of the present study shows the managers and workers that transformational leadership, OCB and organizational culture are all positively related and that placing emphasis on each one of these factors results in an increase in efficiency, effectiveness and improvement of positive relationships between workers and organizational services. Thus, it is of high significance to define and specify comprehensive and operational programs for all units and individuals.

Limitation

There were some limitations in this study. It is important to note that the generalizability of our results may be limited to Shiraz university employees. Another limitation was unwillingness of some experts to participate in the study. Also, because this study was based on self-reported questionnaires, we had to take what people say on questionnaires, at face value. However, self-reported data can contain several potential sources of bias to which we should be alert and note the limitations. These limitations may include selective memory [remembering or not remembering experiences or events that occurred at some point in the past]; attribution [the act of attributing positive events and outcomes to one's own agency but attributing negative events and outcomes to external forces]; and exaggeration [the act of representing outcomes or embellishing events as more significant than is actually suggested from other data].

Conflict of interest

None declared.

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