Organizational Citizenship Behavior, Career Commitment and Collectivism in UAE—A Paradigm Shift

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UAE is considered as collectivistic as per many major studies on culture. The present study aims to find the effect of cultural orientation—like individualism or collectivism on a person’s organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). There are many studies related to collectivism and organization citizenship behavior as well as organization commitment and OCB. But most of these studies were done in a western context and is done years back. The present generation of UAE having undergone studies in management which is highly dominated by western philosophies and due to their interaction with diverse nationalities have evolved in their behavior. At this point it is necessary to investigate whether there is any shift in their behavior patterns based on collectivism. Career commitment has grown among UAE nationals in recent years due to high level of commitment from the government towards education and employment. Since OCB is more of an altruistic tendency within an individual, the study looks into the cultural difference within an individual like individualism or collectivism and its relationship with a person’s OCB level among the employees in UAE. Career commitment is taken as a another variable. The study has made some interesting findings which show a shift from the previous studies that show a direct relationship using correlation analysis, between collectivism and organization citizenship behavior. The study found that there is no relationship between individualism or collectivism and organization citizenship behavior, but there is some relationship between career commitment and organization citizenship behavior factor loyal boosterism.

Keywords: individualism-collectivism, organization citizenship behavior, career planning, career identity, career resilience, career commitment

Introduction

Work behaviors beyond the call of duty and organization citizenship behavior have been of interest to organizational behavior researchers for more than a decade or two now. These behaviors are beyond the measures of performance or organization’s reward systems but still produce success to the organization in the long term (van Dyne, Graham, & Dienges, 1994; Koys, 2001; Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1997). According to Organ (1990) organization citizenship behavior is defined as the job behaviors which are discretionary, not formally or directly recognized by organizational reward system, yet promote the effectiveness of the organizations. There are
different types of constructs like prosocial organizational behavior (POB) (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986) and organization spontaneity (OS) (George & Brief, 1992) which are like OCB but are different from OCB.

Culture is defined by House et al. (2002) as shared motives, values, beliefs, identities, and interpretations or meanings of significant events that result from common experiences of members of collectives and are transmitted across age and generations. This definition can be applied at both societal and organizational level of analysis and culture is held, expressed, and shared by individuals through personal values, norms, activities, attitudes, cognitive processes, interpretation of symbols, feelings and ideas, reactions and morals. One important variable studies in globe project by House et al. (2002) was collectivism. According to House et al. (2002) collectivism1 is the degree to which organizational and societal institutional practices encourage reward and collective distribution of resources and collective action. Collectivism is the degree to which individuals express pride, loyalty, and cohesiveness in their organizations or families.

Culture is like personality to individual or at times living in a certain culture moulds the personality of the individual in that way. Culture thus influences an individual’s psychological responses to the environment and is rooted in the shared values and meanings of a certain group or society. Values and beliefs thus shared are the basis of individual’s behavior in the society (Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1995) and these behaviors are considered to be legitimate by the society.

Individuals exhibit differences in terms of cooperation, competition, inter relationships, and individualistic behaviors based on different cultural orientations. Some culture having high individualism tends to have less interrelationships and hence less teamwork. People in collectivistic culture tend to have high regard for relationships and teamwork. There will be active interest in helping for the common good of the group, team, or organization.

**Rationale for the Study**

In many studies one can see the usage of Hofstede’s cultural dimensions. Individualism collectivism is a dimension which has been used often to explain differences in work groups across eastern and western culture. But this generalization of eastern culture being collectivistic and western culture being individualistic was not further tested to illustrate that the findings hold true even now. Hofstede conducted his study on one organization in the 1980s. But with globalization things have changed, management practices and ethos have shifted from the west to east and is remodeled based on each culture. India, China, UAE, Brazil, and Indonesia are predominantly active in the world economic and political domain in the recent time. The study looks into OCB, career commitment, and individualism collectivism in present in UAE which is an eastern culture.

**Literature Review**

There is high agreement as well as high differentiation in culture and between cultures on many of these cultural dimensions as well as within organization and between organization. For example, East Asian individuals are described as group-oriented and promoting goals that are shared with others, as emphasizing collective identity (Triandis, 1989), and stressing the importance of external and public roles and relatives (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In contrast, Euro-Americans are depicted as self-oriented and promoting their own goals (Triandis, 1995) emphasizing private identity, and focusing on internal abilities, thoughts, and
feelings (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

The present study takes a meta analytical view of previous studies like Moorman and Blakely (1995), Noordin, Williams, and Zimmer (2002), and Hofstede’s (1980) cultural dimensions, globe study (House et al., 2002), Triandis (1995) and tried to synthesize a model which focuses on the importance of within individual orientation-individualism/collectivism and its effect on organizational citizenship behavior in a new way. Moorman and Blakely (1995) in their study have looked into individualism and collectivism as within individual factors and tried to connect this with organizational citizen ship behavior directly. The present study used a mediator variable that might affect an individual’s citizenship behavior in organizations. This mediator variable is career commitment as is taken from an earlier study of career commitment done by Noordin, Williams and Zimmer (2002) whose hypothesis was that career commitment is higher in individualistic culture than in collectivist culture. The study has proved that collectivistic Malaysian employees differed from individualistic Australian employees only in resilience commitment. They scored almost same in career planning and career identity.

Triandis (1995) in his study argues that it is important to distinguish between horizontal and vertical dimensions of individualism and collectivism. Horizontal individualism is a cultural pattern in which each individual is autonomous in his own way, but enjoy a similar status with the other individuals. Vertical cultural pattern is where an autonomous self is postulated with a different individual status between individuals, where inequality is expected. Competition will be there in the second pattern. Horizontal collectivism is when individuals see themselves as similar to each other and merged with the group, where as vertical collectivism is a pattern where although they are members of a group, they see that members are of different in their values and personality and can be assigned different status (Triandis, 1995). This explanation of Triandis make us conclude that I am individualistic but in my own way or as same as any other individualistic person or I am collectivistic—but a different collectivistic person from the common simile collectivistic. Singelis et al. (1995) have developed a scale that measures the horizontal and vertical dimensions of individualism-collectivism.

Collectivism or individualism seems to be less culture specific today. This may be due to higher networking, exposure, and interaction among different cultures. The second reason could be the dominance of management studies and literature by the western theorists and writers. There is more cultural integration and cultural assimilation within organization as different nationalities coming from diverse culture work together. Organizations follow benchmarked practices of western society in many of their rituals and actions and hence organization culture do influence individuals and they behave in ways that are rewarding to them. For example, House et al. (2002) point out that exposure to international media, cross-border commerce, international political, and economic competition of other forms of cross cultural interaction may introduce new competitive forces and new common experiences which may result in changes in cultural variables. When strategic organization contingencies change as a result of new cultural, technological, political and economic reasons, new leader behaviors emerge which might affect the organization practices which creates new common experiences. This will make a change in the cultural orientation of individuals (House et al., 2002).

Alotaibi’s (2001) study conducted in Kuwait found that neither job satisfaction nor organization commitment could predict organisation citizenship behavior. The author explained his findings in relation to cultural specificity. Most previous studies conducted in western countries have found that there exists
relationship between these concepts. The researcher explained that this may be due to the fact that these relationships do not hold true in Arabic culture. In Sultanate of Oman a study was conducted by Kuehn and Al-Busaidi (2002) where they found that normative commitment and job satisfaction are significant predictors of OCB. This is in contradiction to the previous findings in the same Arab culture. Hence, the finding need to be verified through further research.

LePine, Erez, and Johnson (2002) did a meta-analytical study and found strong predictive relationship between normative commitment, job satisfaction, and OCB. Furthermore, the two researches by Moorman and Blakely (1995), Noordin, Williams, and Zimmer (2002) were used as base information and reference for this study, as they have clearly demonstrated that within a culture there could be individual differences.

**Hypotheses**

Main hypotheses:
H1: There is a relationship between individualism-collectivism and organization citizenship behavior.
H2: There is a relationship between career commitment and organization citizenship behavior.

Specific hypotheses:
- There is a relationship between factors of organization citizenship behavior and factors of career commitment;
- There is a relationship among career commitment factors and IC total and OCB total;
- There is a relationship between organization citizenship factors and career commitment total and IC total.

**Model of Career Commitment, OCB and Individualism**

![Model of career commitment, OCB, and individualism.](image)

**Methodology**

The researcher has carefully chosen two organization where there were many Emiratis. The study was conducted on UAE nationals in specific to understand within culture individual differences in
collectivism/individualism at workplace in UAE. UAE nationals were specifically chosen to understand more about the inter-individual variation in organization citizenship behavior, career commitment and individualism and collectivism. Random sampling was done from two major organizations in UAE-RTA and municipality. The sample included administrators, managers, specialists, and officers.

**Design of the Study**

The current research investigates the relationship between individualism-collectivism, and organization commitment with organization citizenship behavior. It is important for a research to have some similarity in demographic characteristics of the sample. Hence, this study has focused on collecting sample from one area of UAE which is Dubai. The study is based on collection of primary data from 60 respondents from two large organizations in UAE whose age varied from 25 to 45 years. The study used questionnaire method.

**Research Instrument**

The data was collected using questionnaires. Questionnaires were made through adopting items from organization citizenship scale (Moorman & Blakely, 1992). The four factors of organization citizenship scale are individual initiative, interpersonal helping, loyal boosterism, and personal mastery.

Individualism and collectivism was measured using seven item, individualism/collectivism scale used by Wagnor and Mosch (1986) which was modified with 10 items.

Career commitment was measured using scale developed by Carson and Bedeian (1994). It is a 12 item multidimensional career commitment measure with career identity, career planning, and career resilience as three important dimensions. The three components of career commitment are career planning, career resilience, and career identity. Career planning is determining ones career goals and planning for the same. Career resilience is the ability to take up new jobs even in face of adversity like losing jobs. These people will have high levels of professional skills. Career identity is the extent to which individuals identify with the work they do and is distinct from organization identity.

All the three scales were modified to adapt to the current culture and work environment. Nine questions were used to understand and measure organization citizenship behavior. Career commitment was measured using 10 items, and 10 items were used to measure individualism-collectivism.

Questionnaires were sent together with an introductory letter describing the objective of the research to 70 respondents in each organization. The researcher received 32 and 28 responses which were able for analysis from the two organizations there by making it to a total of 60 respondents. To provide a motivation for accurate responses the respondents were guaranteed anonymity and were promised an accurate summary of the main findings if requested. Questionnaire was designed in Arabic as well as English language to enhance the accuracy of responses. Some Emiratis have problems in understanding English completely. Five-point Likert scale is used to score the response of the participants of research.

**Analysis**

Analysis was done using Pearson rank correlation and multiple regression analysis.

A correlation was done between IC total and OCB total, IC total and CC total, and CC total and OCB total. It was found that all these three correlations were insignificant. Further, a regression using linear equation was done with the two independent variables on OCB.
Analysis of Results and Discussion

The purpose of the study is to investigate the relationship between individualism and career commitment and organization citizenship behavior. Using SPSS, Pearson correlation (see Table 1) was done between the main constructs of the study which is individualism, career commitment, and organization citizenship behavior. A further understanding was required to find whether there is any correlation between the factors of career commitment scale and factors of organization citizenship scale. For this further analysis using correlation and finally a multiple regression analysis was done to understand effect of all the other variables on organization citizenship behavior.

The results of correlation between individualism and organization citizenship behavior was a very low value (0.010). There is no significant correlation between these two components. Pearson correlation coefficient value was insignificant when correlation was conducted between I/C total and career commitment total scores (-0.140). Correlation between career commitment total and OCB total was also not significant with a value of 0.252. All the three main hypothesis were rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted. The results show that there is no significant relationship between OCB and career commitment as well as OCB and collectivism.

Table 1
Results of Pearson Rank Correlations (N = 60)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Interpersonal helping</th>
<th>Individual initiative</th>
<th>Personal industry</th>
<th>Loyal boosterism</th>
<th>Career planning</th>
<th>Career identity</th>
<th>Career resilience</th>
<th>ICT</th>
<th>OCBT</th>
<th>CCT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal helping</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual initiative</td>
<td>0.721**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal industry</td>
<td>0.609**</td>
<td>0.556**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyal boosterism</td>
<td>0.392**</td>
<td>0.261*</td>
<td>0.267</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career planning</td>
<td>0.215</td>
<td>0.298</td>
<td>0.144</td>
<td>0.378**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career identity</td>
<td>0.205</td>
<td>0.136</td>
<td>0.125</td>
<td>0.513**</td>
<td>0.381**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career resilience</td>
<td>0.198</td>
<td>0.052</td>
<td>-0.125</td>
<td>0.169</td>
<td>0.496**</td>
<td>0.345**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>0.022</td>
<td>-0.069</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>0.146</td>
<td>-0.151</td>
<td>0.064</td>
<td>-0.235</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>OCBT</td>
<td>0.916**</td>
<td>0.865**</td>
<td>0.783**</td>
<td>0.497**</td>
<td>0.301</td>
<td>0.254</td>
<td>0.094</td>
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<td>CCT</td>
<td>0.261*</td>
<td>0.174</td>
<td>0.031</td>
<td>0.433**</td>
<td>0.724**</td>
<td>0.752**</td>
<td>0.836**</td>
<td>-0.140</td>
<td>0.252</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: ** significant level at 0.001, * significant level at 0.05; ICT—Total of individualism/collectivism, CCT—Total of career commitment, OCBT—Total of organization citizenship.

The study did further analysis to understand the relationship that exists between the factors of organization citizenship behavior (OCB) and career commitment (CC) factors with all the other variables of the study. Career commitment factors were career planning (CP), career identity (CI), and career resilience (CR) for which abbreviations will be used in further part of the paper.

The factors in organization citizenship behavior are interpersonal helping (IH), individual initiative (II), personal industry (PI), and loyal boosterism (LB). Individualism-collectivism is a single factor (I/C total).

Interpersonal helping correlated significantly with OCB total and career commitment total(CC total). As it is a factor of OCB total, it is understandable why there is a high correlation between the two which is almost near to 1 (0.916). Interpersonal helping and its correlation with CC total is interesting and give some relationship between the intermediating variable career commitment and the dependent variable OCB factor.
The value is 0.261 at 0.044 significance level. There is a high correlation between IH and other three components of OCB too. This correlation indicates that they belong to one construct which is OCB.

Individual initiative is the second factor of OCB too, which has high significant correlations with the other two factors of OCB—Personal initiative and interpersonal helping. There is a significant relationship between individual initiative and career planning. The result clearly points that an individual capable showing initiative will have keen interest in the growth of their career too. There is a significant correlation of 0.865 with OCB total.

The factor personal industry did not correlate with any of career commitment factors. There is a significant correlation with OCB total.

Loyal boosterism correlated significantly with two factors of career commitment—career planning (0.378) and career identity (0.513). There was a significant correlation with career commitment total too (0.433). The results indicate that when you are more loyal to your organization you may work hard and will be developing your career through career planning and you identify more with your career or vice versa. The direction of the relationship cannot be completely explained by this test.

The factor career planning is significantly correlated with OCB total (0.301), loyal boosterism (0.378), and individual initiative (0.298). An employee who plans his career well may be more loyal to the organization and may show OCB behavior. Career planning always enable an employee to look to the future and be positive about his career growth, and hence may be promoting loyal boosterism for his company.

The factor career identity is also significantly correlated with loyal boosterism (0.381). Career resilience has significant correlation with loyal boosterism (0.496). Loyal boosterism is the factor of OCB where the individual identifies with the organization and would do activities that support the image and reputation of the organization in the external environment. When an employee has high career identity, career planning, and career resilience, there is a chance that he will support activities to protect the image of the organization through OCB activities. The research done by Markovits (2011) found that normative commitment may lead to loyal boosterism. Here in this study it is proved that career commitment may lead to loyal boosterism and that may lead to OCB.

Individualism/Collectivism which was considered as the main independent variable of this study failed to correlate with other variables of the study—career commitment or OCB. This study hence rejects the hypothesis that says there is a relationship between individualism/collectivism total and career commitment with OCB (organisation citizenship behavior), which is the most important finding of this study. The study suggests that in this region, there is no effect of individualism/collectivism and career commitment on organization citizenship behavior. Previous studies by Hofstede (1988) suggested that collectivism may lead to more concern about fellow human beings and there would be more interpersonal helping. This study hence is an eye opener to the fact that business situations and organizations may decide whether an employee is committed to career or would show more organization citizenship behavior. The research’s finding is important as it provides an opportunity to question the importance of career planning within organizations and how that can be used to create more loyal, corporate citizens within organizations.

The study points to the fact that organizations in UAE do not have to consider the factor of collectivism as a predictor of OCB. Individuals may be collectivistic or individualistic in their own lives as explained in
vertical and horizontal collectivism, but they will not bring it to the work place as a behavior.

**Conclusions**

The study found that there is no significant relationship between individualism/collectivism and organization citizenship behavior. The career commitment in the model had a greater influence on organization citizenship behavior with all its factors career planning, career identity, and career resilience having a significant positive relationship with OCB. In Arab culture where collectivism holds true according to Hofstede’s cultural research (1980), it is proved that it is not the same findings that would hold in future. There is need for further research into the reasons about why collectivistic culture individuals tend to show more of individualistic behaviors, and hence there is no significant relationship with OCB directly.

**Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research**

The study was conducted on a small sample of UAE nationals. If the study had been conducted on a larger sample perhaps the research result could be more generalized. Future researchers need to test the model with a larger number of sample size to prove or disprove the present research. The researcher had time limitations and to do so in the present study. Another limitation is that the study did not do a factor analysis on the scales and the factors of the scale for the region although many questions were adapted after expert judgment and was re-written for the present sample. Future researchers can do a factor analysis on the current items in the questionnaire to ensure the factor items structure. The study throws light to the fact that there is a need to revisit many of the western concepts which are blindly followed in the current business scenario where globalization have taken over the management and leadership styles and the work force behaviors, attitudes and beliefs. Hence, more study need to be done on many concepts in management in the eastern region particularly in UAE which is emerging as an emerging economy.

**References**


