

The Moderating Effect of Employee Personality in the Relationship Between Job Design Characteristics and Organizational Citizenship Behavior

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Abstract: Although, previous researchers have paid significant attention to the effect of job design characteristics on employee involvement in Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) few have specifically examined the joint effect of job design characteristics and employee personality on employee involvement in OCB. This study aimed to examine the role of employee personality (agreeableness) as a moderator in the job design characteristics-OCB relationship. A total of 443 employees from public healthcare institutions in Malaysia participated in this quantitative study. A moderated hierarchical regression analysis revealed a positive effect of research design characteristics (autonomy, skill variety, feedback, task significance, task identity, social support, physical demand and psychological demand) with OCB. The result shows a significant interaction between research design characteristics (autonomy and social support) and agreeableness personality in predicting OCB. Consistent with past findings, the effect of autonomy and social support on OCB was stronger for those respondents high in agreeableness than for those respondents low in agreeableness personality. Managerial implications and directions for future research are discussed.

Key words: Job characteristics, job autonomy, social support, organizational citizenship behavior, employee personality

INTRODUCTION

Positive behaviors of employees have been a main focus of research organizations in recent years due to its potential to make critical contribution to organizational performance, competitiveness and ultimately business success (Bakker and Schaufeli, 2008). Employees in organizations are found to engage in both task related behaviors and non task related behaviors which are seen as two important positive behaviors of employees. Although, both of these behaviors are equally important for organizational effectiveness, getting their employees to research beyond what is stated in their job description has become one of the biggest challenges faced by employers in managing their human resources. Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) is one type of non task related behavior concerned with the positive behavioral aspect of employee that has captured the attention of both academician and practitioners in the recent years (Ishak, 2005; Bergeron, 2007; Krishnan *et al.*, 2010, 2013; Chung and Angeline, 2010).

Employee involvement in OCB is deemed important in sustaining competitive advantage, keeping abreast with changes and promoting innovation (Organ, 1997). OCB is

found to benefit both the management and employees and has contributed importantly to organizational effectiveness (Walz and Niehoff, 1996). OCB concerns with the positive behavioral aspects that are neither stated in job description nor enforced by employment contract. Examples of OCB include helping new employees, volunteering at research being punctual and enhancing the reputation of the organization. OCB enhances coworker and managerial productivity, serve as an effective means of coordinating activities between team members and across research groups and enhances organization's ability to adapt to environmental changes (Organ *et al.*, 2006).

Review of literature shows that researchers have identified a number of predictors of OCB such as: job attitudes (Shore and Wayne, 1993), interpersonal trust/loyalty to the leader (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2000) and task characteristics (Todd and Kent, 2006). Although, many studies have examined the direct relationship between job attitude and OCB, studies examining the moderating mechanism in the relationship between job design characteristics and OCB are scarce (Chiu and Chen, 2005; Krishnan *et al.*, 2010). This study was intended to investigate the moderating effect of employee

personality in the job design characteristics-OCB relationship. Although, it is important to identify and examine the role of primary situational antecedents (i.e., job design characteristics) on OCB, examining the moderating role of employee personality in the job design characteristics-OCB link will contribute to the existing body of knowledge in OCB.

Literature review:

Organizational citizenship behavior: Employee's involvement in activities beyond role prescriptions over the years have evolved and conceptualized under different headings such as "pro-social organizational behavior" (Brief and Motowidlo, 1986) "organizational citizenship behavior" (Organ, 1988) "organizational spontaneity" (George and Brief, 1992) "contextual performance" (Borman and Motowidlo, 1993) and "extra-role behavior" (Van Dyne *et al.*, 1995). Smith *et al.* (1983) introduced the notion of OCB as discretionary behavior that goes beyond one's official role and is intended to help other people in the organization or to show conscientiousness and support towards the organization. Organ (1988) later defined this concept as "an individual behavior that is discretionary not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system and that in aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization. By discretionary, we mean that the behavior is not an enforceable requirement of the role or job description that is, the clearly specifiable terms of the person's employment contract with the organization the behavior is rather a matter of personal choice such that the omission is not generally understood as punishable". From the above definitions, OCB can be construed as a positive behavior that is neither stated in job description nor enforced by employment contract.

Study of literature shows that many dimensions were introduced to measure the construct of OCB (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2000). Since, the introduction of the concept of OCB, Organ (1988) has expanded the conceptualization of OCB into five distinct dimensions namely, altruism, courtesy, conscientiousness, civic virtue and sportsmanship. Altruism was referred to the same helping behavior (helping specific others) as indicated by Smith *et al.* (1983) conceptualization of OCB. Courtesy denotes to the behaviors that reflect basic consideration for others (e.g., letting one's coworkers know where they can be reached/consulting others before taking action). Conscientiousness is a pattern of going beyond minimal levels of attendance, punctuality and conserving resources and involves being a "good citizen" in the workplace. Civic virtue is somewhat different from the other dimensions because the target is the organization or

sometimes the research group and the dimension pertains to constructive involvement in the political process of the organization (e.g., keeping abreast of issues involving the organization/keeping up with important matters within the organization). Sportsmanship reflects behaviors that an employee does not engage in such as tolerating inconveniences without whining and grievances (e.g., not complaining about trivial matters). Williams and Anderson (1991)'s examined further the OCB dimensionality issue and came up with a two dimensional view organizational citizenship behavior directed toward individuals (OCBI) and organizational citizenship behavior directed toward the organization (OCBO). Factor analytic evidence from their study demonstrated that the items used to measure OCB loaded best onto their two-dimensional view of OCB. However, it is important to mention that these two dimensions, OCBI and OCBO, were largely based on Organ (1988)'s five-dimensions. Moreover, Williams and Anderson (1991) suggested that Organ (1988)'s five dimensions should be reduced to the two dimensions they proposed such that OCBI is comprised of altruism and courtesy and OCBO includes conscientiousness, civic virtue and sportsmanship.

Job design characteristics and organizational citizenship behavior:

Decreased employee satisfaction increased turnover and absenteeism and difficulties in managing employees in simplified jobs prompted researchers to develop theories focusing on the motivating features of research. Hackman and Lawler (1971) identified three critical psychological states (i.e., experienced meaningfulness of the research, the experienced responsibility for research outcomes and the knowledge of results) that a job should enhance if it is to be internally motivating. This was followed by Hackman and Oldham (1975, 1976) who identified the core job characteristics that would increase the experience of these three psychological states and subsequently propounded the job characteristics theory which argued that the most effective means of motivating employees is through the optimal design of jobs.

The job characteristics theory focuses on facilitating high internal research motivation in the workplace in order to achieve positive research behaviors. The authors proposed that the means for increasing internal research motivation is to design jobs so they will provide skill variety task identity) task significance autonomy and feedback. Skill variety is referred to the extent to which an employee can use different skills in doing his/her research. The more skill that an employee possess, the higher will be the meaningfulness of the job the more appealing will be the job to the employee and also it

avoids the monotony of performing the same task repeatedly. Task identity on the other hand refers to the extent to which an employee can complete the whole or identifiable piece of research or in other word doing the job from beginning to end with a visible outcome. Task significance refers to the extent of the significant impact of the job on others whether in the immediate organization or the world at large. Skill variety, task identity and task significance is expected to influence the employee's experienced meaningfulness of the research. The job will be very meaningful if these three characteristics are high. However even when two of these dimensions are low the researcher may find the job meaningful if the third dimension is high enough. Autonomy refers to the extent of freedom, independence and discretion of an employee to plan his/her research pace and method. Employees in highly autonomous jobs, dictates their own job rather than being instructed by their bosses. Autonomy is expected to influence the employee's experienced responsibility for outcome of the research which in turn influences the final research outcome. Feedback refers to the extent to which an employee knows his/her own job performance from the job itself, colleagues, supervisors or customers. Feedback in the job is expected to influence the employee knowledge of the actual results of the research activities which in turn affects the final research outcome.

Due to a limited set of motivational work feature in the job characteristics model (Humphrey *et al.*, 2007) in a meta-analytical study has expanded the research design model to include other important aspects of research such as the social research characteristics and research context characteristics. In this new theoretical job design model, (Humprey *et al.*, 2007) included 14 additional research design outcomes, four social characteristics of research and three research context characteristics. The empirical evidence from their study support the incremental contribution of both social and research context characteristics above the motivational characteristics. It also found that social support incrementally predicted job satisfaction, training requirements and compensation requirement beyond the motivational job characteristics in their study. As these additional job characteristics were able to explain a unique variance in the behavioral and attitudinal outcome above and beyond motivational job characteristics they suggested future research to include these aspects of job characteristics to examine various organizational outcome.

On the basis of the above discussion on the theoretical and empirical researches related to this study, the researcher proposed the following:

- H₁: job design characteristics (autonomy, skill variety, feedback, task significance, task identity and social support) positively related to OCB and (physical demand and psychological demand) negatively related to OCB

Employee personality: There has been consensus within the organization behavior researchers (Barrick, 2005) that the five-factor model of personality propounded by Costa and McCrae (1992) as one of the most prominent models in contemporary psychology to describe the most salient features of personality. The big five personality dimensions can be divided into five factors: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness and neuroticism (Costa and McCrae, 1992; McCrae and John, 1992). Extraversion is indicated by positive feelings (emotions) and tendency to seek company of others. It represents the tendency to be sociable assertive, active, upbeat, cheerful, optimistic and talkative. Such individuals like people, prefer groups, enjoy excitement and stimulation and experience positive effect such as energy, zeal and excitement (Costa and McCrae, 1992; John and Srivastava, 1999).

Agreeableness is the tendency to be trusting, compliant, caring, considerate, generous and gentle. Such individuals have an optimistic view of human nature. They are sympathetic to others and have a desire to help others in return they expects others to be helpful. In essence, agreeable individuals are prosocial and have communal orientation toward others (Costa and McCrae, 1992; John and Srivastava, 1999). Employees who are high in agreeableness are generally friendly, good natured, cooperative, helpful, courteous and flexible whereas employees who are low in agreeableness tend to be very outspoken and competitive. (Barrick and Mount, 1991). On the other hand, conscientious individuals are purposeful and determined. They have the tendency to act dutifully, show self-discipline and aim for achievement against a measure or outside expectation. Conscientiousness describes socially prescribed impulse control that facilitates task and goal-directed behavior such as thinking before acting, delaying gratification, following norms and rules and planning, organizing and prioritizing tasks (John and Srivastava, 1999).

Neuroticism measures the continuum between emotional adjustment or stability and emotional maladjustment or neuroticism (Costa and McCrae, 1992). People who have the tendency to experience fear, nervousness, sadness, tension, anger and guilt are at high end of neuroticism. Individuals scoring at the low end of neuroticism are emotionally stable and even tempered (Costa and McCrae, 1992; John and Srivastava,

1999). Openness to experience is the tendency of the individual to be imaginative, sensitive, original in thinking, attentive to inner feelings, appreciative of art intellectually curious and sensitive to beauty (Costa and McCrae, 1992; John and Srivastava, 1999). Such individuals are willing to entertain new ideas and unconventional values.

Moderating role of employee personality: Recently, more studies has been conducted to examine the moderating role of personality disposition in various job situation- research outcome relationship (Colbert *et al.*, 2004). For example, Ballout (2009) examined the moderating role of self-efficacy in the relationship between career commitment and career success found that career commitment predicted both objective (i.e., salary level) and subjective (i.e., career satisfaction) career success only for employees with average to high self-efficacy but not for those with low self-efficacy. Comeau and Griffith (2005) supports the notion that personality variables interact with environmental variables such as structural interdependence to impact the levels of OCB. On the other hand, Ilies *et al.* (2006) investigated the interactive effects of personality traits and experienced states on intra individual patterns of citizenship behavior. Results of their study demonstrated that agreeableness moderated the intra individual relationship between state positive affect and daily reports of citizenship behavior.

Of the five big five personality factors, conscientiousness and agreeableness have the most obvious theoretical connections with OCB and have been the subject of most dispositionally based OCB research. (Digman, 1990). Literature search shows that employee personality was found to play both as direct predictor or as moderator in OCB studies. For example agreeableness and conscientiousness was found to have positive relationship with OCB (Ilies *et al.*, 2009). Highly agreeable employees exhibited more consistent patterns of citizenship behavior such that their performance of OCB was less dependent on their state positive affect. Krings and Facchin (2009), found that the relationship between organizational justice and men's likelihood to sexually harass is stronger only for men low in agreeableness. Liu *et al.* (2008) has also supported the moderating role of agreeableness in the relationship between situational variables (perceived job meaning) and behavioral outcome of employees (OCB). The relationship between perceived job meaning and OCB is stronger for employees who are high in agreeableness than low in agreeableness. Given that most OCB researchers have focused on conscientiousness and agreeableness among

the big five personality dimensions, in this study we focus on agreeableness personality dimension to examine its moderating role in the relations between job design characteristics and OCB.

On the basis of the above discussion on the theoretical and empirical researches related to this study, the researcher proposed the following:

- H₂: employee personality (agreeableness) moderates the relationship between job design characteristics (autonomy, skill variety, feedback, task significance, task identity, social support, physical demand and psychological demand) and OCB

Sub hypothesis 2a: Agreeableness moderates the autonomy-OCB relation such that the relations between autonomy and OCB will be stronger when employees are high in agreeableness than when low in agreeableness.

Sub hypothesis 2b: Agreeableness moderates the skill variety-OCB relation such that the relations between skill variety and OCB will be stronger when employees are high in agreeableness than when low in agreeableness.

Sub hypothesis 2c: Agreeableness moderates the feedback-OCB relation such that the relations between feedback and OCB will be stronger when employees are high in agreeableness than when low in agreeableness.

Sub hypothesis 2d: Agreeableness moderates the task significance-OCB relation such that the relations between task significance and OCB will be stronger when employees are high in agreeableness than when low in agreeableness.

Sub hypothesis 2e: Agreeableness moderates the task identity-OCB relation such that the relations between task identity and OCB will be stronger when employees are high in agreeableness than when low in agreeableness.

Sub hypothesis 2f: Agreeableness moderates the social support-OCB relation such that the relations between social support and OCB will be stronger when employees are high in agreeableness than when low in agreeableness.

Sub hypothesis 2g: Agreeableness moderates the physical demand-OCB relation such that the relations between physical demand and OCB will be stronger when employees are high in agreeableness than when low in agreeableness.

Sub hypothesis 2h: Agreeableness moderates the psychological demand-OCB relation such that the relations between psychological demand and OCB will be stronger when employees are high in agreeableness than when low in agreeableness.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sample and data collection: This study has employed a convenience sampling method in selecting respondents who are consists of 443 nursing and clinical employees holding non supervisory jobs employed in two public hospitals in Malaysia. Permission to conduct the study was sought from the hospital directors and the directors of nursing services of these respective hospitals. A survey research design was chosen for this study whereby data on employee's perceived research design characteristics, personality and their engagement in research were collected cross sectionally using a structured research questionnaires. Prior to distribute the study questionnaires, pilot study was conducted to assess whether the items were easy to understand and the appropriateness of the questionnaire design. It was agreed that most of the items were clear and understandable by both of the target groups.

Measures: All constructs of the study was measured with scales adopted from existing scales.

Organizational citizenship behavior: This study has adopted organizational citizenship behavior scale developed by Lee and Allen (2002) to measure organizational citizenship behavior. All the 15 items of this scale were adopted without any modifications. This 15-item scale using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from (very inaccurate) to 5 (very accurate) measures helping behaviors that benefit specific individual (OCB-I) and the organization as a whole (OCB-O). Lee and Allen (2002) reported the reliabilities of 0.83 (OCB-I) and 0.88 (OCB-O). Although, researchers have widely used the five dimensions of OCB proposed by MacKenzie *et al.* (1993), most of the studies that examined the relationship between job characteristics and OCB used either the overall measure of OCB or the five main dimensions by Mackenzie *et al.* (1993). In this study, the overall measure of OCB was used. OCB items that were retained after the confirmatory factor analysis were summed to form a composite score for the OCB construct in this study. Examples of items in this scale are "I help others who have been absent" and "I offer ideas to improve the functioning of the organization". This study has reported a coefficient alpha reliability of 0.87 for the composite

score for OCB. Chen and Chiu (2009) reported a coefficient alpha reliability of 0.94 for their composite score for OCB.

Job characteristics: The five dimensions of job characteristics (autonomy, skill variety, feedback, task significance and task identity) were measured with the corresponding subscales of the job diagnostic survey by Hackman and Oldham (1975). Each subscale consists of four items that was evaluated by the respondents based upon a 5-point Likert-type scale from 1 indicating strongly disagree to 5 indicating strongly agree. An example of autonomy measure is "my job allows me to make a lot of decisions on my own". An example of skill variety measure is "my job is quite simple and repetitive". An example of feedback measure is "I often receive feedback from my supervisor and peers". An example of task significance measure is "I am holding a very important job in this organization". An example of task identity measure is "My job provides me the chance to completely finish the piece of work I begin". The respective coefficient alphas for autonomy, skill variety, feedback, task significance and task identity in this study were 0.79, 0.59, 0.85, 0.70 and 0.63.

Social support: This study has adopted Karasek (1979)'s JCQ scales comprising six items measuring social support. An example is "my co-workers are very helpful". Participants indicated their response on a five point Likert-type scale from 1 indicating strongly disagree to 5 indicating strongly agree. This study has reported a coefficient alpha reliability of 0.78 for social support job characteristics.

Physical demand: This study has adopted Van and Maes (1999)'s physical demand scale with four items scale. A sample item is "I have to work in an uncomfortable position". Participants indicated their response on a five point Likert-type scale from 1 indicating strongly disagree to 5 indicating strongly agree. This study has reported a coefficient alpha reliability of 0.67 for physical demand job characteristics.

Psychological demand: This study has adopted Karasek (1979)'s JCQ scales comprising five items measuring psychological demand. An example is "I am required to work very fast". Participants indicated their response on a five point Likert-type scale from 1 indicating strongly disagree to 5 indicating strongly agree. This study has reported a coefficient alpha reliability of 0.82 for psychological demand job characteristics.

Agreeableness: This study has adopted Goldberg (1992)'s Big Five IPIP with 10 item questionnaire scales which measure agreeableness. A sample item is "I sympathize with others' feeling". Participants indicated their response on a five point Likert-type scale with anchors very inaccurate to very accurate. This study has reported a coefficient alpha reliability of 0.72 for agreeableness.

Data analysis: The data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for windows version 20.0. A hierarchical multiple regression was conducted to investigate the study hypothesis. Prior to conducting the multiple regression, data was screened for violations of the assumptions of normality, linearity, homocedasticity and multicollinearity. The bivariate relationship between all the study variables was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. The mean value for most of the study variables were above 3.5. The Pearson product-moment correlation analysis shows that most of the variables are strongly correlated with one another.

A three steps moderated hierarchical regression (Cohen *et al.*, 1983) was conducted to test the moderation effects of agreeableness on the relationship between job design characteristics and OCB (H_2). In Step 1 of the moderated regression analysis, the hypothesized independent variable was entered. In step 2, the moderator variable (agreeableness) was entered. In step 3, the interaction terms was entered. Any significant increase in variable explained as shown by R^2 in step 2 and the corresponding significance value for beta would indicate the direct relationship between the moderating variable (agreeableness) and the dependent variable. Any significant increase in variable explained as shown by R^2 in step 3 and the corresponding significance value for beta would indicate the moderating effect of agreeableness on the relation between the independent variables and the dependent variable. According to Sharma *et al.* (1981) if the interaction term is statistically significant and the coefficient of determination value (R^2) increase, a pure moderating effect is then present. On the other hand, if there is no significant difference in step 2 and step 3 of the moderated regression analysis, a quasi moderating effect is present. The significance of the interaction was determined by examining the significance of the increment in criterion variance that is explained by the interaction term. To examine the nature of this interaction, the interaction effect was plotted using values one standard deviation below and above the mean for both the predictor variable and moderator variable (Cohen *et al.*, 1983; Aiken *et al.*, 1991). To reduce the

multicollinearity among the main effect variables and their interaction terms, scores on job design characteristics (independent variables) and agreeableness (moderator) variable and their interaction term were mean centered (Aiken *et al.*, 1991).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Interaction between job design characteristics perception and agreeableness on OCB: Table 1 shows the result of the moderated hierarchical multiple regression that tested the interactive effect of the eight dimensions of job design characteristics perceptions and personality (agreeableness) on OCB of employees. H_1 stated that job design characteristics (autonomy, skill variety, feedback, task significance, task identity and social support) positively related to OCB and (physical demand and psychological demand) negatively related to OCB. When the eight job design characteristics were entered in step 1, the total variance explained by the model as a whole was 28.1%, $F(8, 637) = 31.05, p < 0.001$. Among these independent variables, autonomy, feedback, task significance, task identity, social support and psychological demand were found to be significantly related to OCB. Autonomy, feedback, task significance, task identity and social support was positively related to OCB whereas psychological demand was negatively related to OCB as hypothesized. Thus, H_1 gained partial support in this study. In step 2 of the analysis when the moderating variable (agreeableness) was entered, the

Table 1: Moderated regression results for the interaction effects of perception of job design characteristics and agreeableness on OCB

Variables	OCB (B)		
	Step 1	Steps 2	Step 3
Autonomy (MJA)	0.710**	0.070**	0.890***
Skill Variety (MJV)	0.150	0.000	-0.420
Feedback (MJF)	0.180***	0.180***	0.400
Task Significance (MJS)	0.200***	0.170***	0.420
Task Identity (MJI)	0.060*	0.050*	-0.030
Social Support (MSS)	0.080*	0.020	0.730*
Physical Demand (MPHD)	0.020	0.030*	0.130
Psychological Demand (MPSD)	-0.050**	-0.040*	-0.250
Agreeableness (MPA)		0.350***	0.260**
MJA x MPA			-0.190***
MJV x MPA			0.100
MJF x MPA			-0.050
MJS x MPA			-0.060
MJI x MPA			0.190
MSS x MPA			0.180*
MPHD x MPA			-0.020
MPSD x MPA			0.040
R^2	0.281	0.363	0.388
Adjusted R^2	0.272	0.354	0.372
F	31.056***	40.299***	23.428***
ΔR^2	0.281	0.083	0.025

N = 443; Unstandardized coefficients are reported; *, **, *** $p < 0.05, 0.01, 0.001$, two tailed; * $p < 0.05$, one tailed

total variance explained by the model as a whole was 36.3%, $F(9, 636) = 40.299, p < 0.001$. Agreeableness was positively and significantly ($b = 0.35, p < 0.001$) related to OCB and explained an additional 8.3% of the variance in OCB, after controlling for the eight independent variables. In the final step (step 3), all the eight main interaction terms were entered. The addition of these interaction terms accounted for an additional 2.5% of the variance ($\Delta R^2 = 0.025, p < 0.01$). In this final step of the moderated multiple regression, only two independent variables (autonomy, $b = 0.89, p < 0.001$ and social support, $b = 0.73, p < 0.05$) were found to be significantly related to OCB. The moderating variable (agreeableness) was also found to be significantly related to OCB ($b = 0.26, p < 0.01$). Among these eight interaction terms, only autonomy ($b = -0.19, p < 0.001$) and social support ($b = 0.17, p < 0.01$) shows a significant interaction with agreeableness personality in predicting OCB. As indicated by Sharma *et al.* (1981) the moderating effect is considered present when the interaction terms are statistically significant. H_2 stated that agreeableness moderates the job design characteristics perceptions-OCB relationship. Because there are no significant interactions between skill variety and agreeableness, feedback and agreeableness, task significance and agreeableness, task identity and agreeableness, physical job demand and agreeableness and psychological job demand and agreeableness on OCB, hypothesis 2 also gained a partial support in this study.

From Table 1, a significant main effect has been achieved. Specifically, the p-value associated with autonomy is < 0.01 and the p-value associated with social support is < 0.01 . This finding suggests that having autonomy and social support in the workplace increases OCB. However, as seen from Table 1, agreeableness also moderates this main effect. In particular, this main effect applies when agreeableness is average. In other words, autonomy and social support increase OCB when agreeableness is average. The impact of autonomy and social support on OCB at other levels of agreeableness (high agreeableness and low agreeableness) was further explored in order to answer sub-hypothesis 2a and 2f.

Sub-hypothesis 2a predicted that agreeableness moderates the autonomy-OCB relation such that the relations between OCB and perception of autonomy will be stronger when employees are high in agreeableness than when low in agreeableness. Following the moderated regression procedures outlined by Cohen *et al.* (1983) the nature of the interaction between agreeableness personality and perceived autonomy is plotted. The moderating effect of agreeableness in the relationship between autonomy and OCB is shown in Fig. 1. As can be

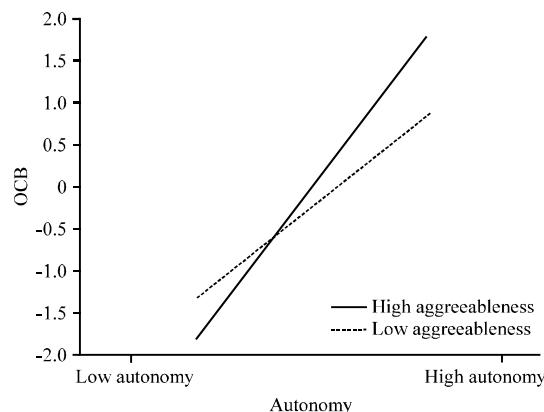


Fig. 1: Graphical representation of the moderating effect of agreeableness on the relationship between perceived autonomy and OCB

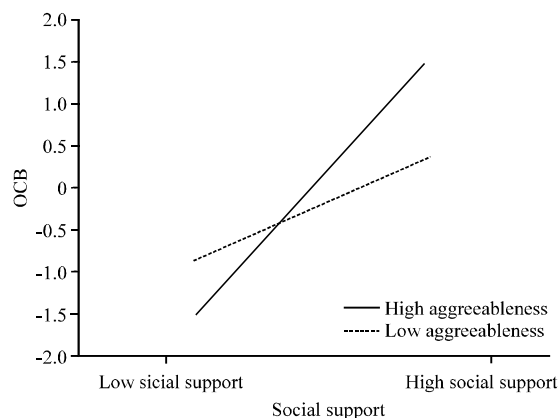


Fig. 2: Graphical representation of the moderating effect of agreeableness on the relationship between perceived social support and OCB

seen from this figure, the regression slope is steeper for high agreeableness than for low agreeableness. This shows that high agreeable personality was found to amplify the positive relationship between autonomy and OCB. These results indicated the effect of perceived autonomy on OCB was stronger for those respondents high in agreeableness (+1 SD from the mean) than for those low in agreeableness (-1 SD from the mean) consistent with the hypothesis. Thus sub-hypothesis 2a is fully supported in this study.

A similar procedure as above was used to test sub-hypothesis 2f. The moderating effect of agreeableness in the relationship between social support and OCB is shown in Fig. 2. As can be seen from this figure, the regression slope is steeper for high agreeableness than for low agreeableness. These results indicate that the

effect of perceived social support on OCB was stronger for those respondents high in agreeableness (+1 SD from the mean) than for those low in agreeableness (-1 SD from the mean) in line with the hypothesis. Thus, hypothesis 2f is fully supported in this study.

CONCLUSION

This study has provided an empirical evidence for linking employee's perceived job characteristics and their involvement in OCB. This study found a strong support for the direct effect of job design characteristics on OCB. This study also found that employee personality (agreeableness) moderates the relationship between perceived autonomy and OCB and the relationship between perceived social support and OCB.

LIMITATIONS

Although, this study has provided some important insights into the relationship between perceived job design characteristics and OCB, we acknowledge that there are also some limitations. First, the sample used in this study consists of rather a homogenous group of mostly female respondents (over 94%) who are mainly registered staff nurses employed in the public hospitals in Malaysia. This has implications on generalizability of our research findings to employees in other sector of economy.

SUGGESTIONS

Thus, future study should replicate our study using samples drawn from different occupations and type of research with even gender distribution. Second, the current study has employed a cross-sectional design in which data were collected from respondents at a single point in time. One of the weaknesses in this method is that it does not allow us to draw firm conclusion regarding the causal direction of the relationships among the predictors and outcome variables. Given this limitation, future research should examine the relationships among the variables using longitudinal designs that examine the continuity of the response. Finally this study has focused on only one type of employee personality as a moderator in the job design characteristics-OCB relationship. Future research can be extended by examining other potential personality variables such as conscientiousness or self efficacy.

IMPLICATIONS

The main purpose of this study was to examine the moderating effect of employee personality

(agreeableness) in the relationship between job design characteristics and OCB. As hypothesized, the results showed a partial support for the direct effect of job design characteristics on OCB (H_1). Among the eight job design characteristics tested, autonomy, feedback, task significance, task identity, social support and psychological demand were found to be significantly related to OCB. The findings of the significant positive effect of job design characteristics variable on OCB are consistent with several research results (Dzepina, 2011; Krishnan *et al.*, 2010, 2013).

This study also has provided further support for an interactionist perspective in the development of employee research behavior specifically OCB. It was found that employee involvement in OCB was jointly predicted by dispositional (agreeableness personality) and situational (job design characteristics) variables. Importantly, the findings of this study shows that agreeableness moderates the relationship between autonomy and OCB and the relationship between social job support and OCB. The present findings are consistent with a study by Liu *et al.* (2008) that showed agreeableness moderated the perceived meaningfulness of job-OCB relationship. In this study, the influence job design characteristics (autonomy and social support) on OCB was more prominent among employees with high agreeable personality compared to low agreeable personality. An obvious implication of this study is that employees perception about their job and their personality matters in the workplace, particularly with regard to promoting their involvement in extra role behaviour such as OCB. This study has demonstrated that employees who are given autonomy and social support in performing their duty will actively participate in helping behaviour such as OCB. This study also found that the relationship between perceived autonomy and OCB and the relationship between perceived social support and OCB amplifies for employee who posses high level of agreeable personality compare to those who posses low level of agreeable personality. Therefore, employers who wish to increase employee involvement in OCB need to take into consideration of selecting employees with this specific personality in the employee selection decisions.

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