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Moderating Role of HRD Practices Between Employee's Engagement and Citizenship Behaviors

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Abstract: The present study was aimed to explore the moderating role of HRD practices between employee's engagement and work attitude (i.e. citizenship behavior) as not so much has been explored the same in multicultural country like Malaysia. Data was collected from 497 employees of manufacturing, agricultural and servicing organizations. The results of the study support the relationship between employee's engagement and organizational citizenship behavior. Employee's engagement was found to be strongly influenced on civic virtue and altruism. Perceptions of HRD practices were not found to strengthen the relationship. Discussion, limitations and direction for future studies were also discussed.

Key words: HRD practices · Employee's engagement · OCB · Multicultural Malaysia

INTRODUCTION

Employee's engagement has not received much attention by the researchers. Hence this progressively growing constructs noting desired outcomes for organization and employees [1-3]. The construct employee's engagement is found to be beneficial for organizations and positively associated with reduced burnout, job attitudes and individual's high level of performance [4-10]. For both flexible and required efforts at work, engagement has examined as feeling responsible for Committing to high performance [11-14]. Most of the studies on the relationship between employee's engagement and flexible behaviors have been conducted on the employee's of developed nation. This study was conducted on Malaysia a growing country in many areas of business.

This study focused on the relationship between employee's engagement and extra role behaviors (OCB). Organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) refers to employees efforts beyond their job description were considered as discretionary job performance, as they are important for the organizations to achieve their desired outcomes [1,15].

Many researchers have suggested that OCB is not a cultural free construct that's why In-role performance was not driven for the study [16-19]. The multi culture of Malaysia makes it appropriate country to study the relationship between citizenship behaviors and employee's engagement. Furthermore, through the impact of culture, organizational context and individual's productivity, OCB can enhance performance [17,20]. Thus studying the relationship between OCB and employee's engagement in Malaysia will contribute in the existing knowledge of OCB at international level.

A recent study by [21] leaves room for the future researchers by arguing that there is absence of studies in which organizational development, Human Resource Development (HRD) and practices of human resource management as antecedents of employee's engagement has been focused. If HRD is considered as the antecedents of employee's engagement than perceptions of HRD may play a moderating role in the relationship between employee's engagement and citizenship behaviors [1]. Thus considering this call the present study is an attempt to explore the moderating role of HRD perceptions between employee's engagement and citizenship behaviors.

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Literature Review: Literature review related to the constructs used in the study is given below.

Employee's Engagement: Kahn, [22] was one of the pioneers to work on the construct "employee's engagement". According to him "Psychological conditions that encourage employees of an organization to actively participate in their own and organization's tasks are known as employee's engagement". Khan related the construct employee's engagement with the workplace [23]. Since then this construct was given importance by the researchers but, most of them had explored this construct from professional's perspective rather than rigorous research base studies.

Despite the construct was introduced almost two decades ago, employee's engagement is still characterized as the discrepancies regarding conceptualize, measurement and lack of compromise on the definition [2]. Researchers have reported that the construct was related with job related attitudes like, organizational commitment, job satisfaction and job involvement but, it is not aggregate of the existing established constructs [12,24,25].

Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (OCB): According to [26], behaviors that go beyond the employees routine tasks are citizenship behaviors. Organ further added that employees can demonstrate these behaviors in five ways i.e. (1) behaviors towards some specific individuals, known as altruism and categorized as helping behavior, (2) behaviors that goes minimum compulsory anticipations, known as conscientiousness, (3) behaviors that prevent a problem in advance (i.e. inform to organization when being absent) known as courtesy, (4) behaviors which tolerate without creating issue and complaining known as sportsmanship and (5) behaviors participating in the organization's matters known as civic virtue.

Literature is clear about the relationship between OCB and other work related outcomes. Some of the studies have stated a positive and significant relationship between employee's engagement and OCB [1,12,27,28]. But the researchers are not sure about this relationship among multicultural countries. So, considering this call, first hypothesis of the study was:

H1: Employee's engagement and OCB will positively associate among employees working in Malaysian organizations.

Employee's Perceptions of Human Resource Development Practices: Human resources are the real asset for the organizations to get competitive advantage over its rivals [29]. Thus, it has become essential for the organizations to develop their human resource [30]. Functions of HRD are responsible for dealing with knowledge and employees [31]. Highlighting the significance of HRD in the effectiveness of the organizations, the American society of training and development [32] reported that, "investment in employee's development and learning from the US organizations remain consistent throughout the year, despite the most challenging business year".

HRD practices are strategically important [33], despite this importance; little has explored so far, about the influence of HRD practices between the relationship of employee's engagement and organizational outcomes [14]. To understand the notion that "how learning and development relates to team, individual and organizational effectiveness", employee's perceptions towards HRD cannot be ignored [34, 35]. In his study [36] argued that employee's perception of training and development can encourage workplace attitudes. In their study [37, 38] confirmed that when employees perceive that their organization is facilitating them to learn new skills and competencies on continuous basis, positively impact on their performance and workplace attitudes. Thus in the present study the researchers focused on the three perceptions of HRD practices i.e. organizational support, benefits of training and support for HRD opportunities. These perceptions were selected from the past studies who noted the importance of employee's beliefs towards workplace attitudes and HRD practices [36,39-43]. This suggested two hypotheses:

H2: Employee's engagement, perceptions of HRD practices and OCB are positively associated among employees working in Malaysian organizations.

H3: Employee's perception of HRD practices will moderate the relationship between employee's engagement and OCB among employees working in Malaysian organizations.

The importance of social exchange and perceived fairness cannot be ignored [42,44-47]. When employees perceive that their organization is treating them with fair, justice and willing to invest on their development resulted high level of engagement [48,40]. This leads to hypothesis:

H4: Organizational support will moderate the relationship between employee's engagement and OCB among employees working in Malaysian organizations.

Some studies have confirmed that training and carrier opportunities consequent employee's engagement [43]. Thus, carrier advancement opportunities and training were supposed to moderate the relationship between employee's engagement and OCB as stated in the hypothesis:

H5: Perceived benefits of training will positively moderate the relationship between employee's engagement and OCB among employees working in Malaysian organizations.

H6: Access to HRD opportunities will positively moderate the relationship between employee's engagement and OCB among employees working in Malaysian organizations.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sample and Procedure: Employees from five large organizations of Malaysia were considered as the population of the study. Out of five, three organizations were related to the public organizations including, petroleum, chemical and agricultural. While two organizations were related to the private organizations including, manufacturing and servicing. These firms were selected because these represent employees having different culture and race, on the basis of personal contacts. To draw sample, simple random sampling technique was used on non managerial employees of five organizations. Young and energetic respondents were expected because they would receive HRD investment [49].

A total of 968 respondents were invited through questionnaire, out of which 497 responded back (response rate = 51.3%). Respondents were also investigated on the basis of certain demographical characteristics like; age, gender, education, experience with the current organization and position holding in the organization.

Out of 497 respondents, 258 (51.9%) were male and remaining were female. This distribution shows that the data was biased free regarding gender. The majority of respondents were aged from 26-30 years (n= 188, 37.8%). Most of the respondents had cleared their 16 years of education (n= 239, 48%). Interestingly the average tenure of respondents working with the current organization was 8.69 years (S.D= 7.09).

Measuring Instrument: The study used all the developed and tested scales by the earlier studies. But for the cultural relevancy the scale was sent to the HRD professionals and they consider it as cultural relevant [50]. In addition to this, a pilot study was conducted on 69 employees. The results of pilot study confirmed the suitability of the scale.

Employee's Engagement: Kahn, [22] introduced certain characteristics of engagement, based on those characteristics [51] developed a scale named Utrecht Worked Engagement Scale (UWES). Later on, [52] reduce the scale up to nine items and reported its reliability as 0.92. The original scale was developed to measure the different conditions of employee's engagement but the short version of the scale was developed to measure employee's engagement as one construct [53]. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted in the present study on nine item scales and CFA revealed that scale best fit the data with reliability reported as 0.92.

Organizational Citizenship Behavior: Podsakoff, *et al.*, [54] developed 24 items scale to measure the five dimensions of OCB and reported its reliability as 0.96. The same scale was used in the present study with the reliability of 0.89.

Employee's perception of Human Resource Development: Three separate scales were used in the present study to measure the employee's perceptions of HRD i.e. organizational support, perceived benefits of training and access to HRD opportunities. Further detail on constructs is given in this section.

Organizational Support: Organizational support was used to measure the according to employees, their organization has interest in them for both work and non-work related activities [55]. Later on, Eisenberger *et al.*, (2001) reduced the scale into six items and reliability was reported as 0.88. Taking six items scale the present study noted reliability as 0.86.

Benefits of Training: To measure benefits of training like, knowledge, skill and abilities [56] 14 item scale was used. This scale was further divided into three sub scales i.e. job benefits (three items), personal benefits (five items)

and career benefits (six items). In the present study benefits of training regarding job and carrier were used as a single construct. The items regarding personal benefits were excluded from the study because personal benefits were not the main focus of the study. The reliability of items was noted as 0.91.

Access to HRD Opportunities: Bartlett, [36] developed three items scale to measure the employee's perceptions regarding their organization providing them with HRD opportunities rather than actual opportunities and reported its reliability as 0.77. The present study noted reliability as 0.86.

RESULTS

Table 1 showed the values of Pearson's correlation all the values ranged from 0.04 to 0.53. Employee's engagement was found to be positively and significantly associated with each dimension of OCB. Employee's engagement was found to be highly correlated with civic virtue (r=0.51, P<0.001). This finding showed that highly engaged employees have high participation in organizational tasks and matters. While the correlation between employee's engagement and courtesy was found to be weak (r=0.10, P<0.05). This result fully support first hypothesis. Supporting to second hypothesis, employee's engagement, perceptions of HRD practices and OCB were also found to be positively correlated to each other.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis: According to [57] factor loading of each item of the variables should be calculated via confirmatory factor analysis. Thus, considering the call, CFA was also included in the present study. Table 2 represents the significant (P>0.001) values regarding factor loading composite reliability and average variance of the constructs. Hair *et al.* [58], introduced the standard values for model fitness in this regard i.e. higher the value of CFI (comparative fit index) higher will be the model fit, NNFI (non- normative fit index) and NFI (normed fit index) value should be greater or equal to 0.90, the value of RMSEA (root mean square error of approximation) should be less or equal to 0.08 and the value of x^2/df should be less than 3. The values of test adaptability were found as: NNFI= 0.93, NFI=0.90, CFI=0.94, RMSEA= 0.06, x^2= 2546.87 and x^2/df = 2.36. The results regarding model fitness were better than the standard results.

Table further showed that the values of average variance of each construct were above 0.50. In such case convergent validity of the scale can be tested [59]. Thus, the instrument used to collect data has convergent validity. Composite reliability was also calculated taking the sum of square for each item's loading, divided by number of items and all the values were above 0.50 which was accepted.

Table 3 represents the hierarchical regression analysis. Employee's engagement (β=0.26, t=5.98, P<0.001), benefits of training (β=0.24, t=4.56, P<0.001) and perceptions of HRD opportunities (β= 0.12, t=2.37, P<0.001) were significant with the altruism. These three variables accounted for 28% variation in altruism and 2.4% variation with the demographical variables.

Civic virtue was statistically related to employee's engagement (β=0.29, t=4.53, P<0.001), organizational support (β=0.31, t=6.06, P<0.001), benefits of training (β=0.33, t=6.29, P<0.001) and perceptions of HRD opportunities (β=0.22, t=6.99, P<0.001). Together these four variables contributed approximately 36% of variation in civic virtue with the 3.98% variation via demographical variables.

Table 1: Pearson correlation

Variables	EE	OS	AHRD	PBT	AL	SP	CV	COU
EE	---							
OS	0.43***	---						
AHRD	0.35***	0.52***	---					
PBT	0.31***	0.49***	0.48***	---				
AL	0.45***	0.36***	0.22**	0.40***	---			
SP	0.29***	0.15**	0.34***	0.16**	0.42***	---		
CV	0.51***	0.49***	0.08*	0.46***	0.44***	0.26***	---	
COU	0.10*	0.04	0.15**	0.18**	0.41***	0.27***	0.28***	---
CON	0.33***	0.18**	0.03	0.21**	0.53***	0.32***	0.41***	0.35***

Note: *P<0.05, **P<0.01, ***P<0.001, employee's engagement (EE), organizational support (OS), employee's perception to access HRD opportunities (AHRD), employee's perception of benefits of training (PBT), altruism (AL), sportsmanship (SP), civic virtue (CV), courtesy (COU) and conscientiousness (CON)

Table 2: Factor Loading, Composite reliability and average variance of the constructs

	Factor Loading	Composite reliability	Avg. Variance		Factor Loading	Composite reliability	Avg. Variance
Employee's				Ssportsmanship			
Engagement				SP1	0.91	0.76	0.77
EE1	0.94	0.81	0.76	SP2	0.87		
EE2	0.89			SP3	0.84		
EE3	0.89			SP4	0.86		
EE4	0.93			SP5	0.88		
EE5	0.9			Organizational Support			
EE6	0.86						
EE7	0.89			OS1	0.79	0.70	0.85
EE8	0.88			OS2	0.77		
EE9	0.94			OS3	0.87		
Altruism				OS4	0.86		
A1	0.82	0.70	0.87	OS5	0.83		
A2	0.79			OS6	0.9		
A3	0.88			Benefits of Training			
A4	0.91			BOT1	0.93	0.76	0.83
A5	0.78			BOT2	0.89		
Courtesy				BOT3	0.90		
C1	0.8	0.73	0.86	BOT4	0.86		
C2	0.85			BOT5	0.83		
C3	0.94			BOT6	0.87		
C4	0.76			BOT7	0.81		
C5	0.91			BOT8	0.91		
Civic virtue				BOT9	0.85		
CV1	0.88	72	0.79	Access to HRD Opportunities			
CV2	0.79						
CV3	0.86			AHRD1	0.89	0.75	0.73
CV4	0.85			AHRD2	0.83		
Conscientiousness				AHRD3	0.87		
CON1	0.93	0.75	0.72				
CON2	0.91						
CON3	0.88						
CON4	0.83						
CON5	0.79						

Table 3: Hierarchal regression with significant variables correlating citizenship behaviors

	Organizational Citizenship Behavior									
	Altruism		Civic Virtue		Sportsmanship		Courtesy		Conscientiousness	
Variables	β	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2
Step 1: (Demographics) Control		0.04		0.05		0.03		0.06		0.05
Step2: Main Effect		0.25		0.30		0.16		0.05		0.14
Employee's Engagement	0.26		0.29		0.23		0.07		0.38	
Organizational Support	---		0.31		---		---		---	
Benefits of Training	0.24		0.33		---		0.15		---	
Perceptions of HRD opportunities	0.12		0.22		---		---		---	
Step 3: Interaction		---		0.01		---		---		---
Org. Support × Personal Benefits	---		0.18		---		---		---	
Total R^2		0.28		0.36		0.18		0.05		0.12

The construct sportsmanship and conscientiousness were found to be related with employee's engagement only (β=0.23, t=7.14, P<0.01) and (β=0.38, t=6.48, P<0.001) respectively. Employee's engagement contributed 18% variation in sportsmanship with1.97% variation through demographical variables and 12% variation in conscientiousness with 0.06% variation via demographical variables.

Finally courtesy was found to be related with employee's engagement (β=0.07, t=2.58, P<0.01) and benefits of training (β=0.15, t=4.79, P<0.001). These two variables altogether contributed 5% variation in courtesy while demographical variables contributed 1.5% variation.

To explore the moderating effect of employees perceptions of HRD practices between the relationship employee's engagement and OCB, moderating effects were also examined. In opposing to hypothesis 3, 4, 5 and 6 perceptions of HRD perceptions was not found to strengthen the relationship between employee's engagement and OCB.

DISCUSSION

Despite the growing interest on the study of OCB and employees engagement, still few researchers have explored this relationship and probably one study explores this relationship in a multi cultural country. In addition to this many researchers have studied the relationship between employee's perception of HRD practices and job attitudes but no one earlier has studies HRD as moderator. The present study contributed to the existing knowledge of OCB and employees engagement [2,21].

According to [60] in non-experimental studies, it is difficult to detect moderating effect. Furthermore, most of the respondents were not having higher level of education; it may weaken the moderating effect of the study [61]. The present study did not found any moderating effect of employees perceptions of HRD but, the findings of the study were encourage able for the new researchers to explore the same relationship in other countries.

Employee's perceptions towards organization and positive work related attitudes can be changed by investing in HRD activities. This notion is supported by the results of present study that benefits of training and organizational support were the main factors of HRD. Furthermore the cooperation of senior staff and colleague's cerates positive environment as well as positively influence on employees behaviors [3,5,9].

Perceived organizational support was found to be influence in civic virtue. When employee perceives that their organization is treating them with fairness, justice and for their well being than they willingly participate in the organizational activities. Perceived organizational support was also found to be positively related to the altruism. This means that to gain the emotional attachment of the employees, organizations should support them with fairness. Surprisingly, employee's engagement was the only construct found to be essential contributor of conscientiousness. According to [47] this perhaps the dynamic behavior of employee's beyond the minimal role requirements.

HRD plays a vital role to gain the work related outcomes and strengthen the employee's engagement. A Meta analysis by [12] has confirmed leadership and job characteristics as antecedents of employee's engagement. Incorporating to the present study, perceptions of HRD characters positively influence on employees engagement [14,43,51,62-64].

Limitations and Future Direction of the Study: The present study contributed in the existing knowledge of variable studied but still contain certain limitations. First of all the instruments used were developed and tested in the European countries. It is not necessary the same instrument provide same results in other countries [50]. The same instrument has been studied in multicultural country. This might have impact on the results regarding moderating role of HRD practices.

Secondly the study uses self reported cross sectional data. This might raise a point on its generalizability. To avoid this problem in future researchers should prefer longitudinal data.

Each construct used in the present study reflects employee's job related attitudes and confirms that how important employee's engagement is for the desires outcomes [3,22,52,63]. This study should encourage further deliberation of the implementation of a high engagement human resource strategy [25].

CONCLUSION

This study suggests a positive correlation between employee's engagement and OCB in Malaysia. The results of the study didn't support the entire hypothesis, the study contributed to HRD practices and theory in Malaysia where no study has been conducted regarding employee's engagement and citizenship behaviors. Although the results of the study does not support the

moderating role of HRD practices between employees engagement and OCB but still confirmed the importance of HRD to enhance workplace attitudes like OCB.

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