

Demographic Characteristics and Organisational Citizenship Behavior in Public Institutions

Meor Rashydan Abdullah¹, Nurul Liyana Mohd Kamil²

Abstract: *Government institutions play a vital role in implementing and navigating the government's vision and policy for the benefit of the citizens. However, the administrative role that these government institutions are supposed to portray, to some extent has failed to meet public expectations, resulting in significant public complaints as reported by the Public Complaint Bureau. In response to the public outcry for better service delivery, this research investigates the differences in demographic characteristics such as employees' gender, age, level of education, position/grade and the length of service in influencing the organisational citizenship behaviour. The sample of the study consisted of 615 employees from a public institution located in Putrajaya, Malaysia. The data were analysed using Kruskal-Wallis, Mann-Whitney U and Bonferroni Correction analyses. The result indicates no significant difference between gender, age, education level and job tenure on organisational citizenship behaviour. In particular, male and female employees share a similar level of citizenship behaviour in the public institution. In addition, employees' age group, level of education and job tenure have no differences regarding the level of citizenship behaviour. Unlike other demographic variables, position/grade was found to have significant differences with citizenship behaviour among employees in the public institution. This indicated that different levels of citizenship behaviour exist in accordance with the position/grade. Correspondingly, the interpretations of results, limitations and suggestions for future research have been described in the final section.*

Keywords: Organisational citizenship behaviour; public institution; demographic characteristics; Malaysia

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1. Introduction

Employees behaviour is a key factor affecting organisational success. One of the most popular of employee behaviours is Organisational Citizenship

¹ Corresponding author. Department of Administrative Studies and Politics, Faculty of Economics and Administration, University of Malaya, Malaysia. *Email:* rashydan88@gmail.com

² Department of Administrative Studies and Politics, Faculty of Economics and Administration, University of Malaya, Malaysia. *Email:* nurulliyana@um.edu.my

Behaviour (OCB), which has received attention from researchers and practitioners in management, psychology and social sciences. Initially coined by Bateman and Organ (1983), the term “organisational citizenship behaviour” or OCB as “individual behaviour that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognised by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organisation” (Organ, 1988, p. 4). The OCB of employees has been related to improved organisational productivity and efficiency, increased customer satisfaction and reduced cost and employees turnover (Miao, Humphrey, & Qian, 2017).

Previously, Organ (1988) identified five dimensions of OCB, namely altruism, conscientiousness, civic virtue, sportsmanship and courtesy. Altruism means helping co-workers with a relevant task or problem while conscientiousness is a behaviour whereby employees are willing to go beyond the minimum role requirements, including obeying rules and regulations. Civic virtue is a type of discretionary behaviour of employees concerning the life of the organisation. Sportsmanship is the behaviour of employees’ willingness to tolerate inconvenience without complaining, and courtesy is the employees’ behaviour that aims at avoiding and preventing work-related problems (Ocampo et al., 2018; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000).

OCB is highly valued and critical in enhancing government organisations (Norasherin, Rohaida, Mozhdeh, Siti Zaleha, & Nor Aiza, 2016). The government administration in Malaysia has been the target of public criticisms on the perceived lack of financial restraint, good governance and responsibilities (Mohd Nazri, Mohd Rushdan, Mohd Safwan, Mohd Asrul, & Mohammad Ismail, 2017). The Malaysian public sector has failed to achieve high-quality service despite various transformation programmes being implemented to improve its performance (Johanim & Khulida, 2018).

Studies have proven that the dispositional factors of employees’ characteristics such as personality traits and job satisfaction have an important role in influencing the OCB of employees (Singh, Gupta, Dubey, & Singh, 2017; Organ, 2018; Szabó, Czibor, Restás, & Bereczkei, 2018). According to Wee, Kamarul Zaman, and Yap (2014), no OCB researcher conclusively provides the best components representing the dimensions of OCB. Moreover, there is a lack of research that investigates the role of the demographic characteristics of employees in displaying OCB (Crawley, Maher, & Blake-Beard, 2015; Mitonga-Monga, Flotman, & Cilliers, 2017). This study investigates whether there are differences in employees’ citizenship behaviours related to their demographic characteristics, including gender, age, level of education, position/grade and length of service.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Based on the original definition of OCB, Organ (1997, p. 91) redefined OCB as the “contribution to the maintenance and enhancement of the social and psychological context that support task performance”. In the latest concept provided by Organ (2018), the author conceptualised OCB as a discretionary behaviour of cooperation and contributions that participants view as a function of job satisfaction and perceived fairness.

OCB is also known in various terms including prosocial organisational behaviour (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986), civic organisational behaviour (Graham, 1991), organisational spontaneity (George & Brief, 1992), extra-role behaviour (Van Dyne, Cummings, & McLean Parks, 1995), contextual performance (Motowidlo & Schmit, 1999), perceived organisational membership (Masterson & Stamper, 2003), compulsory citizenship behaviour (Vigoda-Gadot, 2006), rewarded and unrewarded OCB (Korsgaard, Meglino, Lester, & Jeong, 2010) and discretionary OCB, normative OCB and rule-bounded OCB (Agarwal, 2016).

Moreover, OCB has been conceptually identified with various dimensions based on the category-based model introduced by Organ (1988). For instance, another dominant concept of OCB by William and Anderson (1991) devised OCBs by distinguishing the concept into the direction of who benefits from the behaviours: OCB-individual (OCBI), where the behaviour is targeted towards individuals, and OCB-organisation (OCBO), where the behaviour is targeted towards the organisation. OCBI is more commonly identified as altruism and courtesy, while OCBO includes civic virtue, sportsmanship and conscientiousness (Organ, 1988). Exemplary behaviour of OCBI is helping other colleagues in work-related problems and who have been absent, while an exemplary behaviour for OCBO would be attending events on behalf of the organisation and following the rules and regulations set by the organisation (Ng, Lam, & Feldman, 2016).

Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) underpins OCB and involves a series of independent and contingent interactions within the social relationship actions and generate obligations (Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002). According to Blau (1964), social exchange is defined as “voluntary actions of individuals that are motivated by the returns they are expected to bring and typically do bring from others” (p. 91). In the social exchange relationship, individuals perceive their contributions to the organisation are being recognised, and they may feel obligated to reciprocate and engage in the organisation to achieve its goals. Among the principles that need to be followed in an exchange process to form an exchange relationship, which is the reciprocate behaviours triggered to respond to the favours given by the

first party (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). When reciprocity behaviours do not exist, there will be no social interaction between both parties. Hence, OCB has become the most straightforward conjecture about a dominant motive from social exchange theory (Organ, 2015).

Several studies have revealed mixed results on the relationship between demographic variables and organisational citizenship behaviour. For instance, Chan and Lai (2017) and Jena and Goswami (2014) found that gender, age, job level, and tenure exert a significant difference on OCB. Studies have also found similar results (Podsakoff, Ahearne, & MacKenzie, 1997). However, Yadav and Rangnekar (2015) found no differences between demographic variables with OCB. Likewise, Kamel, Ilyes, and Zohra (2015) found no significant relationship between demographic variables with the OCB among employees working in an electric and gas company.

Several studies highlighted the relationship between employees' OCB and their demographic characteristics including gender, age, education level, position and tenure. Gender can be considered to influence OCB. They argued that there is a difference between gender and OCB (Altinkurt, Anasiz, & Ekinci, 2016; Chen, Hu, & King, 2018; Cohen & Mohamed Abedallah, 2015; Elamin & Tlaiss, 2015). A recent study by Mirković and Cizmic (2019) indicates that there are significant differences between gender and the employees' OCB. The study concludes that women show a higher level of citizenship behaviour since they are more empathetic and caring for others. A similar study by Neeta Bhatla (2016) concludes that female employees have a positive opinion towards OCB, which supported Crawley et al. (2015) who proposed that female employees only engage in certain types of OCB. Notably, only a few studies have found no differences in gender and OCB score (Dirican & Erdil, 2016; Kamel et al., 2015). As suggested by Basu, Pradhan, and Tewari (2017), further research on the aspect of demographic variables specifically in gender differences may provide interesting results about the effects of OCB within organisations. Based on the previous findings, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 1: *There is a significant difference between gender and OCB*

In terms of age categories, studies have found inconclusive findings on OCB. For instance, Elamin and Tlaiss (2015) and Kamel et al. (2015) found no significant impact of age on the overall OCB. In other studies, there is a significant difference between age group and OCB (Cohen & Mohamed Abedallah, 2015; Campbell & Im, 2016; Mitonga-Monga et al., 2017; Chen et al., 2018). For example, Mirković and Cizmic (2019)

concluded that younger employees have to go through the phases of adapting and adjusting themselves with the organisation while older employees have a clear view in terms of work and can easily adapt to the needs of the organisation. This is aligned with Gyekye and Haybatollahi (2015), who noted that older workers participate more actively in citizenship behaviour than younger employees. Hence, this study proposes:

Hypothesis 2: *There is a significant difference between age group and OCB*

With regard to the level of education, most studies found a significant difference between the level of education and OCB (Nadiri & Tanova, 2010; Cohen & Mohamed Abedallah, 2015; Elamin & Tlaiss, 2015; Mitonga-Monga et al., 2017; Chen et al., 2018). Employees with a higher educational level would perceive more social advantages in the exchange with the organisation compared to the less educated individual who focuses more on the economic exchange in the workplace (Jena & Goswami, 2014). An individual with a high education would acknowledge the importance of informal support from colleagues and supervisors and is willing to spend more time on a social exchange such as through OCB. Pavalache-Ilie and Anitei (2014) found that the level of education plays significant differences with OCB among employees in public institutions. The study noted that employees with a higher education degree are more prone to help co-workers and develop good relations with others. However, mixed results are found in examining the relationship between education and OCB (Crawley et al., 2015; Jena & Goswami, 2014). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 3: *There is a significant difference between Education level and OCB*

Campbell and Im (2016) and Chen et al. (2018) found a positive correlation between position/grade and OCB. However, Lambert, Kelley, and Hogan (2013) noted that position is negatively associated with OCB. This is in contradiction with Bogler and Somech (2004) who mentioned that the higher the employees' position is in an organisation, the more likely they are to regard citizenship behaviour as part of their job. According to Pavalache-Ilie and Anitei (2014), employees who hold upper positions feel effective and are willing to undertake extra roles to contribute towards organisational development. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

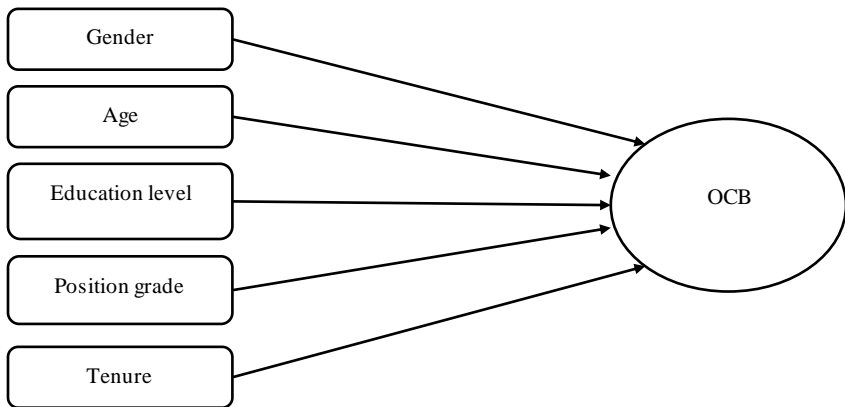
Hypothesis 4: *There is a significant difference between position/grade and OCB*

Concerning the demographic variable of tenure and the effect on OCB, studies have reported that long term tenure shows a high level of engagement on OCB than short-term tenure (Chen et al., 2018). It is found that job tenure shows a significant difference on an OCB score (Cohen & Mohamed Abedallah, 2015; Campbell & Im, 2016; Mitonga-Monga et al., 2017; Chen et al., 2018). In contrast, Elamin and Tlaiss (2015) and Dirican and Erdil (2016) indicated that tenure does not have any significant impact on OCB. The present study would expect that employees with less tenured employment focus more on investing their resources in securing their in-role performance; unlike longer-tenured employees who would perform more citizenship behaviour as they are more familiar with the system, have a stronger identification and are psychologically engaged with the organisation (Jena & Goswami, 2014). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 5: *There is a significant difference between tenure and OCB*

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework for this study. This conceptual framework in this study is built on theoretical views and previous empirical research on correlations between demographic variables and OCB from various contexts.

Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework of the Study



3. Methodology

This study adopted the cross-sectional survey questionnaire that was distributed to public institution employees, which is located in Putrajaya, Malaysia. The survey was developed using a self-report questionnaire that comprised two parts. The first part was about the demographic characteristics of the respondent, including gender, age, level of education, job position and tenure in the organisation. Accordingly, the second part was the measurement of OCB. All employees were initially assured anonymity and that all the information provided was to be kept confidential.

The data were collected through a population survey on four government organisations. A total of 1140 questionnaires were distributed after receiving the approval from the head secretary of the Human Resource Department of each organisation. From the total questionnaires that had been distributed, 714 surveys were returned with a response rate of 62.6%. After discarding the invalid responses, the missing values and outliers, 615 completed survey forms were available for final analysis, which represented 54.2% of response rate.

The sample had a representation of 39.0% male and 61.0% female. More than half of the employees in the sample were older than 30 years; the majority of the respondents were bachelor degree holders (64.7%). This is followed by Master degree holders (33.5%), and the rest are respondents with a doctorate (1.8%). The years of employment tenure of the respondents ranged from one to two years (21.8%), three to five years (20.9%), six to nine years (34.6%) and more than ten years (33.2%) of tenure.

4. Measures

OCB was measured using a 16-items scale developed by Lee and Allen (2002). This measurement was also adopted and adapted by other studies (Jehad, Farzana, & Mohmad, 2011; Kasa & Zaiton, 2015, 2016; Jihad, Farzana, & Rosmini, 2016) on Malaysia, but looking at different groups of population and sector. Samples of the items were “I help others with their duties” and “I help others who have been absent”. The instrument was measured using a six-point Likert type scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). The Cronbach’s alpha value of the scale is 0.88 (Lee & Allen, 2002).

5. Data analysis

The data were analysed for normal distribution. Based on the analysis of skewness and kurtosis and Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk, the assumption of a normality test on the data is not normally distributed. Therefore, non-parametric tests such as Kruskal-Wallis were used to analyse the data in order to determine whether the mean scored is different within the group. Following the significant value that had resulted, the Mann-Whitney U test was performed to identify a specific source of the differences and was evaluated using Bonferroni corrections for multiple paired comparisons (Dirican & Erdil, 2016).

6. Findings

The descriptive statistics for OCB scores of public administrators are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Demographic Variables in Relation to Organisational Citizenship Behaviour

Demographic variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	240	39.0
	Female	375	61.0
Age	20 – 29	79	12.8
	30 – 39	363	59.0
	40 – 49	159	25.9
	50 years and above	14	2.3
Education level	Bachelor Degree	400	65.0
	Master Degree	204	33.2
	PhD	11	1.8
Position/grade	M41	135	22.0
	M44	226	36.7
	M48	186	30.2
	M52	43	7.0
	M54	25	4.1
Tenure	1 – 2 years	68	11.1
	3 – 5 years	128	20.8
	6 – 9 years	214	34.8
	10 years and above	205	33.3

Based on the Mann-Whitney U test to analyse the differences between gender and OCB, there are no significant differences between OCB scores of both males and females ($U=43481.5$, $p = 0.36$). Thus, hypothesis 1 is not supported.

For the age groups, the Kruskal-Wallis tests found no significant differences in OCB scores ($X^2(3) = 1.469$, $p = 0.689$). The significant value is greater than 0.05. This indicates that the distribution of OCB scores is the same across age groups. Hence, hypothesis 2 is not supported. In addition, the result of Kruskal-Wallis tests indicated no significant differences in the OCB scores among education level groups ($X^2(2) = 4.060$, $p > 0.05$). The significant value is 0.131, which indicates that the OCB scores distribution is similar across the respondents' education level. Thus, hypothesis 3 is not supported.

In regards to position/grade, Kruskal-Wallis tests revealed significant differences in the OCB scores across position/grade groups, $X^2(4) = 22.673$, $p = 0.001$. Since the result was significant ($p < 0.05$), pairwise comparison among the four groups was conducted using the Mann-Whitney U test with Bonferroni correction to control the Type 1 error. Hence, all effects for position/grade M44 and M54, grade M48 with M54 and grade M41 with M54 were reported at $p < 0.05$ as shown in Table 1. Therefore, hypothesis 4 is supported.

Finally, the Kruskal-Wallis test found no significant differences in OCB scores across tenure group ($X^2(3) = 0.162$, $p = 0.983$). It is revealed that the p-value is above 0.05 ($p > 0.05$) indicating that the results are not significant. Thus, hypothesis 5 is not supported. Based on this analysis, the result indicates that the longer or shorter tenure periods have no differences in citizenship behaviour among employees in the public institution. The result of Kruskal-Wallis test between demographic variables and OCB are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Result of Variables Difference Analysis Between Demographic Variables and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB)

Demographic variable	Categories	n	Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB)	
			Mean	p-value
Gender	Male	240	299.82	0.361
	Female	375	313.23	
Age	20 – 29	79	300.59	0.689
	30 – 39	363	303.21	
	40 – 49	159	322.53	
	50 years and above	14	309.07	
Education level	Bachelor Degree	400	297.66	
	Master Degree	204	326.06	
	PhD	11	349.0	

Table 2: (Continue)

Position/grade	M41	135	312.58	0.001
	M44	226	286.66	
	M48	186	300.5	
	M52	43	356.15	
	M54	25	449.14	
Tenure	1 – 2 years	68	314.99	0.983
	3 – 5 years	128	306.82	
	6 – 9 years	214	308.98	
	10 years and above	205	305.39	

7. Discussion

The results established the relationship among demographic variables on organisational citizenship behaviour among public administrators in Putrajaya. In terms of the gender group, this result indicates no difference between men and women in OCB among public institution employees. This is consistent with Dirican and Erdil (2016) who concluded a similar result among employees in an academic institution.

As for the age group, there are no differences across age groups based on OCB scores. This result is consistent with Mohammad, Razieh, Saeed, and Arefeh (2013) and Yaghoubi, Afshar, and Javadi (2012). Although age group does not have significant differences in OCB, this result contradicts Dolan, Tzafrir, and Baruch (2005) and Nadiri and Tanova (2010).

In regards to education level, this study found no significant differences between education level on OCB among the public administrators. The findings are aligned with Mohammad et al. (2013) and Kamel et al. (2015). This result concludes that education level among employees in the public institution does not affect their helping behaviour towards organisation.

The results of the study indicate a significant difference in OCB across the position/grade group. This indicates that job position/grade is a significant determinant of employees' citizenship behaviour within the organisation. For instance, the higher the position, the more tenacious employees are to engage in extra-role behaviour towards colleagues and the organisation.

The reason for the disparity is because of the differences in the roles and expectations of their job positions. Higher job grades such as M54, M52 and M48 are more experienced, and most of them are involved in supervising and managing subordinates. They are required to manage, assist and help their subordinates in meeting their needs to perform the task. This is related to the helping behaviour that shows the virtues of citizenship towards the organisation. Unlike other job grades such as M41

and M44, although they are still engaged in decision-making and administrative task, their workloads and the less challenging job might exhibit low engagement in OCB activities.

Moreover, employees with different grades in the public institution might have a different level of citizenship behaviour in the organisation. Employees with a higher grade, such as those who are responsible in managing a department or unit in the organisation, may display greater citizenship behaviour because of their supervisory role as senior staff, or heading a department. These findings also suggest that an organisation should give more attention to the engagement and the extra-role behaviour shown by employees. An organisation can cultivate several engagement practices through participation in the decision-making process and cross-functional program within the unit/department to ensure that senior and junior staff can work together.

8. Limitations and suggestions for future research

On the limitations, the findings are limited to the context of a public institution. It cannot be generalised to another context such as the private sector, academic institution and public services. As this study only focuses on the public institution in Putrajaya, it might not be representative of the public institution of the entire country. Moreover, this study has used a cross-sectional design that may limit any causal inferences among the variables. The results of the study have been assessed using the self-reported data from the respondents. Such self-reported data are known to have limited common method variance.

Future studies can replicate the framework and research design to be conducted in different settings such as geographical areas (countries and regions), population or sectors, which might produce different results. A similar study can be validated across different background settings to understand the potential differences in employees' behaviour and the implementation of organisational policies. Finally, more variables can be added, such as mediator or moderator, to examine the complete mechanism of OCB domains further.

9. Conclusion

This study investigates the relationship between employees' demographic characteristics (gender, age, education level, job position/grade and tenure) and OCB in Malaysian public institutions. Several interesting findings were recorded, one of which is that position/grade has a vital role in predicting the employees' citizenship behaviour. Furthermore, gender, age group, education level and tenure do not affect OCB. Generally, an organisation

can benefit much by promoting OCB among the employees as this can increase efficiency and improve productivity. Moreover, recognition and rewards might help to encourage employees to perform citizenship behaviour in the organisation.

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