

## Organizational Citizenship Behavior Evaluation: Insights from Local Government Agency in Malaysia

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**Abstract:** The local government, the third-tier in Malaysian government structure, has been identified as one of the important government agencies mandated to drive the economic growth and development of a particular district and its residents. Since local governments, in general are faced with financial and administrative constraint that could jeopardize the operational efficiencies, Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) is the identified vehicle to promote overall organizational effectiveness at a relatively low cost. A preliminary study on a local government agency was conducted using structural equations modeling Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach. Statistical analysis on measurement model in assessing reliability and validity and structural model in testing the hypothesized relationship provided indicative support of a good model in predicting Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB).

**Key words:** Organizational citizenship behavior, local government, leader-member exchange, organizational communication, job satisfaction, Malaysia

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### INTRODUCTION

The success of an organization, irrespective of its size, location and nature of business lies with the ability of the management in managing and motivating the workforce towards attaining the organization's objectives and towards satisfying the needs and expectations of consumers and the various stakeholders. Local government being the lowest government in the three-tier structure is the engine of growth in terms of social and economic activities in a particular district and is considered as the manager of urban environments. Hence, the multifarious services provided by local government have touched almost all aspect of its residents' needs that the performance is constantly under the watchful eyes of the public. The services provided so far has failed to meet the public satisfaction as statistics from public complaint bureau have indicated high number of grievances being addressed by the public towards local governments' operational issues.

In order to response to the public demand for betterment in service quality and delivery, transparency and accountability in ways the local government spends the taxpayers' money, the willingness of its employees to exhibit OCB would be the possible solution in inspiring the public confidence. Many studies have proved empirically that OCB has the ability to increase high job

performance, cost reduction and improve operational efficiency, employees' retention and consumer satisfaction (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2009). Hence, the objective of this study is to conduct a preliminary survey to determine the suitability, reliability and validity of survey statements incorporating leader-member exchange, organizational communication, job satisfaction as the identified variables in promoting the exhibition of OCB among one of the important public sector specifically local government.

### Literature review

**Local government:** Local government is the lowest level government under the three-tier government with the federal government being the upper or core government and follows by the state government. Being the lowest in the government hierarchy, local government is further segregated into city council for city centers, municipal council for larger towns and district council centers for small urban town. Manned with three types of workforce where professional and administrative staff which comprises of mayor/president, secretary and head of departments are directly involved in the administration, strategic planning and decision making purposes while the middle level management or support I staff is accountable in managing and supervising the operational staff in carrying out the tasks assigned. The support II staff or the operational personnel is mainly undertaking

the day-to-day operations where their tasks are more towards executing the tasks assigned rather than giving out instructions.

The local governments are the local planning authority where, they approve and control all planning and development applications within their jurisdictions. As such, they are considered as the urban managers and their involvements at the local level have significant impact towards the livelihood of the local citizen. Local government has very close participation with the public where, they play two key roles where the first role relates to provision of basic services aimed at the upkeep of the local community including business to be found within the administrative purview while the second role is to regulate land use and business activity within the administrative area (Abdullah and Kalianan, 2009).

**Organizational citizenship behaviour:** Grounded on social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and norm of reciprocity, OCB has been widely acknowledged as a low cost vehicle in achieving organizational effectiveness and efficiencies. Defined by Organ (1988) as some discretionary behavior of individuals' that are unrecognized by direct or explicit formal reward system and promotes the effective functioning of the organization in aggregate, OCB lubricates the social machinery of the organization, reduce friction and increase efficiency (Bateman and Organ, 1983). The impact of OCB is noticeable with the aggregate summation of these discretionary behaviors that perform across time and across persons in the group, department and organizational levels where these behaviors are clearly observable by peers, supervisors or the public at large (Noormala and Syed, 2009).

OCB is the key for an organization's success as, it is a reflection of willingness of employees in demonstrating five elements as postulated by Organ (1988) towards altruism helping out colleagues on work-related matters; courtesy-preventing problems with other workers and providing constructive information; civic virtue, involvement in the organization governance; conscientiousness-going beyond normal requirements or expectations and sportsmanship; a positive attitude and willingness to endure less than ideal circumstances without complaining.

**Leader-member exchange and organizational citizenship behavior:** LMX theory which draws from the social exchange theory describes the associations between leaders and their subordinates and how their working relationship and the inter dependencies has resulted in the establishment of in-group (high quality exchanges) and out-group (low quality exchanges). Those subordinates within the inner communication circle of the

leader (in-group) would be entrusted with higher levels of responsibility, decision influence and access to resources while leaders would develop formal work relationships with those outside communication circle (out-group) (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995). It is the only leadership approach to consider dyadic relationship and the exchanges that developed through a series of work-related exchanges which would determine the organizational effectiveness and essentially, no two dyadic relationships are the same. Many empirical findings have found affirmative positive bond between LMX and OCB on work units and organizational success (Hui *et al.*, 1999; Hackett *et al.*, 2003; Ilies *et al.*, 2007).

Some findings found that LMX relationship have shown insignificant association in a study among bankers in Malaysia and a study by Barnett (2011) among Jamaican public sector organization where insignificant association was noted where the study pointed out distrust, suspicion of motives and felt of being exploited and doubts about management's concern for workers have block the motivation efforts to exhibit OCB. Leaders have strong influence on subordinate's willingness to engage in OCB and towards relationship bonding, thus, the relationship establishment has been suggested to be one of the most important associations for employees (Manzoni and Barsoux, 2002).

Since, Malaysia culture is different from Western culture marked with power distance, relationship-oriented and collectivism (Bakar and Mustaffa, 2013; Abdullah, 1994), the following hypothesis is proposed:

- H<sub>1</sub>; LMX is positively related to OCB

**Organizational Communication and OCB:** Organizational communication as defined by Karakutuk in 2011 as the communication occurring in organizational environment and the main objective there of are to communicate organizational policies, establish a continuous coordination among organizational members, solve the organizational problems and share information. As pointed out by Berger (2008), organizational communication helps to motivate, build trust, create shared identity and spur engagement; it provides a way for individuals to express emotions, share hopes and ambitions and celebrate and remember accomplishments. Interest on communication remains strong as, this is largely due to the increasing complexity of modern organizations, the dynamic and diverse environments in which they operate and rapid advances in information technologies they use to communicate and interact with employees (Turner *et al.*, 2006).

In support of social exchange theory, Kandlousi *et al.* (2010) in their study among manufacturing employees showed that employees would engage in OCB to

reciprocate the gratification they received arising from the organizational communication that transpired in the organization. This positive relationship was also supported by Ayatse and Ikyanyon (2012) where IT employees in Nigerian universities would engage in OCB when they were satisfied with the communication channels and processes in the organization. They further emphasized that a climate of trust should be inculcated so as to foster an open and transparent communication. Taking into account that this study is on a government agency which is staffed by predominantly Malay which has strong preference in workplace harmony, concern for face-saving, non-confrontational in nature, the following hypothesis is put forward:

- $H_2$ ; organizational communication is positively related to OCB

**Job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behavior:**

Maintaining a satisfied workforce is an important and challenging agenda for most organizations as satisfied employees are more willing to put more efforts towards work, willing to contribute beyond its contractual obligations, uplifting the organization image and are able to produce many favorable outcomes to support the organizational goals. As defined by Weiss *et al.* (1967), job satisfaction is described as the attitudes and view points of workers regarding their jobs and the relevant environments and is divided into intrinsic satisfaction and extrinsic satisfaction.

Job satisfaction has been accepted as one of the strongest predictors of OCB and this relationship has been investigated most frequently in OCB studies (Williams and Anderson, 1991). Many empirical evidences provided strong foundation on the significance of job satisfaction-OCB linkages which among them are meta-analyses done by Podsakoff *et al.* (2000), Dalal (2005) and Harrison *et al.* (2006). Due to limited studies on local government employees and to affirm Malaysia culture which held strong values in Islamic principles, relationship-oriented and collectivism, the following hypothesis is formulated:

- $H_3$ ; job satisfaction is positively related to OCB

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The data was collected by means of a survey packet which contained five sections: respondents' demographic information, OCB scales developed by Podsakoff *et al.* (1990), LMX scale developed by Liden and Maslyn (1998) with additional four items being introduced arising from focus group discussion, short version of Minnesota

Satisfaction Questionnaire in 1967 to measure job satisfaction and organizational communication scale incorporating Malaysian cultural values developed by Bakar and Mustaffa (2013). These scales, anchored on 5 point Likert scale have been translated to Malay language in view of the local government employees are primarily Malays with majority of them are having basic tertiary education and not that eloquent in English language. Face and content validity were carried out in ensuring that, the survey instrument measures what is supposed to measure (Hair *et al.*, 2010). A preliminary study was conducted in a local government agency in Terengganu with 59 respondents adopting a random sampling procedure. These respondents were considered the target group in terms of job description and structure and these criteria should be similar to the actual work to be conducted.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Characteristics of samples:** About 62.7% of the sample was male compared to the female counterpart at 37.3% with all of them were Malays. The support staff (low and middle level management) dominated the sample at 93.2%. Majority of them have attained up to certificate level of education (74.6%) and correspondingly their monthly income reported below RM2500 (71.2%). The age of respondents showed 47.5% of them aged below 35 year, mainly school leavers and university graduates in the midst of their careers development while 52.5% were the working class group of 36 years old and above. In terms of service tenure, the profiling showed that 47.5% of them were new batch with employment term of <5 years and 44.1% of them between 5-10 employment tenure. Majority of the respondents were being supervised by male supervisor (61%) and due to job rotation exercise to improve their multitasking skills and experience, 16.9% were supervised below 5 years while majority of them (40.7%) in the range of 5-10 years supervision.

**Assessment of measurement model:** structural equations modeling Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach was used by using Smart PLS 2.0 to establish the measurement model (validity and reliability of the measures) and an examination of the structural model (testing the hypothesized relationship). As some items have outer loadings of below PLS recommended value of 0.708 (Chin, 2010), they were removed accordingly. The final model consisted of 9 items from OCB, organizational communication with 20 items, LMX with 14 items and job satisfaction with 9 items, thus, internal consistency was

Table 1: Results of measurement model

Item	Loading	CR	AVE	Item	Loading	CR	AVE
OCB		0.911	0.534	JS		0.923	0.575
OCB_1	0.687			JS_1	0.635		
OCB_2	0.817			JS_2	0.570		
OCB_3	0.803			JS_3	0.698		
OCB_4	0.716			JS_4	0.775		
OCB_5	0.771			JS_5	0.836		
OCB_6	0.656			JS_6	0.871		
OCB_7	0.716			JS_7	0.803		
OCB_8	0.695			JS_8	0.789		
OCB_9	0.702			JS_9	0.798		
COM		0.970	0.588	LMX		0.945	0.552
COM_1	0.748			LMX_1	0.745		
COM_2	0.734			LMX_2	0.718		
COM_3	0.848			LMX_3	0.771		
COM_4	0.831			LMX_4	0.738		
COM_5	0.743			LMX_5	0.752		
COM_6	0.838			LMX_6	0.714		
COM_7	0.791			LMX_7	0.751		
COM_8	0.670			LMX_8	0.687		
COM_9	0.720			LMX_9	0.722		
COM_10	0.848			LMX_10	0.750		
COM_11	0.727			LMX_11	0.732		
COM_12	0.762			LMX_12	0.791		
COM_13	0.812			LMX_13	0.795		
COM_14	0.726			LMX_14	0.730		
COM_15	0.811						
COM_16	0.752						
COM_17	0.726						
COM_18	0.675						
COM_19	0.834						
COM_20	0.691						

OCB = Organizational Citizenship Behavior, JS = Job Satisfaction, COM = Organizational Communication, LMX = Leadership Member Exchange, CR = Composite Reliability, AVE = Average Variance Extracted

Table 2: The discriminant validity

Construct	OCB	COMM	JS	LMX
OCB	0.731			
COMM	0.690	0.767		
JS	0.659	0.748	0.758	
LMX	0.631	0.661	0.556	0.743

OCB = Organizational Citizenship Behavior; COMM = Organizational Communication; LMX = Leader-Member Exchange; JS = Job Satisfaction; Figure in diagonal is square-roots of AVE

achieved. In terms of convergence validity, all the Composite Reliability (CR) values were above the cut off value of 0.70 (Chin, 2010) and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for this model exceeded 0.50 (Hair *et al.*, 2010) suggesting that, the measurement items were reliable and valid as shown in Table 1.

Next, the discriminant validity with Fornell-Larcker criterion was assessed. Overall, the square root of the AVEs for OCB was at 0.731, organizational communication at 0.767, job satisfaction at 0.758 and LMX at 0.743, all of which were higher than, the correlations of these constructs with other latent variables in the path model as shown in Table 2. Hence, the results of this study confirmed that the Fornell-Larckers criterion has been met.

**Assessment of structural model:** Figure 1 presents the results of the structural model for the present study where collinearity, coefficient of determination or R<sup>2</sup> value and the model predictive capabilities were examined. Before interpreting the path coefficients, the structural model was examined for collinearity issue. The related measure of collinearity was Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) where a tolerance value of 0.20 or lower and a VIF value of 5 and higher indicated a potential collinearity problem (Hair *et al.*, 2014). Multicollinearity was not an issue since, VIF values are below the threshold value of 5. Following the guideline by Henseler *et al.* (2009), R<sup>2</sup> value for OCB was at 0.57 which is considered as moderate. These results provided evidence for the model's predictive relevance and indicative of a good model.

**Hypothesis testing:** As illustrated in Table 3, LMX was positively related to OCB with path coefficient statistically significant at  $\beta = 0.278$ ,  $t = 1.941$ . Hence, H<sub>1</sub> was supported. However, the path coefficient between organizational communication to OCB was not statistically significant at  $\beta = 0.292$ ,  $t = 1.631$ , hence, a rejection of H<sub>2</sub>. H<sub>3</sub> was supported where job satisfaction was positively related to OCB with significant path coefficient at  $\beta = 0.286$ ,  $t = 2.094$ .

The social exchange theory was supported where empirical evidence indicated that LMX has the ability to exert significant effect on OCB among these respondents arising from quality relationship being experienced in the dyadic relationship. It is worth to point out that despite 16.9% of them has short dyadic tenure of <5 years and 40.7% of them in the range of 5-10 years supervision arising from combination of job rotation exercise and new employment, the dyadic association between them have evidently progressed into quality relationship. Since, Malaysian organizations are high on power distance which is an acceptable norm in Malaysian working culture coupled with Malaysian culture of collectivism and relationship-oriented have resulted in the establishment of quality LMX between them. In contrast to individualistic society, developing and maintaining quality LMX relationship would enable these subordinates to get into the inner communication circle of the leader so as to gain trust and better access to limited resources. This finding was in line with the meta-analysis by Ilies *et al.* (2007) where LMX and OCB was found to be moderate and positively strong and Murphy *et al.* (2003) where individuals who were engaged in high-quality relationship would behave in such a way that, their exchange partner would also get the benefits.

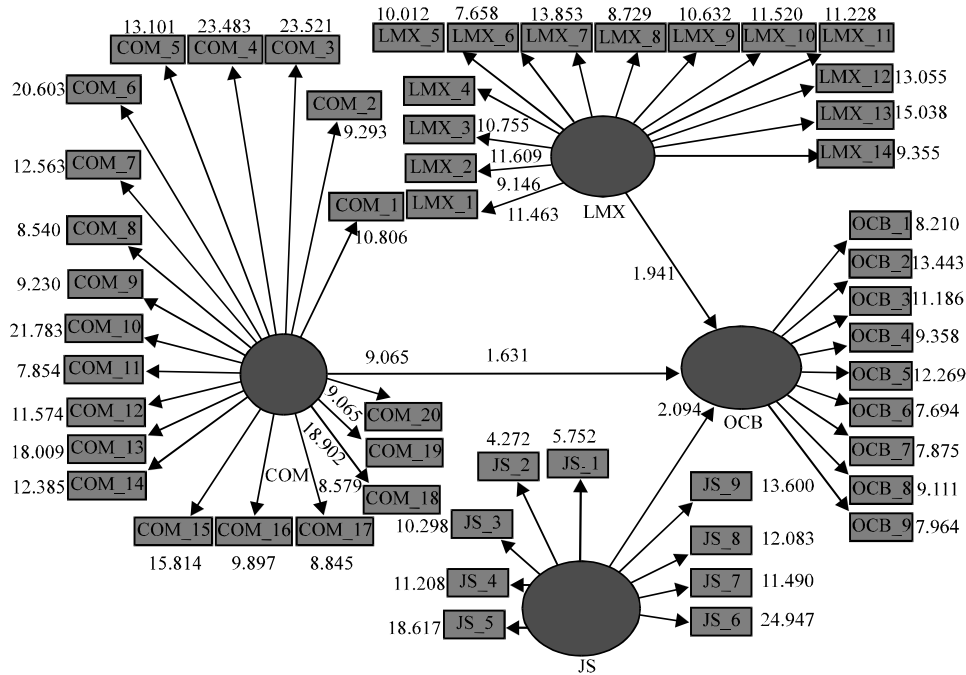


Fig. 1: Structural model results

Table 3: Coefficients and hypothesis testing results

Hypothesis	Relationship	Standard $\beta$	SE	t-value	Decision
H <sub>1</sub>	Leader member exchange, organizational citizenship behaviour	0.278	0.143	1.941*	Supported
H <sub>2</sub>	Organizational communication, organizational citizenship behaviour	0.292	0.179	1.631	Not supported
H <sub>3</sub>	Job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behaviour	0.286	0.137	2.094*	Supported

\*p<0.05, t-value >1.645

However, contrary to the proposed hypothesis, organizational communication was found to be insignificant to OCB. The communicative activities occurred within the said organization has failed to promote OCB among these respondents. Hence, the earlier findings by Ayatse and Ikyanyon (2012) in Nigerian universities and Kandlousi *et al.* (2010) in Iran manufacturing company were not supported. The plausible reason for the immaterial association could be traced back to demographic profile where new batch of employees were employed in which 47.5% of them aged below 35 years and having being employed for <5 years. These new batch of employees were perhaps have yet to be fully acquainted with the communicative motions that transpired within the organization. The hierarchical structure and high power distance in a local government could be the contributing factors for the insignificant association where the element of respect for the higher authority is apparent and fear in participating in the management of organization where higher level of participation means an added workload and this may not be appealing to them since, they have already much responsibility to serve the public (Hofstede, 2003;

Faizuniah *et al.*, 2011). Hence, this would lead them in reducing or withholding OCB engagement and focusing on performed tasks as prescribed under their employment contracts.

Job satisfaction and OCB was found to be significantly correlated where the satisfaction experienced by these respondents have heightened their willingness in exhibiting OCB. This significant finding was in line with that of Crewson (1997) who observed that public employees in government organizations as opposed to private-sector employees are seen to be motivated by a concern towards the community and a desire to serve the public interest. Hence, this would be true for local government employees being the lowest in the government tier and having the closest contact with the public, in that their sense of satisfaction would translate into performing OCB for the good of the community. Consistent with social exchange theory, OCB is one mechanism through which employees could reciprocate for having their needs appropriately fulfilled in the workplace (Organ *et al.*, 2005). This finding was in congruent with that of several meta-analyses studies conducted by Podsakoff *et al.* (2000), Dalal (2005) and Harrison *et al.* (2006).

Overall, this preliminary study has highlighted that LMX and job satisfaction was among the important ingredients in promoting OCB but not organizational communication. It is worthwhile to note that, these findings were based on preliminary study with small number of respondents from one local government. Thus, with a wider geographical coverage throughout Malaysia and a larger sample size with respondents from city council, municipal council and district council would unveil the merit of this study in examining the impact of LMX, organizational communication and job satisfaction in elevating OCB readiness among these local governments' employees. More rigor statistical analysis such as multiple regression analysis, mediation analysis and an investigation on demographic profile are worth pursuing in determining the interrelationships and the impact of these variables that could shed light on the importance of promoting OCB as a low cost vehicle in enhancing the local government's operational efficiency.

### CONCLUSION

Preliminary results revealed that Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) and job satisfaction were significantly and positively associated to OCB while organizational communication did not have significant impact towards OCB exhibition. Deliberation on the findings and direction for future work were discussed.

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