Organizational Citizenship Behavior and Emotional Intelligence of EFL Teachers in Saudi Arabia: Implications to Teaching Performance and Institutional Effectiveness

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Abstract

Many studies have extensively investigated the antecedents, consequences, and relationships of Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) and Emotional Intelligence (EI) in corporate and industrial settings, but not in educational contexts particularly in the field of English language teaching. To expand the existing literature in OCB and EI, this study investigated the levels and relationship of OCB and EI of college English teachers in an English language institute in the western region of Saudi Arabia. It tried to answer the following research questions: 1) What is the level of OCB and EI of the respondents? 2) Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' OCB and EI? Using descriptive correlational research design with adapted organizational citizenship behavior and emotional intelligence scales as data gathering instruments, this study found that the respondents had very high level of OCB. Specifically, the findings revealed that the OCBs under altruism, civic virtue, and compliance dimensions were rated as very high while those under sportsmanship and courtesy were assessed as high. Findings also indicated that the EFL teachers had high level of EI. Lastly, the study proved that there was a significant, positive relationship between the respondents' organizational citizenship behaviors and emotional intelligence. Based on the findings, the study concludes that the respondents have the potential to excel in their job and are able to contribute to overall institutional effectiveness. This asset should be enriched and sustained by implementing more relevant OCB/EI-friendly policies and practices that support conducive school climate, transformational leadership, and emotional well-being.

Keywords: EFL teachers, emotional intelligence, English language teaching in Saudi Arabia, organizational citizenship behavior, teaching performance

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Introduction

Recent developments in English language education have brought new challenges for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers. New policies on accessibility and inclusivity have made EFL teachers' roles, duties and responsibilities more demanding. Moreover, new digital trends have also made English Language Teaching (ELT) landscape more complex, compelling EFL teachers to learn new skills and competencies to pace up with the changing learning ecosystems. Further, new perspectives arising as results of continuous inquiries in language teaching and learning have also changed existing ELT paradigms requiring EFL teachers to make necessary adjustments on views and approaches to effectively help learners succeed in their learning. Clearly, recent transformations in language teaching have made EFL teachers' work more stressful and challenging, hence the need to develop and maintain highly committed and resilient teachers who can perform beyond expectations and survive in times of uncertainties and complexities.

Developing committed and emotionally resilient teachers plays significant role in ensuring school effectiveness and improvement. In order to develop a culture of willingness and commitment in an educational organization, it is important to identify and promote the characteristics and actions that lead to Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (OCBs). OCBs are discretionary extra-role behaviors beneficial to employees and organization as a whole (Hazzi, 2018; Organ, 2018; Somech & Oplatka, 2015). Examples of teacher organizational citizenship behaviors include providing additional help to slow learners outside class hours and organizing extra-curricular activities without extra pay. Similarly, in order to develop emotional resilience in school in time of complexities, Emotional Intelligence (EI) of teachers should also be examined. EI is the "ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 189). It is positively correlated with good social relations, productive working relationships, effective interpersonal behaviors, and general social competency (Brackett, Rivers, Shiffman, Lerner, & Salovey, 2006). When teachers exhibit high levels of OCBs and EI at work, they foster harmony, productivity, and effectiveness (Somech & Oplatka, 2015).

In view of the foregoing claims, this study aims to examine the organizational citizenship behaviors and emotional intelligence of EFL teachers in a multicultural higher education institution (HEI) in Saudi Arabia. In a country with many educational institutions employing many expatriates from different countries of varying cultures, exhibiting organizational citizenship behaviors can be uncommon. Also, with top-down pressures of curriculum reforms, quality assurance and accreditation programs, and other national and institutional policies affecting personal and professional lives of teachers, becoming emotionally resilient is also difficult. Therefore, to help establish a collaborative, friendly, and healthy working environment in the HEI, this study aimed to answer the following research questions: 1) What are the organizational citizenship behaviors of the EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia and to what extent are they exhibited? 2) What is the level of emotional intelligence of the respondents? 3) Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' organizational citizenship behavior and emotional intelligence? It also tried to confirm the following hypothesis: 1) There is no significant relationship between the respondents' organizational citizenship behavior and emotional intelligence.

Having a unique focus and context, this study fills the gaps in literature on organizational citizenship behaviour and emotional intelligence. For decades, many studies have already investigated the nature, components, antecedents, consequences, and factors facilitating and inhibiting OCBs and EI. Some studies have also examined the relationships of the two. However, to the author's knowledge, no study has been conducted yet on the same line of inquiry focusing on EFL teachers working in a multinational and multicultural academic environment. Further, no study of the same focus has also investigated the relationship between EFL teachers' OCB and EI. This is the first attempt to examine OCB and EI of EFL teachers in a context where most are contract-based foreign workers situated in a very culturally diverse and politically driven work environment. Results of this study can expand understanding and bring in new perspectives on teacher OCB and EI. It can also help school leaders in formulating more relevant policies that promote OCB and increase EI in schools leading to institutional effectiveness and improvement.

Literature Review

Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (OCBs) are discretionary, beyond-role behaviors and gestures that are not explicitly recognized by the formal reward system but are considered important in promoting organizational effectiveness (Organ, 2018; Somech & Oplatka, 2015). Contextually viewed and valued, these behaviors maintain and enhance the social and psychological contexts that support performance in the organization (Pickford & Joy, 2016). They help create social capital, increase efficiency, enhance productivity, and ensure overall success in the organization (Mallick, Pradhan, Tewari, & Jena, 2014; Wei, 2014).

OCB has different categories and dimensions. These include altruism which involves behaviors helping co-workers, generalized compliance which consists of more impersonal conscientious behaviors, and courtesy which comprises gestures preventing problems for colleagues at work. These OCB categories can help an organization promote efficiency through reduced need for supervision, training, and crisis management costs (Pickford & Joy, 2016). Another type of OCB is sportsmanship which refers to willingness to forbear minor inconveniences without appeal or protest. This allows organizations to sustain efficiency and effectiveness by focusing on more important job functions. Finally, the last type of OCBs is civic virtue which includes constructive involvement in issues of governance. This helps organizations save costs by providing constructive suggestions.

OCB is found to be helpful in promoting quality and innovation in organization (Yaakobi & Weisberg, 2020). It facilitates knowledge sharing and promotes job satisfaction, mental health, physical health, job retention, and service-oriented behaviors among employees (De Geus, Ingrams, Tummers, & Pandey, 2020). Display of OCBs also fosters organizational efficiency as it can reduce the need for supervision, training and crisis management costs, allow managers to focus on important job functions, and encourage employees to get involved in giving constructive suggestions that may help improve the organization (Hazzi, 2018). In general, OCBs are found to be important in promoting higher level of organizational productivity, quality, and effectiveness (Organ, 2018; Somech & Oplatka, 2015).

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence (EI) refers to the capacity to perceive, understand, control, and evaluate emotions (Fernandez-Abascal & Martin-Diaz, 2015; Vesely, Saklofske, & Leschied, 2013). More specifically, it is the ability to recognize one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to distinguish among them, and use this information to guide one's thinking and actions (Gong, Chen, & Wang, 2019; Serrat, 2017). Pekaar, Van der Linde, Bakker, and Born (2017) conceptualize it as knowledge about emotional processes and the tendency or ability to use this knowledge to regulate social and emotional behavior.

There are different approaches and measures of EI including: 1) ability EI which examines relatively discrete mental abilities that process emotional information; 2) trait EI which postulates that EI is a personality trait occupying lower levels of personality hierarchies; and 3) mixed EI which measures a combination of traits, social skills, and competencies that overlap with other personality measures (Fernandez-Abascal & Martin-Diaz, 2015; O'Connor, Kaya, & Martin, 2019). EI has also different domains and competencies such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2017). Self-awareness refers to the ability to understand one's moods, emotions, and drives as well as its effect on others, while self-management includes the ability to control emotion, adapt to different situations, and focus on achieving goals (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2017). Social awareness on the other hand involves the ability to understand others and the whole organization, while relationship management comprises the ability to influence and mentor others, manage conflict, and promote teamwork and inspirational leadership (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2017).

The effects and benefits of EI have been explored in decades and results vary depending on contexts and variables involved. In recent studies, it was gleaned that EI develops mental, physical, emotional health and well-being of teachers (Fernandez-Abascal & Martin-Diaz, 2015; Jacobs, Kemps, & Mitchell, 2014). It also facilitates development of competencies that lead to improved psychological health and teaching success and, in turn, positive student outcomes (Vesely, Saklofske, & Leschied, 2013). Further, it was also found that school leaders' high EI can positively impact teachers' job outcomes and satisfaction (Wong, Wong, & Peng, 2010) and that teachers' high emotional intelligence can lead to success in teaching and teachers' efficacy (Ghanizadeh & Moafian, 2010; Kocoglu, 2011). Moreover, EI can also promote students' academic achievement by enhancing the effects of students' self-perceptions of ability and self-esteem (Curci, Lanciano, & Soleti, 2014). In some contexts, EI has an impact on work efficiency, behavior, motivation, and job satisfaction (Gutierrez-Moret, Ibanez-Martinez, Aguilar-Moya, & Vidal-Infer, 2016), while in others, EI affects psychological capital and job performance (Mohammad & Jais, 2016; O'Boyle, Humphrey, Pollack, Hawver, & Story, 2010; Pekaar, Van der Linden, Bakker, & Born, 2017). Recently, Fernandez-Abascal & Martin-Diaz (2019) found that EI develops empathy, while Issah (2018) noted that it can help leaders provide effective leadership by being able to engage with staff, build commitment, forge working relationships, and increase staff satisfaction and retention.

Relationships between Organizational Citizenship Behavior and Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence (EI) does not directly affect organizational effectiveness. It goes through the informal routes of social mechanism which may be organizational citizenship behavior

(OCB) (Turnipseed & Vandewaa, 2012). Turnipseed and Vandewaa (2012) argue that employees with high EI have greater tendency to help their peers (altruism) and appropriately respond to different organizational situations (compliance). They further argue that those who have high ability to perceive and understand emotions may be less likely to violate organizational norms. Moreover, they contend that employees with high EI are likely to have and use better social skills and be more socially adept. In addition, they believe that employees with high EI tend to be more sensitive and are able to understand the many complex social relationships in organizations, hence more likely to engage in OCBs. Lastly, they claim that those who are capable of evaluating and managing their emotions tend to effectively achieve desired organizational results.

Related studies from different contexts found that there is a positive link between OCB and EI (Bighami, Soltani, Panah, & Abdi, 2013; Chehrazhi, Shakib, & Azad, 2014; Turnipseed & Vandewaa, 2012). Turnipseed (2017) in his more recent study exploring the linkages between the four dimensions of emotional intelligence and organizational citizenship behavior also found that the EI dimensions of perceiving, understanding, and managing emotions had positive effects on OCB towards individuals (OCB-I) and OCB towards organization (OCB-O) while using emotions had no link to OCB at all. Miao, Humphrey, and Qian (2017) also investigated the effects of EI on OCB and discovered that effects are stronger in healthcare and service industries than in industries where emotional labor demands are lower. In a more recent study, Miao, Humphrey, and Qian (2020) found EI-OCB relationship and it is stronger in long-term oriented and restraint cultures.

Methods

Research Design

Since the purpose of this study is to describe the characteristics and condition of a certain group and investigate the relationships of different variables, the descriptive correlational research design was used (Mertler, 2019). To determine the organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) and emotional intelligence (EI) of the respondents, the descriptive survey method was utilized. On the other hand, to establish relationship between the respondents' OCB and EI, the correlational method was employed. In the first phase of the study, the variables (OCB and EI) were described. In the second phase, the relationship between the variables were examined.

Respondents

The respondents of the study were 37 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) lecturers and professors in a higher education institution in the western region of Saudi Arabia. Majority (84%) of them are expatriates from different countries like United Kingdom, United States of America, Canada, Malaysia, Jordan, Pakistan, India, Philippines, Nigeria, and Sudan. Most of them are male (62.2%) aged 35 years and above with teaching experience of over 15 years (62.1%). 83.8% have masters, while 8.1% have Ph.Ds. No random sampling was conducted since the aim was to involve all faculty members to collect more comprehensive data. Out of 45 invited participants, only 37 completed the online questionnaires. The study was conducted at an English Language Institute in the west coast of Saudi Arabia offering foundation English programs among young Saudis aspiring to pursue engineering, management, computer science, logistics, and interior design programs. The Institute has three campuses catering to male and female college/university students and adult learners working in various industries. As an institution employing different nationalities with personal, professional, and cultural differences, it often deals with opposing views and practices.

Also, as a government institution rife with top-down pressures and office politics, working condition is demanding and stressful.

Instruments

To determine the organizational citizenship behaviors of the respondents and the extent they are exhibited, the adapted version of Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) Scale developed by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, and Fetter (1990) was used. The scale comprises 24 randomly distributed items representing such domains as sportsmanship, altruism, civic virtue, courtesy, and compliance. On the other hand, to ascertain the level of emotional intelligence of the respondents, the Emotional Intelligence (EI) Scale developed by Schutte, et al. (1998) was administered. It is composed of 33 items eliciting participants' EI competencies and attitudes.

Data Collection

The data gathering procedure started with seeking approval from the school administration. Upon approval, the questionnaires on organizational citizenship behaviors and emotional intelligence were administered online through Google Forms. Though the survey link was emailed directly to all EFL faculty members in the institution, participation in the study was voluntary. Institutional policy on research ethics was observed throughout the duration of the study. Respondents were given two weeks to complete the online questionnaires with few reminders sent in between. Collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics thereafter.

Data Analysis

The responses in the Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) Scale and Emotional Intelligence (EI) Scale were analyzed using 5-point Likert Scale and Weighted Mean. The relationship between OCB and EI was analyzed using Pearson's correlation (r) and t-test.

The levels of OCB and EI are analyzed using the following scale and description:

Table 1. *Scale and Qualitative Description of Responses*

Scale	Range	Qualitative Description
5	4.21 – 5.00	Very High
4	3.41 – 4.20	High
3	2.61 – 3.40	Average
2	1.81 – 2.60	Low
1	1.00 – 1.80	Very Low

Results

Q1. What are the organizational citizenship behaviors of the respondents and to what extent are they exhibited?

Table 2. *The organizational citizenship behavior of the respondents and the extent they are exhibited*

Dimension	Wt. Mean	SD
Sportsmanship	4.12	0.30
Altruism	4.36	0.29

Civic Virtue	4.55	0.22
Courtesy	3.98	0.22
Compliance	4.30	0.06
	4.26	0.20

**Note 1.* This questionnaire was adapted from the original version developed by Podsakoff, et al. (1990)

The table above shows the organizational citizenship behaviors of the respondents according to dimensions with corresponding weighted means. As revealed, OCBs under Civic Virtue (CV) has the highest average weighted mean of 4.55 (Very High), followed by those under Altruism (AL) and Compliance with the average weighted means of 4.36 (Very High) and 4.30 (Very High) respectively. OCBs under Sportsmanship (SS) have an average weighted mean of 4.12 (High), while those under Courtesy (CR) have 3.98 (High). Overall, the general average weighted mean of the organizational citizenship behaviors of the respondents is 4.27, which is qualitatively described as very high.

Q2. What is the level of emotional intelligence of the respondents?

Table 3. *Emotional Intelligence (EI) of the respondents*

Variable	N	Items	Average Wt. Mean	SD
Emotional Intelligence	37	33	4.08	0.28

Note 2. The instrument used was adapted from the EI scale developed by Schutte, et al. (1998). Table two presents the results of the 33-item emotional intelligence (EI) scale conducted among 37 respondents. As reflected the overall average weighted mean is 4.07, which is qualitatively described as high.

Q3. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' organizational citizenship behavior and emotional intelligence?

Table 4. *Correlation between respondents' organizational citizenship behavior and emotional intelligence*

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r	T	Df	p	Decision
Organizational Citizenship Behavior	37	4.34	0.360	.6636	5.248	35	.01	H_0 rejected*
Emotional Intelligence	37	4.07	0.336					

Note 3. *Using $t = 5.248 > CV = 2.03$ as parameter of rejection

Table four reflects the correlation between the respondents' organizational citizenship behavior and emotional intelligence. A Pearson's correlation was run to determine the relationship between the 37 respondents' EI and OCB values. Results indicate that there is a strong, positive correlation between EI and OCB ($r = .664$, $N = 37$, $p < .01$). The t-test value was also computed to determine the significance of relationship between the respondents' OCB and EI. Using 0.05 level of

significance, the critical value ($CV = \pm 2.03$ two tailed) was obtained using the t distribution table with degrees of freedom ($n-2$) by interpolation. Since the t value (5.248) is greater than CV (2.03), the H_0 (null hypothesis) is rejected, hence a significant relationship between OCB and EI. This suggests that there is a tendency for high OCB of the respondents to go with high EI levels (and vice versa).

Discussion

Results revealed that there was a very high level of organizational citizenship behaviors among the respondents. This was despite cultural diversity, professional competition, office politics, and security of tenure issues within the organization. Results seem to be interesting since in culturally diverse organizations where majority of the workers are foreigners who are not permanently employed, it is unlikely for organizational commitment, willingness, and helping to be very high. Somech and Oplatka (2015) in their study identified factors that may have partly and indirectly influenced this result, such as job satisfaction, sense of educational calling, perceived organizational trust, and support from leaders. With very high level of OCBs, the findings imply that the respondents may also have high level of self-efficacy, sense of self-fulfilment, and teaching efficacy and performance (Mallick, et al., 2014; Organ, 2018; Somech, & Oplatka, 2015; Wei, 2014). Findings also indicate that respondents may yield more teaching quality and innovation (Yaakobi & Weisberg, 2020), knowledge sharing, job satisfaction, mental health, physical health, job retention, and learner-centered behaviors (De Geus, et al, 2020; Hazzi, 2018). The respondents' level of OCBs further implies that the organization (school) where they work at may have organizational efficiency and effectiveness (De Geus, et al., 2020; Hazzi, 2018; Organ, 2018) and higher productivity and better quality of service (Somech & Oplatka, 2015).

Findings of this study also revealed that the respondents' level of emotional intelligence (EI) was high. This suggests that the respondents can efficiently and effectively perceive, understand, control, and evaluate their own and others' emotions to guide their decisions and actions particularly in teaching. Having this level of EI indicates that the respondents can effectively sense and handle their feelings, motivate themselves to get jobs done, creatively perform at their level best, and easily control their relationships with others. Results imply that respondents may be able to sustain and promote mental, physical, emotional health and well-being in school (Fernandez-Abascal & Martin-Diaz, 2015; Jacobs, Kemps, & Mitchell, 2014). They may also easily develop competencies that lead to teaching success, efficacy, and positive student outcomes or academic achievement (Ghanizadeh & Moafian, 2010; Kocoglu, 2011; Vesely, et al., 2013). Lastly, they may have the tendency to produce positive job outcomes, excellent job performance, develop work efficiency, job satisfaction, and empathy towards their colleagues and students (Fernandez-Abascal & Martin-Diaz, 2019; Gutierrez-Moret, et al, 2016; O'Boyle, et al., 2010; Pekaar, et al., 2017; Wong, Wong, & Peng, 2010). The high EI of the respondents may help facilitate growth and improvement in the organization.

Finally, this study also revealed positive, strong correlation between organizational citizenship behavior and emotional intelligence of the respondents. It supports previous findings of Turnipseed (2017), Turnipseed and Vandewaa (2012), Chehrazhi, Shakib, and Azad (2014), and Bighami, Soltani, Panah, and Abdi (2013) where positive relationship between OCB and EI was established at different levels. In the study of Turnipseed and Vandewaa (2012), for example, it

was found that employees with high EI tend to display altruism, civic virtue, and compliance OCBs. It was also discovered that relationship between EI and OCB is stronger in healthcare and service sectors. This study being conducted in a new, different context with English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers as respondents expands literature on OCB-EI relationship. It advances that even in the field of English language teaching in an institution rife with cultural diversity and uncertainties, strong OCB-EI relationship can possibly thrive. Several factors may have influenced this result. One could be the nature of the teaching profession itself. Teaching is viewed as a service-oriented profession and that teachers are expected to be patient, resilient, committed, compliant, and service-oriented individuals. Others could be some shared cultural beliefs among respondents and favorable organizational dynamics.

Conclusion

This study investigated the levels and relationship of the organizational citizenship behaviors and emotional intelligence of EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia. Using descriptive-correlational research method, this study found that the respondents had very high level of OCB. Specifically, the findings revealed that the OCBs under altruism, civic virtue, and compliance dimensions were rated as very high while those under sportsmanship and courtesy were assessed as high. Findings also indicated that the EFL teachers had high level of EI. Lastly, the study proved that there was a significant, positive relationship between the respondents' organizational citizenship behaviors and emotional intelligence.

Based on the findings arrived at, it can be concluded that the respondents have the acceptable levels of organizational citizenship behaviors and emotional intelligence, which are believed to be helpful in promoting outstanding teaching performance and school effectiveness. Results of this study also confirm that there is significant relationship between organizational citizenship behavior and emotional intelligence, a desirable phenomenon in an educational organization that can help foster better quality of learning outcomes, teaching efficiency and effectiveness, job satisfaction, resilience, and institutional performance. Though the scope, number of respondents, and the complexity of the measures used are quite limited, findings of this study can still contribute to the existing literature on OCB and EI, particularly in the emerging area of Teacher OCB where the construct is validated in various contexts. More sophisticated research involving more diverse groups of EFL teachers with focus on investigating the antecedents of teacher OCB and EI and their relationships to certain performance indicators or teaching outcomes can be conducted to advance new knowledge within this field of inquiry.

While the results of this study is favourable at the time it was conducted, it is important to note that it is not always the case in other contexts. Therefore, in order to sustain or even increase the existing levels of OCB and EI as well as the strong positive correlation between the two, it is important that relevant OCB/EI-friendly policies and practices are always in place. The organization should always be aware of the OCB practices of its employees and implement corresponding programs and activities that help them sustain job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job efficacy, and sense of educational calling. Moreover, the organization should cultivate organizational trust and collectivism, increase any form of organizational support, maintain conducive organizational/school climate, and practice transformational and participative leadership. It is also important that the organization regularly implements activities that promote

emotional well-being of the teachers. Trainings or workshops on increasing emotional intelligence can be conducted for this purpose. Effective and committed teachers are assets of any learning institution. It is when they are developed in all aspects that they bring effectiveness to the whole organization.

About the author

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