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## **Impact of Psychological Contract Fulfillment on Organizational Citizenship Behavior**

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### **Abstract**

*The contribution of Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) is a driving force of effectiveness in the hotel industry. Due to the perceived importance of OCBs, a significant amount of emphasis has been devoted to investigate the antecedents of such behaviors, especially by service organizations. Emerging lines of research put forward Psychological Contract Fulfillment (PCF) as an important antecedent to view organizational citizenship behavior. Hence, this study investigated the impact of psychological contract fulfillment on organizational citizenship behavior. Quantitative methodology has been adopted to achieve the aim of the study, and data was collected from three to five star hotels in central province, Sri Lanka, using a cross sectional study design and stratified random sampling technique. Items to measure psychological contract fulfillment were taken from Bal et al. (2010). Organizational citizenship behavior was measured using the 24 item scale developed by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman and Fetter (1990). Two hundred and forty-two (242) usable questionnaires were collected and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the aid of AMOS (Analysis of Moment Structures) 23.0. The study results indicated that psychological contract fulfillment has a positive and significant impact on organizational citizenship behavior. This study provides important insights, especially for managers in the hotel sector, and emphasizes the importance of fulfilling psychological contracts with their employees. Despite the contributions and implications, studying only one antecedent of OCB, cross-sectional nature of data and quantitative methodology are limitations of this study. Future studies may accommodate qualitative research approach, a longitudinal time frame, and may identify other possible antecedents of OCB.*

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**Keywords:** *Organizational citizenship behavior, psychological contract fulfillment, service sector*

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## 1. Introduction

As a result of the phenomenal growth and competitive intensity today, organizations strive to gain advantage through their employees (Afsar & Badir, 2016). Organizations depend on extra-role behaviors of their employees to fill the gaps between role behaviors based on job descriptions, and those demanded by the changing environment (Gong, Greenwood, Hoyte, Ramkissoon & He, 2018). Such extra-role behavior of an employee is called organizational citizenship behavior. Organ (1988) defines organizational citizenship behavior as “a special type of work behaviors that is defined as individual behaviors that are beneficial to the organization and are discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system”.

Organizational citizenship behavior is held to be vital to the survival of an organization. The construct has been considered one of the most valuable dependent variables for academicians and practitioners because it, as discretionary behavior, leads to more effective operation of an organization, as well as to increase employee performance (Gupta, Shaheen & Reddy, 2017; Royle, Hall, Hochwarter, Perrewe & Ferris, 2005). When organizations promote superior citizenship behaviors, they happen to be more attractive places to work, and are able to hire, train, and retain the best people with decreased turnover and improved job performance (George & Bettenhausen, 1990; Koys, 2001 as cited in Afsar & Badir, 2016). Given the potential benefits of OCB, there have been a number of studies trying to identify its antecedents and outcomes (Podsakoff et al., 2000).

As cited by Afsar & Badir (2016), due to the phenomenal growth and competitive intensity in the hotel industry, it strives to gain advantage through employees (Tajeddini, 2010). Hotel managers must promote certain citizenship behaviors beyond regular job functions (Chiang & Hsieh, 2012) to achieve organizational objectives and high firm performance. It is found that the hotel industry emphasizes customer services, creation of unique service experiences, and being innovative in service management, which are essentially OCBs (Morrison, 1994). This is because today's guests are actively seeking superior-quality, customized yet consistent hospitality experiences, which integrate a subtle culture-specific novelty with a certain acceptable level of service and product quality. Due to the significant role of employees, hotel managers will have to encourage employees to go the extra mile regarding regular job functions. As a result, organizational citizenship behavior has garnered more attention in the hotel industry (Ma & Qu, 2011).

However, since OCB is not a part of employee's job description and it is discretionary behavior (Fisher, McPhail, & Menghetti, 2010), it cannot be encouraged through formal incentives or reward practices. Due to the perceived importance of OCB for the hotel industry, it is vital to identify the factors which encourage employees to volunteer for activities beyond the call of their duties. Understanding what factors influence hotel employees' OCB has become an important area of research today. Research has been conducted to identify antecedents of OCB, such as supervisory behavior, organization's culture and climate, job autonomy, self-efficacy, and propensity to innovate (Afsar & Badir, 2016).

Researchers put forward psychological contract fulfillment, particularly, as an important predictor of OCB (Robinson & Morrison, 1995). It is indicated that citizenship behavior may result from employer fulfillment of obligations (Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2000; Robinson & Morrison, 1995). Rousseau (1989) defines psychological contract as "the belief or perception which an employee has on terms and conditions of the exchanged agreement between employee and the organization which he or she is employed". From the employee perspective, psychological contract fulfillment refers to whether the employer provides the employee with the expected inducements (Chaudhry, Wayne, & Schalk, 2009).

### **1.1. Research Problem**

Employee engagement in organizational citizenship behaviors has traditionally been theorized as an act of reciprocity for the treatment employees receive from the organization (Konovsky & Pugh, 1994). This implies that employees' engagement in OCBs is dependent on the actions of their employer.

Previous studies (Chiang & Hsieh, 2012; Ozduran & Tanova, 2017) emphasize the special requirement for OCBs in the hotel industry due to the uncertain economic conditions, fluctuating demands, diverse customer base, etc. However, it is reported that the youngest generation of workers, traditionally a large segment in the hospitality labor pool, are often claimed to be more self-centered and less prepared to put in an extra effort (Gong et al., 2018; Lub, Blomme & Bal, 2011). The younger workers tend to care more about career advancement than other generations in the workforce, and their career development concerns are likely to influence organizational citizenship behavior (Gong et al., 2018). Further, scholars have found that hospitality workers have poor self-restraint, do not feel their work is essential and useful to the company, and are less committed to the job (Hemaloshinee & Nomahaza, 2017).

Literature has suggested that psychological contract fulfillment is an important predictor of OCB, and argued that this special requirement for OCB can be fulfilled by enhancing employees' PCF (Ahmad & Zafar, 2018; Robinson & Morrison, 1995). However, in recent

research, most researchers have undertaken their research to study the impact of psychological contract breach and consequences in an employment relationship (ex, Raja, Johns, & Ntalianis, 2004; Rayton & Yalabik, 2014; Ranasinghe, 2016). Even though understanding what factors influence OCB is an important area of research both in academia and in practice today, there is less research on psychological contract fulfillment and organizational citizenship behavior (ex. Ahmad & Zafar, 2018). Specially, to the best of knowledge, up to date, the association between psychological contract fulfillment and organizational citizenship behavior has not been tested adequately in the Sri Lankan context, particularly in the hotel sector. More research studies on OCB focus on the western context (e.g., Newton, Blanton, & Will, 2008; Robinson & Morrison, 1995), while similar efforts in the Sri Lankan context are rather scarce (Janadari, Ramalu & Wei, 2018).

In this background, the current study attempts to address the research problem:

What is the impact of psychological contract fulfillment on organizational citizenship behavior of hotel sector employees in Sri Lanka?

## **2. Literature Review**

The concept of organizational citizenship behavior has been studied since 1970 and it has taken an important place in the organizational theory literature (Hoffman, Blair, Meriac, & Woehr, 2007). In recent years, as organizational structures have become more flexible, much attention has been given to the role that employee citizenship behavior plays in improving organizational functioning (Turnley et al., 2003). In reviewing the definitions of OCB, the most widely accepted definition for the OCB concept belongs to Organ (1988), who is considered the father of OCB. Based on Smith et al.'s (1983) definition, Organ (1988) defined OCB as "employee behavior that is extra-role that promotes organizational effectiveness and that is not formally recognized by an organization's reward system". A careful analysis of this definition firstly reveals that OCB is a discretionary behavior performed on the basis of choice and not a part of the job description, secondly it means going beyond the enforceable requirements of the job description, and finally it positively impacts organizational effectiveness (Kumar & Shah, 2015).

In discussing the dimensions of OCB, there hasn't been any consensus on the definition of OCB dimensions in literature, and it can be seen that there have been over thirty definitions of OCB in various studies (Polat, 2009). Several OCB models have been developed by researchers since the origin of the concept. However, the five dimensions of OCB identified by Organ (1988) have been frequently recognized in the existing research (LePine, Erev & Johnson, 2002, as cited by Kumar & Shah, 2015). Therefore, the present study adopts Organ's (1988) five dimensions of

OCB, which comprise altruism, courtesy, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, and civil virtue. Altruism refers to an employee's willingness to improve the work environment (Norris-Watts & Levy, 2004). Conscientiousness includes adherence to organizational rules/ norms, and it depicts the reliability and dependability of the employee within the organization (Organ et al., 2006). Courtesy is a form of helping behavior, but one that works to prevent problems from arising, and includes the word's literal definition of being polite and considerate of others (Organ, Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 2006). Civic virtue encompasses positive involvement in the concerns of the organization (Organ et al., 2006); whereas, sportsmanship involves the active avoidance of unhelpful behaviors. It represents an effort to endure difficult situations by sacrificing individual comfort (Wang, Hinrichs, Prieto, & Howell, 2013).

The psychological contract is often used as a framework to understand the changes occurring in the employment relationship and individual beliefs regarding the mutual obligations between the employee and the organization. The interest in psychological contracts can be traced back to early work based on social exchange theory (Coyle-Shapiro & Parzefall, 2008). Argyris (1960) viewed the psychological contract as an implicit understanding between a group of employees and their foreman, and argued that the relationship could develop in such a way that employees would exchange higher productivity and lower grievances in return for acceptable wages and job security. However, early work on the psychological contract has been criticized due to some diversity in the conceptualization of the construct (Coyle-Shapiro & Parzefall, 2008). More recent work on psychological contracts is heavily influenced by the re-conceptualization of Rousseau (1989). Rousseau's re-conceptualization of the psychological contract signals a transition from the early work to what is now considered contemporary research (Coyle-Shapiro & Parzefall, 2008). Rousseau (1989) defines the psychological contract as "an individual's beliefs regarding the terms of conditions of a reciprocal exchange agreement between the focal person and another party" (p.23). The distinguishing feature of Rousseau's (1989) re-conceptualization of the psychological contract was locating it at the individual level (Coyle-Shapiro & Parzefall, 2008).

Psychological contract fulfillment refers to an employee's belief that the organization has generally kept its obligations toward him or her (Henderson, Wayne, Shore, Bommer, & Tetrick, 2008 as cited in Ruitter et al., 2016). From the employee perspective, psychological contract fulfillment refers to whether the employer provides the employee with the expected inducements (Chaudhry, Wayne, & Schalk, 2009). When employees judge employer fulfillment to be high, they are more likely to feel obligated to reciprocate, and hence increase their own sense of obligation towards the organization (Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2002 as cited in Bal et al., 2010).

A driving concern behind the interest in the psychological contract is its consequences on the attitudes and behavior of organizational members (Coyle-Shapiro, Jacqueline, Kessler, & Ian, 2000). Rousseau (1989) underlined that an employee's perception of the extent to which the organization fulfills its obligations has the most profound effect on work-related attitudes and behavior (Conway & Briner, 2005 as cited in Ruiter et al., 2016). The psychological contract between employees and their organizations is a crucial element of the employment relationship (Rousseau, 1995). The terms of an individual's psychological contract include an employee's understanding of his or her own obligations as well as those of the employer (Dabos & Rousseau, 2004; Rousseau, 1995). The psychological contract can influence some outcomes, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, employment stability, motivation, OCB, and turnover.

Scholars have distinguished between different psychological contract dimensions. One of the classifications that can be found in the extant literature is transactional contract and relational contract. Transactional psychological contract reflects short-term employment relationships between employees and employers, and suggests that an individual's performance-based compensation depends on his or her specific contract (MacNeil, 1985 as cited in Xuan & Park, 2012). Relational psychological contract reflects long-term employment relationships, and suggests that an individual's performance-based compensation depends on his or her comprehensive contract (Rousseau, 2000). However, scholars argue that the empirical evidence is not so clear cut in terms of supporting the transactional-relational distinction (Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2008). The key issue is the crossover of items (Taylor & Tekleab, 2004). Therefore, attempting to classify psychological contract items into relational-transactional factors has not yielded consistent results (Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2008).

Alternatively, Bal et al. (2010) distinguish between three types of psychological contract dimensions: economic, socio-emotional, and developmental. The three types of psychological contract fulfillment were considered in this study. Economic obligations refer to monetary resources that organizations provide for their employees (Pohl et al., 2016). Socio-emotional obligations refer to obligations related to respectful treatment and being supportive of employee concerns (Bal et al., 2010); whereas, developmental dimension refers to resources aimed at developing the employee in order to achieve greater performance on the job (Pohl et al., 2016).

### **2.1. PCF and OCB**

PCF is an important predictor of extra-role behaviors, (Chang et al., 2013, as cited in Ahmad & Zafar, 2018) such as OCB. It is indicated that citizenship behavior may result from employer fulfillment of their obligations rather than commitment and satisfaction as previously

suggested (Robinson et al., 1994, as cited in Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2000). Robinson and Morrison (1995) specified that psychological contracts are an especially important lens to view organizational citizenship behavior.

In particular, Organ's (1990) "social exchange interpretation of OCB" suggests that OCBs provide employees a means through which they might reciprocate the positive actions of employers who treat them well. In other words, social exchange theory suggests that employees are motivated to engage in extra-role behaviors when they perceive that their employment relationship is based upon the foundation of a fair social exchange. According to Organ (1988), once the employer psychological contract is fulfilled, the employee provides discretionary support to coworkers, and responds to the firm's broader needs. Moreover, people who receive favorable treatment from others feel obliged to reciprocate the same behavior (Blau, 1964). Researchers also claim that such reciprocation usually takes place in the form of OCB (Ma & Qu, 2011).

Increases in employer psychological contract fulfillment have been shown to lead to increases in respective employee OCBs (Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2002). Other than this, studies have also found support for this argument, and have suggested that PCF enhances OCB (Turnley et al., 2003; Ahmad & Zafar, 2018). Based on these arguments this study can hypothesize:

*Alternative hypothesis H1: Psychological contract fulfillment has an impact on organizational citizenship behavior*

### **3. Methods**

This study adopted quantitative methodology to achieve the aim of the study, and the deductive approach was used as the research approach of the study. Survey strategy was used, as it was associated with the deductive approach. This study is cross sectional in nature, and the extent of researcher interference is minimal. Items to measure psychological contract fulfillment were taken from Bal et al. (2010). Organizational citizenship behavior was measured using the 24 item scale developed by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman and Fetter (1990). A five point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) was used in order to retain the original scales of the authors, as well as to keep the comparability of the results. The population represents the customer-contact employees of three to five star hotels in central province, Sri Lanka. The sample of 285 was drawn using stratified random sampling method, and the primary data was collected using a self- administered survey questionnaire. A pre-test was carried out to ascertain whether the respondents could understand the wordings and questions in the questionnaire designed, and a pilot test was done to identify and eliminate potential problems in the questionnaire design. Before analyzing data, missing values and outliers were removed,

and 242 questionnaires remained for data analysis. Multivariate assumptions, namely normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity were tested Using SPSS. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used as the main research statistical-analysis tool. After drawing the final measurement model, Cronbach's alpha values, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values and Composite Reliability (CR) values were taken to satisfy the reliability and validity requirements. Two structural models were drawn to analyze the data, and each model was tested with the goodness of fit indices.

## **4. Results**

### **4.1. Respondents' Profile**

Out of 242 of respondents, 35 (14.5%) respondents were born in 1965-1980, while 207 (85.5%) belong to the category of birth after 1980. Further, the majority is married (53.7%) and male 156 (64.5%). Out of 242 respondents, 22.7% have less than two years of working experience. Most of the respondents in the sample (30.2%) have 2 - 5 years of working experience in the particular sector, while 26.9% of respondents have experience of 5-10 years, and only 20.2% respondents have more than 10 years of experience.

### **4.2. Preliminary Analyses**

In the current study, the researcher searched the missing data by using SPSS and used the mean imputation method to treat the missing values. Based on the box plot analysis, 08 outliers were identified and removed from the data set. In order to assess the normality of the data set, the researcher used the Histogram, skewness and kurtosis values (Hair et al., 2010). According to the skewness (PCF- -0.396, OCB- 0.113) and kurtosis (PCF -0.236, OCB - 0.606) values it was concluded that data is normally distributed. Further, according to the Histogram, the researcher identified that the data is normally distributed. The scatter plots ensured the linearity of variables. Homoscedasticity was checked by plotting predicted values and residuals on a scatter plot using SPSS. The scatter plot confirmed the assumption of homoscedasticity in the data set.

The Researcher checked the Multicollinearity of variables using variation inflation factor and tolerance value, (VIF < 10, Tolerance > 0.2). The tolerance values were greater than 0.2 and VIF values were less than 10. Therefore, it was concluded that there is no multicollinearity in existence. Further, explanatory factor analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) were conducted to measure the Unidimensionality. All the standardized factor loadings of the final CFA model were above 0.5 and all the t-values were significant at  $p < 0.001$ .



### 4.3. Assessing Reliability and Validity

According to the results, Cronbach's Alpha values of each construct were greater than 0.7. (PCFE .868, PCFS .843, PCFD .828, OCB .925). Therefore, it ensures the internal consistency of indicators. All AVE values and factor loadings were greater than 0.5. Composite reliability for all the variables was greater than AVE of each latent variable. Further, composite reliability for all variables was greater than 0.7. Together, these results provide evidence of convergent validity of the study's constructs. In order to assess discriminant validity, the square of the correlation estimates between each construct was compared with the AVE of each construct. AVE for each construct was higher than the square of the correlation between that construct and the other constructs. Moreover, the correlation coefficients among the study constructs did not exceed 0.85 (Kline, 2011). All together these results ensure that there are no problems with discriminant validity.

### 4.4. Hypotheses Testing

Table 01 presents the results of testing the hypothesized direct relationships between psychological contract fulfillment and organizational citizenship behavior. The table also includes the standardized path coefficients, *t*-values, and the corresponding significance levels.

Table 1: Hypothesis testing

Path	Hypothesis	$\beta$	p-value	Result
PCFOCB →	H1: Psychological Contract Fulfillment has an impact on Organizational Citizenship Behavior	0.35	.001**	Accept

Source: Sample Survey, 2019

Hypothesis 01 investigated the impact of psychological contract fulfillment on organizational citizenship behavior. The results demonstrated positive and significant paths from psychological contract fulfillment and organizational citizenship behavior ( $\beta = 0.35, p < .001$ ). Thus, hypotheses 01 was supported.

## 5. Discussion

The research question of this study aimed to investigate the impact of psychological contract fulfillment on organizational citizenship behavior (Does psychological contract fulfillment impact on organizational citizenship behavior?). The results of the current study showed that

psychological contract fulfillment was positively associated with organizational citizenship behavior. This finding is consistent with the findings of previous studies, especially those in western contexts.

Studies (Coyle-Shapiro, 2002; Turnley et al., 2003) have found that, organizationally desired outcomes will result from contract fulfillment by the employer, whereas contract breach by the employer is likely to lead to negative responses with some evidence reporting incidents of retaliatory behavior in the form of theft or sabotage. Similarly, Ruiter et al. (2016) have found that there is a positive relationship between PCF and organizationally desired outcomes. They found PCF would be positively related to job and career satisfaction. Moreover, Turnley et al. (2003) have supported the positive relationship between psychological contract fulfillment and employee performance.

Researchers have put forward psychological contract, in particular, as another important predictor of OCB (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler (2000) have confirmed the link between psychological contract and citizenship behavior, and have highlighted the importance of employer's contract behavior regarding the fulfillment of specific obligations in affecting employees' attitudes and behavior. Similarly, the study on effects of psychological contract on organizational citizenship behavior by Xuan and Park (2012) has also confirmed the significant relationship between psychological contract and OCB.

However, there has been very little investigation on the impact of psychological contract fulfillment on organizational citizenship behavior. Hence, this study studied the association between PCF and OCB focusing on the Sri Lankan hotel sector. The findings of this study are in line with the previous findings (Ahmad & Zafar, 2018; Bal et al., 2010), which support the direct impact of PCF on OCB. Therefore, Sri Lankan hotel sector managers, who are perceived as agents of organizations, should make realistic promises, and try to fulfill the promises made to the employees. This is because employees exhibit extra role behaviors once the employer fulfills their promises.

## **6. Conclusion**

Due to the dynamic nature of the hotel industry, employees are often required to extend extra-role behaviors (i.e., helping out colleagues, keeping abreast with developments within the organization, working extra hours...etc) to colleagues and the organization at large. The results of these citizenship behaviors are essential for hospitality organizations in achieving their objectives, as well as for efficient maintenance of their competitive advantage. Psychological contract fulfillment plays a major role in promoting OCB. The objective of this study was to identify the impact of psychological contract fulfillment on organizational citizenship behavior.

The results of the current study confirm the significant direct impact of psychological contract fulfillment on organizational citizenship behavior; hence, it can be concluded that as PCF increases, OCB will also increase. The finding is in line with the empirical evidence. Therefore, it can be stated that if an organization fulfills its promises to their employees (i.e. enhanced PCF), the employees will be willing to do more in exchange and move beyond their job descriptions. Overall, this study provides important contribution to the organizational behavior literature and a great deal of practical contributions, especially to the hotel industry in Sri Lanka and other areas in the world, in terms of psychological contract fulfillment and organizational citizenship behavior.

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