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Corporate Social Responsibility, Organizational Engagement, and Organizational Citizenship Behaviors: A Conceptual Framework

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Abstract:
Previous studies of corporate social responsibility (CSR) at the individual level of analysis (i.e., employee perspective) indicated that social identity theory is one of the possible mechanisms to explain the relationship between CSR perceptions and employee behaviors. Based on social identity theory, the current conceptual paper introduces employee engagement as a useful mechanism, through which the association between employee perceptions of CSR and employee behaviors could be explained. This paper sheds light on the role that employee organizational engagement (OE) play in the relationship between CSR perceptions and employee organizational citizenship behaviors.

Keywords: CSR, organizational engagement, organizational citizenship behaviors, OCBs.

1. Introduction

Although academic research has discussed the concept of CSR for many decades, there is no single definition of the concept that everybody agrees. There are several definitions for CSR that can be found in literature, each characterized by its own meaning and attribute. Bowen (1953, pp. 41) put the initial definition of CSR as "the obligation of businessmen to pursue those policies, to the make those decision or to follow those ". He defines CSR as the policies, the decisions, and the actions that align with the goals and values of society. Davis (1973, pp. 312) offered a classic definition of CSR as "the firm's consideration of, and response to, issues beyond the narrow economic, technical, and legal requirements of the firm". One of the commonly used definitions developed by Carroll (1979). Carroll determined four main orientations of organization's CSR. He defines CSR as "the responsibility of business encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time". Under this point of view, organizations would vary in how they act upon the legal, ethical, economic, and discretionary aspects of the CSR.

Past studies have indicated that employee' perception of CSR is among the main factors that influence employee' attitudes and behaviors (e.g., Branco and Rodrigues, 2006; Briggs and Verme, 2006;Hsieh and Chan, 2012; Valentine and Fleischman, 2008; Zheng, 2010). Research has shown that employee attitudes and behaviors are heavily influenced by how socially responsible they consider their organization to be (Peterson, 2004). Although the previously stated literature supports the idea that CSR influences employees attitudes, "we still know little about how and why CSR directly influences employees" (Glavas and Kelley, 2014). There is still insufficient research on the mechanisms linking CSR and employee outcomes (Aguinis and Glavas, 2012). Thus, more research is needed on the mechanisms that underline the relationship between perceived CSR and employee behaviors (Glavas and Kelley, 2014). In this report, employee organizational engagement (OE) will be introduced as a new mechanism, through which the association between CSR perceptions and employee OCBs could be explained. By doing so, the current study contributes to CSR and OE literatures.

2. Literature Review

The relationship between CSR practices and employee extra-role behaviors has been examined in a number of studies (e.g., Duarte and Neves, 2010; Azim, Diyab, and Sabaan, 2014; Futa, 2013; Isfahani, Boutani, Pourzamani, and Heidari, 2013; Lin, Lyau, Tsai, Chen, and Chiu, 2010; Rupp, Shao, Thornton, and Skarliki, 2013; Vlachos, Panagopoulos, and Rapp, 2014; Zhang, Fan, and Zhu, 2014). Most of these investigations found the existence of a positive relationship between organization's CSR efforts and employee extra-role behaviors.

Vlachos et al (2014) found in their study of two hundred sixty employees working in U.S. that employee CSR judgments positively related to employee affective commitment and employee extra-role behavior. Choi and Yu (2014) examined the impact of CSR practices on employee OCBs of in China. They found that employee perception of CSR practices regarding environmental CSR, ethical CSR, philanthropic CSR, and stakeholder-relation CSR had a positive impact upon employee extra-role behaviors (i.e., OCBs). Isfahani et al. (2013) conducted a study of one hundred and eighty employees working in the educational sector in Iran and found positive relationships between CSR perceptions and five dimensions of organizational citizenship behaviors (e.g., benevolence, dutifulness, citizenship virtue, chivalry and respect, and honor).

Some studies investigated the differences in employee perceptions of the internal and external aspects of CSR and its influences on employee behaviors. For example, Duarte and Neves (2010) conducted a study of one hundred thirty three employees from an airline company and they found that internal CSR practices such as training and education, work diversity, health and safety, work-life balance, and human rights have positive impact on employee OCBs. The results also revealed that job satisfaction partially mediated this relationship. Recently, Islam, Aamir, Khalifah, and Ahmed (2015) confirmed the mediating role that job satisfaction plays in the positive relationship between perceived CSR and employee OCBs. Using mixed practices of CSR (i.e., internal and external practices), Hansen, Dunford, Boss, and Angermeier (2011) found in their study that perceived CSR practices positively influenced employee OCBs.

Azim et al (2014) found in their study of employees working in banking sector in Saudi Arabia that perceived external CSR had a significant positive relationship with employee OCBs. A study done by Zhang and his colleagues in China confirmed the positive association between external CSR performance and OCBs (Zhang et al., 2014). Zhang et al (2014) found in their study that perceived CSR (CSR toward external stakeholder) significantly influenced employee OCBs.

Using stakeholder approach, a number of studies investigated the relationship between CSR practices and employee behaviors (e.g., Newman et al., 2015; Rupp et al., 2013; Zhang et al., 2014). In a study of one hundred and eighty three private sector employees in China, Newman et al (2015) examined the relationship between organization's CSR practices (i.e., CSR toward social and non-social stakeholders, employees, customers, and government) and OCBs. The study found that perceived organizational CSR practices toward social and non-social stakeholders significantly related to job performance and OCBs. Furthermore, they found that employee perceptions of the importance of CSR influenced their OCB, which confirmed the results of Peterson (2004). Peterson (2004) had indicated earlier that the relationship between perceived CSR and employee attitudes and behaviors was stronger among employees who believed highly in the importance of CSR. A study conducted by Abdullah and Rashid (2012), however, could not confirm that employee perceptions of CSR towards government had any impact on employee OCBs.

A number of studies investigated the role of psychological and individual variables on the relationship between perceived organization's CSR efforts and employee behaviors (e.g., Raineri and Paille, 2015; Rupp et al., 2013; Lamm and Tosti-Kharas, 2015). Rupp et al (2013) found in their study of two hundred forty-five employees who were attending part-time MBA classes at large North American university that there was a strong positive relationship between employee perceptions of CSR (e.g., those directed toward secondary stakeholders) on employee OCBs. They also found that first-party justice perceptions attenuated the positive relationship between perceived CSR and their OCBs. Further, the results also revealed that the relationship between CSR perceptions and OCBs was more pronounced among employees high (versus low) in moral identity.

Recently, Raineri and Paille (2015) found a positive association between corporate citizenship (i.e., corporate greening) and OCBs. The results of their study also revealed that ecological beliefs moderate this relationship. They found that ecological beliefs strengthen the relationship between corporate citizenship and OCBs. Lamm and Tosti-Kharas (2015) examined the relationship between perceived CSR (i.e., perceived organizational support toward the environment _ POS-E) and employees' organizational citizenship behaviors. They confirmed the existence of positive association between CSR and OCBs. Further, they established a psychological mechanism behind this association. The results of their study indicated that psychological empowerment plays a mediating role in the relationship between perceived CSR and OCB. Story and Neves (2015) explored the role of intrinsic and extrinsic CSR attribution (intrinsic motive refers to the organization's goal is to contribute to the 'good', while extrinsic CSR attribution reflects that the organization strategically benefits from CSR). They found that employee task performance increases when employee attribute both intrinsic and extrinsic motives for CSR. The results of their study also revealed that when employees perceive their organization invests in CSR practices that are both intrinsic and extrinsic, employees tend to exert effort in their work (i.e., OCBs).

Overall, the studies presented above suggested that CSR is positively related to employee OCBs. Based on the empirical studies on the relationship between CSR and employee OCBs, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

- Hypothesis 1: Employee perceptions of CSR will be positively related to employee OCBs.

2.1. Employee Engagement

The concept of employee engagement is relatively of recent origin. It was coined by the Gallup Group, as a result of several empirical studies based on interviewing and surveying managers and employees from different countries. The term has gained considerable popularity in the last two decades (Shuck and Wollard, 2010). It is easy to understand why the increase in popularity, since the outcomes of employee engagement can be exactly what most organizations seek for. When employees are engaged they will be more productive, and profitable, also they will be less likely to be absent, and more willing to work harder for their companies (Fleming and Asplund, 2007; Wagner and Harter, 2006). Further, Vance (2006) suggests that engaged employees generated higher customer satisfaction ratings and increased revenue.

The first definition of engagement found in the academic literature is the one provided by Kahn (1990). Kahn (1990) defined employee engagement as "the harnessing of organization members' selves into their work roles" (Kahn, 1990, pp. 694). Employee engagement has been defined in several ways and the definitions and measures often sound like other established constructs such as organizational commitment and OCBs (Robinson, Perryman, and Hayday, 2004). Nevertheless, there is sufficient evidence for arguing that the concept of engagement is related to, but distinct from other constructs in organizational behavior (Saks, 2006). For example, Robinson et al (2004) stated that "…engagement contains many of the elements of both commitment and OCB but is by no means a perfect match with either. In addition, neither commitment nor OCB reflect sufficiently two aspects of engagement – its two – way nature, and the extent to which engaged employees are expected to have an element of business awareness."

According to Kahn (1990), employee engagement is a psychological state wherein employees give all of themselves to their work roles. Kahn conceptualized employee engagement as a higher-order construct consisting of three elements: physical, cognitive and emotional. When engaged "people become physically involved in tasks, whether alone or with others, cognitively vigilant, and empathetically connected to others in the service of the work they are doing" (Kahn, 1990, pp. 700). These three elements of engagement represent Kahn's perspective that when individuals are engaged, they willing to use all aspects of themselves in work activities (Kahn, 1990, 1992).

Recently, Saks (2006) introduces a two-dimensional model of employee engagement. At the core of the model are two different types of engagement: job engagement (JE) and organization engagement (OE). This stems from the conceptualization of engagement as role related (Kahn, 1990), that is, "…it reflects the extent to which an individual is psychologically present in a particular organizational role" (Saks, 2006, pp. 604). The two most dominant roles for most organizational members (e.g., employees) are their work role (i.e., JE), and their role as a member of an organization (i.e., OE). This also stems from the idea that individuals have multiple roles and as suggested by Rothbard (2001) that research should examine employee engagement in multiple roles within organizations.

Saks (2006) found in his study of 102 employees working in different sectors that there is a meaningful difference between JE, OE. Further, Saks (2006) found that perceived organizational support predicts both JE and OE; job characteristics predict JE, and procedural justice predicts OE. The results of his study also revealed that OE mediated the relationships between the antecedents and employee positive work outcomes (job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intentions to quit, and organizational citizenship behavior). According to Saks, the psychological conditions that lead to job and organization engagement are not the same. However, the focus will be on OE for some reasons. The first reason that motivates us to use employee engagement at a macro-level is that we discuss the implications of employee perceptions of some organizational factors (organization's CSR activities), which makes OE more appropriate as a dependent and/or mediating variable. Second, the majority of previous studies have concentrate primarily on testing employees' engagement at a micro level of analysis (e.g., job and work engagement), and surprisingly neglected employee engagement at the macro-level of analysis.

2.1.1. Research on the Antecedents of Employee Engagement

Many researchers tend to agree that the consequences of employee engagement are positive (e.g., Menguc, Auh, Fisher, and Haddad, 2012; Kular, Gatenby, Rees, Soane, and Truss, 2008; Saks, 2006). As a result, more studies have begun to look at the antecedents of employee engagement (e.g., AbuKhalifeh and Som, 2013; Albdour and Altarawneh, 2012; Rhoades, Eisenberger and Armeli, 2001; Ferreira and Oliveira, 2014; Kahn, 1990; Lee, 2012; Mathumbu and Dodd, 2013; Ram and Prabhakar, 2011; Rich, Lepine, and Crawford, 2010; Robinson et al., 2004; Saks, 2006; Smith, 2012; Gokul, Sridevi and Srinivasan, 2012).

Ram and Prabhakar (2011) in their study of 310 employees from the Jordanian hotel industry found that job characteristics, intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, perceived supervisor support, perceptions of procedural and distributive justice have positive impacts on employee engagement. Smith (2012) found that there is positive relationship between perceived organizational prestige and employee engagement. The results of this study also indicated that organizational identification partially mediated this relationship.

Some researchers suggest the existence of positive influence of employees feeling of being valued by their employers and the engagement level (Rhoades et al., 2001). Mathumbu and Dodd (2013) confirmed that in their study of employees working in health-care sector. The results of their study indicated that there is a positive relationship between perceived organizational support and employee engagement. Further, Gokul et al. (2012) indicated that perceived organizational support indirectly impact employees' attitudes (i.e., employee commitment) through its positive influence in employee engagement. In the service industry, AbuKhalifeh and Som (2013) found that employee communication, employee development, reward and recognition, extended employee care have significant positive impacts on the engagement level of employee. The results of their study also indicated that employee development is the highest contributing factor to employee engagement.

There is a stream of researches concentrate primarily on investigating the relationship between individual differences, emotional experiences and employee engagement (e.g., Kahn, 1990; Lee, 2012; May et al., 2004). Kahn (1990) suggests that psychological differences might impact on individuals' ability to engage or disengage in their role performance. According to Kahn, people would engage differently "given their experiences of psychological meaningfulness, safety and availability in specific situations" (Kahn, 1990, pp. 718). Robinson (2006) also argues that individual differences play a vital role in determining an employee's potential level of engagement. According to Robinson (2006) individuals categorize and make sense of situations according to their own and personal frame of reference, which reflects their own personality, knowledge, expectations, priorities and interests. It is also been argued that employee engagement is related to emotional experiences and wellbeing (May et al., 2004). Lee (2012) in his study of 394 hotel employees and managers in the United States that core self-evaluations (i.e., basic conclusions or bottom-line evaluations that individuals hold about themselves) and three components of psychological climate (i.e., managerial support for service, interdepartmental service, and team communication) positively influence employee engagement. The results of his study also revealed that core self-evaluation and psychological climate interact and have a moderating effect on employee engagement.

While considering the contribution of the studies mentioned above. There is a lack of research on the relationship between organization's CSR efforts and employee engagement. A few studies investigated the impact of organization's CSR performance (i.e., internal and external CSR) on employee engagement (e.g., Albdour and Altarawneh, 2012; Ferreira and Oliveira, 2014). Albdour and Altarawneh (2012) found in their study of 336 frontline employees working in the banking sector in Jordon that training and education, work diversity, and work life balance have a positive impact on employee engagement. Ferreira and Oliveira (2014) confirmed the existence of positive relationship between employee perceptions of organization's social performance and employee engagement. From social identification perspective, individuals are predisposed to reinforce their self-esteem and bolster their self-

images by identifying themselves with groups and organizations recognized for their social engagement and responsibility. This, in turn is likely to result in positive attitudes. An organization's CSR efforts will promote employees' identification with their organization and this identification will lead to a greater engagement between an employee and the organization as a whole (Rodrigo and Arenas, 2008). Based upon the results of empirical studies (Albdour and Altarawneh, 2012; Ferreira and Oliveira, 2014) and past research on the social identity theory, the current advances the following hypothesis:

- Hypothesis 2.Employee perceptions of CSR will be positively related to employee organizational engagement (OE).

2.2. Employee Engagement and OCBs

Recently, many studies began to look at the positive consequences of employee engagement (e.g., Crim and Seijts, 2006; Sonnentag, 2003; Saks, 2006; Wickramasinghe and Perera, 2012). There is a general belief that there is a strong link between employee engagement and business results: A meta-analysis done by Harter, Schmidt, and Hayes (2002) confirmed the existence of this connection. Harter and his colleagues concluded that, "…employee satisfaction and engagement are related to meaningful business outcomes at a magnitude that is important to many organizations". At the individual-level of analysis, previous empirical research has proven that engagement has positive impacts on work attitudes (Sonnentag, 2003; Saks, 2006). According to Saks (2006), employee engagement has a direct effect on; job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intention to quit. Furthermore, on the organizational level, many have claimed that a high level of employee engagement will lead to desirable consequences, such as an enhancement of revenue growth and profitability (Crim & Seijts, 2006), the ability to adapt to change in the long run, and organizational success (Baumruk, 2004; Wellins, Bernthal, & Phelps, 2005).

The relationship between employee engagement and employee extra-role behaviors has been tested in many studies (e.g., Ariani, 2013; Babcock-Roberson and Strickland, 2010; Banhwa, Chipunza, and Chamisa, 2014; Kataria, Grag, and Rastogi, 2013; Mathumbu and Dodd, 2013; Ram and Prabhakar, 2011; Runhaar, Sanders, and Konermann, 2013; Rurkkhum, 2010; Saks, 2006; Saradha and Patrick, 2011; Sulea et al., 2012; Rurkkhum and Bartlett, 2012;Wickramasinghe and Perera, 2012), and the findings of these studies support the existence of a positive relationship between EE and employee extra-role behaviors.

Banhwa et al. (2014) found in his study of one hundred eighty employees working in the retail-banking sector that employee engagement had positive impact on OCBs. According to the findings from this study, employee engagement led to increased display of OCB by employees. Saks (2006) found in their study of employees working in cross-section of organizations in Canada that employee engagement had a positive impact on OCBs. Babcock-Roberson and Strickland (2010) also confirmed the positive relationship between employee engagement and OCBs. The results of their study revealed that employee engagement was a mediating variable in the relationship between charismatic leadership and OCBs. Ram and Prabhakar (2011) in their study of 310 employees from the Jordanian hotel industry found positive impacts of employee engagement upon organizational citizenship behaviors. They also found that employee engagement had a negative relationship with intentions to quit.

Ariani (2013) found a significant positive relationship between employee engagement and OCBs in her study of five hundred and seven employees working in the service industry in Indonesia. She also found that there was a negative relationship between employee engagement and counterproductive behavior. Rurkkhum (2010) in their study of 698 employees working in four large organizations in Thailand indicated that there were positive relationships between employee engagement and the five components of OCBs (i.e., altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, and civic virtue). The results of this study also revealed that the most positive relationship was between employee engagement and civic virtue.

Saradha and Patrick (2011) undertook a study of two hundred thirty-five workers employed in organizations in the IT industry. They found that employee engagement strongly influenced OCBs. An investigation of IT professionals in India conducted by Kataria, Grag, and Rastogi (2013) confirmed the positive impact of employee engagement on OCBs. They also found that employee engagement mediate the relationship between supportive management and OCB.

Recently, two cross-sectional investigations found positive association between employee engagement and employee extra-role behaviors (e.g., Sulea et al., 2012; Rurkkhum and Bartlett, 2012). Sulea et al. (2012) found positive relationship between employee engagement and OCBs. The study also confirmed that employee engagement had a negative impact on counterproductive work behavior. An important finding from Sulea et al. (2012) study was that employee engagement played as a mediator in the relationship between perceived organization support and OCB. Rurkkhum and Bartlett (2012) collected cross-sectional data from 522 employees in Thailand to examine the impact of employee engagement on OCB. They found that employee engagement had a significant positive relationship with OCB.

Table 1 below provides a summary of the empirical studies on the relationship between employee engagement and OCBs. The table briefly presents the name(s) of the author(s), the country in which the studies were conducted, the kind of organizational sectors (e.g., public vs. private), the research method(s) used, the sample size, and the findings that were obtained from these investigations.

The studies cited above showed that employee engagement was related to organizational citizenship behaviors. Based on the empirical findings of previous studies, we propose the following hypothesis:

- Hypothesis 3: Employee organizational engagement (OE) will be positively related to employees OCBs.

2.3. Interrelationships among CSR, Organizational Engagement, and Organizational Citizenship Behaviors

Drawing on social identity theory, this study assumes that perceived CSR could affect employees' extra-role behaviors through OE. In other words, OE might mediate the effect of CSR perceptiosn on OCBs.

As mentioned earlier, employees' organizational engagement has a positive relationship with their perception of CSR of their organization (Gond et al., 2010). Furthermore, employee OE has a positive influence on organizational citizenship behaviors. An

emotionally attached employee is logically perceived to devote his/her abilities and power to perform activities that go beyond his/her formal job description (Azim, 2016). Azim (2016) suggested that when the organization performs CSR, the employees become engaged because of enhanced self-image or greater sense of fairness, and will, in return, perform voluntary behavior within the workplace. A structural analysis of two hundred ninety online responses of employees working for various Indian and foreign information technology enabled services, confirm the presence of partial mediation by employee engagement between CSR perceptions and employee positive attitudes and behavior (Gupta, 2015). The literature, thus, provides evidence to support the mediating role of engagement on the relationship between CSR and employee OCBs.

Current study proposes that Organization's CSR actions can boost employees' self-enhancement processes through its impact on corporate image, which supports employees' efforts to define themselves through organizational affiliations; in turn, this reinforces their engagement at the organizational level and consequently generates OCBs. Accordingly, and based on social identity theory, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

- Hypothesis 4: OE will mediate the relationship between CSR perceptions and employee OCBs.

3. Conclusion

This paper argues that CSR perceptions can influence employee organizational citizenship behaviors through its impact upon employee organizational engagement. As the current study is a conceptual paper, future empirical studies may extend the CSR literature by empirically examining the model, which may contribute additional insights to this study.

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