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The mediating role of organizational commitment and political skills in occupational self-efficacy and citizenship behavior of employees

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ABSTRACT

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Organizational Citizenship Behavior, Political Skills, Organizational Commitment, Occupational Self-Efficacy

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Customer's perception of service quality presentation is becoming an increasingly important issue in preservation of exclusive strong-tie relationships between organization and customer. The quality of service is assessed according to the customer's expectation about the perceived service quality. Due to this, promoting the quality of presented services, with appearance of voluntary and willingly behaviors that are known as Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), provides employees with behaviors in order to go above and beyond the call of duty. This study investigates the features of employees' OCB and the relationship of these features with variables, namely occupational self-efficacy, political skills, and organizational commitment. For this end, a questionnaire was distributed among the employees of Ardabil Gas Company. The data analysis revealed that it is important to improve employees' OCB, which would result in their remarkable ability in meeting people's demands and providing high quality services for customers. It can be argued that for improving the organizational commitment and political skills of employees, managers can take steps to create motivation among employees by rewarding and encouraging them to become highly involved in their work.

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Introduction

Today, employees have a major and eminent role in a service organization. Employees tend to be in the first line of service providers and they perform the same marketing functions that are considered as an advantage for the good of organization. One of the most important issues that service organizations are facing with is how to give stimulus to employees.

Organizations require their employees to become involved in discretionary behaviors that go beyond their formal job requirements (Barnard, 1938; Katz, 1964). These behaviors, generally referred to as organizational citizenship, incorporate work behaviors including helping others, staying late or working weekends, performing at levels that surpass enforceable standards, tolerating problems on the job, and being actively involved in company affairs (Organ, 1988; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000). To this end, organizations play their role and perform their duties in a complete manner in order to assure that the customers will receive better level of services that shows that the marketing function is an innate ability. Unlike the ordinary goods, the quality of services depends to a large degree on the reactions of employees with customers. The attitudes of these employees and their behaviors with customers have profound effect on customers' perception of services quality and their satisfaction.

Based on this idea and in addition to the defined activities, roles and determining extra activities consistent with these roles may be described as distinctive elements in identifying service quality. Maybe you have frequently seen an individual in various organizations that protect their organization against others' criticisms. They share what they know with their coworkers and they put an effort for attracting skillful people without any expectation from the organizations. What justification can be assigned to their behavior? What are its dimensions? What are the effects of it for the organization? Acknowledging the importance of these questions, some key points are in order.

The study of human behavior is among the most widely discussed issues by experts in the field of social sciences. Human behavior has different dimensions. Considering this, various sciences, namely psychology, sociology, and management aim to study human behavior in different environments. Human behavior becomes systematic in accordance with environments that they act. Individuals perform certain duties in each situation that they take the responsibility of it, and environmentally appropriate behaviors are expected from their side. For instance, an individual, as a citizen, should not relinquish others rights in any position that he or she is. Highlighting the limitations that rules provide for citizens to control and lead these behaviors, some people are still careless. In addition to the behaviors expected from individuals in the form of a role, there also exist some other behaviors that have deep roots in culture, history, and religion of a society. Voluntarily behaviors that are displayed according to the values in the societies, such as respecting elders, are considered as behaviors

beyond the call of duty. These behaviors within the organizations are known as Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB).

Mathieu and Zajac (1990) stated that committed employees were more likely to show citizenship behaviors. Citizenship behaviors are those behaviors that often go beyond an employee's job description and involve a series of acts like helping others, taking on additional responsibilities, putting in extra hours, defending the organization, and speaking out about important organizational issues (Organ, Padsakoff, & MacKenzie, 2006).

Employee citizenship is likely to enhance organization performance. The appearance of OCB would not be feasible except by identifying and providing appropriate bases consistent with it. Necessity of the research provides compelling evidence that in service organizations like Gas Company, having employees with high self-efficacy for creating organizational commitment and OCB is of primary importance.

According to Rigotti, Schyns, and Mohr (2008), occupational self-efficacy is a kind of skill that a person feels concerning the ability to fulfill the tasks involved in his or her job. The notion of occupational self-efficacy is attributed to the work context as a domain but not to a specific task. Self-efficacy has a significant effect on the tasks a person attempts to do, the effort they bring to bear on these tasks, their determination, and their response to setbacks, and has been found to be prominent in changes across a wide range of behaviors (Bandura, 1997). Moreover, organizations are in need of people with high level of political skills for applying OCB.

Review of Literature

Hee Yoon and Suh (2003) studied the OCBs and service quality to understand critical roles of contact employees' OCBs in customers' evaluation of service quality. The purpose of this research is perception of influential roles in relation with behaviors of employees in service and communication organizations. The findings of the study illustrated that job satisfaction among the employees of service organization and their trust to their managers are directly related to organizational behaviors. Strong commitment in OCB has a positive relationship with the perception of service quality.

According to Bienstock, DeMoranville, and Smith (2003), the relation of citizenship behavior with service quality was undertaken with 49 famous fast food restaurants. The research reports that employees have a major role in a service organization, especially those who are in direct contact with customers. Service employee perceptions of how they are

treated by the service organization, i.e. what organizational rights they receive, are positively related to OCB. Following this, it reveals that these behaviors result in more effective service delivery to organizational standards and enhanced customer perceptions of service quality.

Stephen, Schepman, and Zarate (2008) conducted a research and thirty-two participants completed surveys. The primary purpose of the research was to explore the relationship between burnout, negative affectivity, and OCB for social service workers at two agencies serving homeless populations. Study presented that there was a meaningful relationship between burnout, negative affectivity, and OCB.

Nejat, Kosar Neshan, and Mirzadeh (2010) attempted to explore the impact of OCB on the quality of travel agencies in Tehran. This study stressed the importance of service quality enhancement and assessment of functioning. Findings of the study indicated that job satisfaction and employees' trust to their managers create a meaningful relationship between citizenship behavior and perceived service quality.

Maleki (2009) investigated the relationship between organizational citizenship behavior and occupational factors. This study demonstrated that how citizenship behavior relates to occupational factors and how it can have a crucial role in behavioral intentions. Based on the results, occupational factors were taken into account in this study.

Empowerment is an enabling and inspirational process (Corsun & Enz, 1999). Khalesi et al. (2011) estimated the relationship between organizational citizenship behavior and the employees' empowerment at the health centers of Tehran University of Medical Sciences. The principle aim of the study was to determine the relation of OCB with each of its four dimensions on employees' empowerment. The results of the study showed that OCB makes an important contribution to the empowerment of employees, and it is useful in managing human resources.

Javadin, Rayej, Aghamiri, and Yazdani (2010) investigated the implementation of internal marketing which was a step towards improving OCB and service quality in Tehran Gas Company. The study identified the effect of internal marketing activities on OCB and service quality. Findings of the study revealed that internal marketing activities in Iran Gas Company could increase employees' OCB and services quality. It should be stated that this research focused on internal marketing. In addition, identifying internal activities and their effect on OCB was taken into account.

Baharifar and Javaheri Kamel (2011) explored the relationship among outcomes of organization ethical values, organizational justice, organizational commitment, and OCB.

The paper examined the consequences of the moral values of the organization, namely organizational justice, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, and moral behavior. The results indicated that the values of the organization had positive impact on people.

Following this, organizational commitment positively affected the ethical behavior of employees. Also, the ethical behavior had significant influence on the generosity and altruism of OCB. Employees with high organizational commitment turn to be more passionate and concerned and are more likely to contribute to organizational assignments and goals (Freund, 2005; Janssen, 2004; Marchiori & Henkin, 2004; Moon, 2000; Sparrowe, 1995). Additionally, organizational commitment is a valued attribute as committed employees have greater loyalty and intentions to remain with an organization and devote more effort in their work (Giffords, 2003; Shore, Barksdale, & Shore, 1995).

Litt (1988) suggested that self-efficacy is crucial because it influences an individual's ability and willingness and encourage them to go beyond the expectations. Bandura (1986) believes that self-efficacy is a kind of construct, which is concerned with people's beliefs about their capabilities to organize and execute designed course of action. As presented by Leither (1992), self-efficacy is one of the primary individual difference variables.

Comparing the results of the studies, the more recent body of research has demonstrated the importance of these factors for all organizations, especially for service organizations which are trying to attract customer satisfaction by providing high level of quality and having appropriate behavior. These organizations even try to gain more benefits in competitive markets by paying attention to customers' expectations about acceptable quality level that cause their satisfaction and their attention to a certain organization in comparison with their competitors.

Theoretical Framework

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is one of new statistical methods and it is among the strongest methods of multivariate analysis that is also known as Covariance Structure Analysis (CSA) or a Lisrel Model. The main use of it is in topics involving multivariate data analysis that cannot be analyzed using two-dimensional correlation method and considering independent and dependant variable each time. Multivariate analysis refers to a set of methods of analysis which basic features of them involve analysis of multiple independent variables with the dependent variable. In other words, if you want to estimate your dependent

variable such as delinquency by the use of your independent variables, namely self-motivation, family relations, juvenile delinquency background, and economic and social situation, you must design a causal model and evaluate it through running SEM. Therefore, in this study, some items called the measurement model section, which are generally the questionnaire items, are directly measured. Besides, some items are obtained by combining these dimensions and their relations with each other in order to draw final model that is cited as path analysis section. SEM is a powerful multivariate analysis technique from the family of multivariate regression analysis. To be more precise, a General Linear Model (GLM) allows the researcher to examine a set of regression equations at the same time.

Methodology

The main purpose of the present study is to investigate the mediating role of organizational commitment and political skills in occupational self-efficacy and citizenship behavior of employees in Ardabil Gas Company. A number of secondary objectives were also addressed, including investigating the relationship between self-efficacy and citizenship behavior, organizational commitment, and political skills, exploring the relationship between commitment and emergence of citizenship behavior, and investigating the relationship between political skills and emergence of citizenship behavior.

Research Hypotheses and Conceptual Model

Five components of OCB (Podsakoff & Mackenzie, 1997) are responsibility, courtesy, altruism, generosity, and friendliness. In order to evaluate occupational self-efficacy, we used general self-efficacy (GSE) questionnaire developed by Sherer et al. (1982). The measured components included desire to display behavior, desire to expand the effort, and being different in the face of obstacles.

For political skills and organizational commitment, we used questionnaires developed by Ferris et al. (2005), and Allen and Meyer (1990), respectively. Political skill was judged by the use of four components, including the ability for applying to networking activities, interpersonal influence, social consciousness, and absolute integrity. Following this, organizational commitment was judged using three components namely normative commitment, continuous commitment, and affective commitment. Figure 1 clearly indicates the conceptual model of research and its variables.

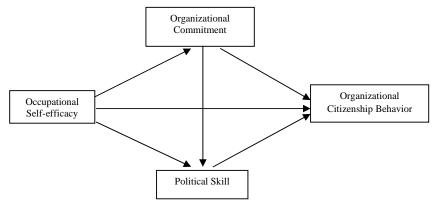


Figure 1. Conceptual model of research

Considering the nature of subject and the study goals, we employed descriptive method. In order to determine and describe the position of the variables and for data gathering, survey method was carried out. With respect to literature review and history of the subject in local and international literature, OCB in working environment was considered dependent variable, occupation self-efficacy of employees was identified as independent variable, and organizational commitment and political skills of employees were determined as mediator variables in this research.

Then, by the use of authentic and standardized questionnaires designed for attitude surveys by world's leading experts, an integrated questionnaire was developed and applied. For OCB, political skills, and organizational commitment, questionnaires developed by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, and Fetter (1990), Ferris et al. (2005), and Allen and Meyer (1990) used, respectively. Cronbach's alpha was used as an estimate of the reliability of questionnaire and the results was indicated to be 0.915.

Participants

The objective of the present study is an investigation into the mediating role of organizational commitment and political skills in occupational self-efficacy and citizenship behavior of employees in Ardabil Gas Company. This study was undertaken with 171 respondents. All of them were employees in Ardabil Gas Company. Details of participants are shown in Table 1, 2, and 3 as follows:

Table 1

Age of Participants

Age	Percentage
20-29	5.58
30-39	59.65
40-49	29.24

Table 2
Experience of Participants

Experience	Percentage		
Less than 5 years	11.1		
5-10 years	25.14		
10-15 years	30.4		
15-20 years	8.18		
20-25 years	8.18		
25-30 years	15.2		
More than 30 years	1.75		

Table 3

Education Level of Participants

Education Level Percentage	
Diploma	8.77
Associate Degree	15.2
MA Degree	10.53
PhD Degree	50

It is worth noting that 5.26 per cent of participants had more than 50 years old, and 152 of respondents that consisted 88.88 per cent of subjects were married and 19 respondents that comprised 11.11 per cent of subjects were single.

Data Analysis

The unit of analysis was the individuals who responded to the questionnaire. For the analysis of the data, different descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used. Moreover, for research purposes, we used SEM and EQS software. Acknowledging the descriptive statistics, the distribution of the study subjects, their educational status, their age, work experience, and other factors of respondents are determined in statistics formats. Armed with the data obtained from the questionnaire and by the use of statistical testing, each of research hypotheses was analyzed. Considering SEM, analysis of the results of model was represented.

The Average of Indicators

Tables 4 shows the number of questions, number of dimensions, and mean scores which were determined by indicators, namely OCB, organizational commitment, political skill, and organizational self-efficacy. According to the results, the mean score of organizational commitment was 58.34 per cent. In addition, the mean scores of occupational self-efficacy, OCB, and political skill were 60.41, 70.23, and 73.02 per cents, respectively.

Table 4

The Average of Indicators

Indicators	Number of Questions	Number of Dimensions	Mean Score	Percentage
Organizational Commitment	18	3	2.91	58.34%
Occupational Self- efficacy	30	3	3.02	60.41%
Organizational Citizenship Behavior	24	5	3.51	70.23%
Political Skill	40	4	3.65	73.02%

Since the overall aim of this study was achieving a model like causal relationship between variables, it was necessary to use causal modeling. This model by combining cause and effect information and considering deterministic theory tries to explain the relationship between variables and provide grounds for having better perception. Causal inferences are the results of correlation between data. In causal modeling, the primary purpose is to gain quantitative estimation of causal relationship between variables.

In this work, SEM that is based on the causal relationship between variables was used. In order to take advantage of SEM it is important to determine the variables in shaping the model. By collecting data through survey methods in research that are relevant to the variables of the model and by exploratory factor analysis, we can decrease a large number of dependant variables that are linked to each other to latent variables. In addition, common factors between the variables of the research are recognized and they are defined as the elements in research concepts formation.

In this phase of research, based on the large number of studies indicated by local researchers in government agencies and companies in fields of OCB, occupational self-efficacy, political skill, and organizational commitment, model of present study was represented. For OCB, political skills, and organizational commitment, questionnaires developed by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, and Fetter (1990), Ferris et al. (2005), and Allen and Meyer (1990) used, respectively.

Determining the Structural Model of Research

After various processes and determining elements for each of research variables, we examined a set of relationships that were defined in theoretical framework of research. In SEM and path analysis, this becomes practical by designing a structural model. Therefore, it becomes possible to examine the effects of variables under investigation. Figure 2 represents

the results of structural model that shows the relationships between variables using the theoretical framework of the study.

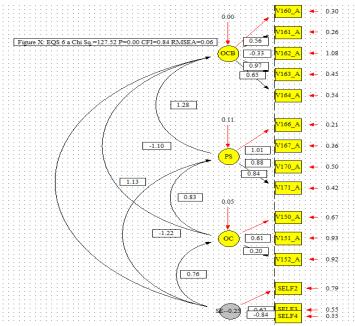


Figure 2. The resuls of model by EQS

Table 5 exhibits the proprietary indicators of final model. According to the results and their comparison with accepted range, it can be implied that all proprietary indicators of above model were reached the proved quorum and were acceptable.

Table 5
Proprietary Indicators of Research

Proprietary Indicators	AGFI	CFI	GFI	RMSEA	P-Value	X ² /df
Accepted Range	> 0.8	> 0.8	> 0.8	< 0.1	< 0.1	< 5
Result	0.83	0.84	0.88	0.6	0.00	3.61

Discussion

The aim of this study is an investigation into the mediating role of organizational commitment and political skills in occupational self-efficacy and citizenship behavior of employees in Ardabil Gas Company. According to the results, it is important to improve employees' OCB in Ardabil Gas Company, which will result in their remarkable ability in meeting people's demands and providing high quality services for customers. For improving the organizational commitment and political skills of employees, managers can take steps to create motivation among employees by rewarding and encouraging them to become highly

involved in their work. Increases in employee creative role identity and creative self-efficacy are both of great importance in increasing their performance of creativity. Strengthening employees' sense of role identity for creative work can improve their self-efficacy considering their creative tasks (Wang, Tsai, & Tsai, 2014) Individuals who are highly involved in their work are, in fact, more likely to engage in organizational commitment. Besides, managers should try to use employees with high self-efficacy in sections that are in close contact with customers. It follows that social encouragement influences self-efficacy. Colleagues possibly use social persuasion, for example to encourage each other with respect to tasks. Satisfaction with colleagues should demonstrate this kind of relationship and therefore be positively related to occupational self-efficacy (Schyns & Von Collani, 2002).

High self-efficacy employees offer opportunity to create responsiveness which is an effective step in improving the citizenship behavior. In terms of practical implications, as suggested by recent research evidence (Choi, Price, & Vinokur, 2003; Malone, 2001) senior managers or organizations should conduct more training programs aimed at changing managers' self-efficacy in the workplace. In order to encourage employees to demonstrate high performance of OCB, managers can have a wide range of advertising for familiarizing customers' with their civil rights in the company. Wide range of advertising offers an array of services to meet the requirements of clients. Due to this, it is suggested to identify and build a service excellence culture to improve the consistency and quality of all services to better meet the needs of clients. It is, also, suggested to identify employees with high self-efficacy who bring promotion to the quality of presented services, encourage them, and introduce them as a model for other employees. Therefore, in the long run, organizational culture will lead to better results and it will lead to make organizational culture improvement.

Given the value of citizenship behavior, it should be mentioned that according to the respondents' opinions provided in the questionnaires, mean score of OCB was 3.51 that indicates that OCB constitutes 70.23 per cent of scores. The mean score of organizational commitment was 2.91 and it constitutes 58.34 per cent of scores. The mean score of occupational self-efficacy was 3.02 and it achieved 60.41 per cent of scores. Additionally, the mean score of political skill was 3.65 that indicate that it achieved 73.06 of score. Considering the participants' view, it has fulfilled the requirements. By identifying variables of research, designing primary model using structural equations, inserting data into an existing data container, and by analyzing the collected data, the proprietary indicators of primary model were derived and they were shown as CFI=0.84, RMSEA=0.06, GFI= 0.885,

AGFI=0.836, IFI= 0.853 and RMR= 0.055. CIF was determined as comparative fit index and since its value was about 0.84, it made up large proportion and fulfilled the requirement. RMSEA was determined as mean squared error. The closer to zero this measure is, the more it shows that square deviation decreases and proprietary indicator increases. Considering this fact, it is necessary to indicate that this research, according to the results of primary model, had less squared deviation and it was in appropriate level of proprietary.

Organizational commitment and political skills are becoming increasingly important as they have important consequences both for individuals and for organizations. This study focused exclusively on employees in Ardabil Gas Company. Hence, it is inappropriate to generalize the findings from the sample of this study. In other words, applying the research design to other companies and professions is recommended and to generalize the findings, further studies should use larger samples.

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