

EMPLOYEES' RESILIENCE, HOPE AND OPTIMISM AS PREDICTORS OF WORKPLACE CIVILITY AND ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated employees' resilience, hope and optimism as predictors of workplace civility and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) among civil servants in Ekiti State, Nigeria; following the efforts of positive psychology to discover the importance of positivity to people and a renewed emphasis on the importance of positivity to organizational effectiveness and growth. A sample of 262 civil servants was selected for the study, using the multi-stage random sampling technique to select the Ministries, Departments and Agencies as well as the research participants. A questionnaire was used to collect data and was adopted from Brief Resilience Scale (BRS) developed by Smith et. al, Beck's Hopelessness Scale developed by Beck, 10-items Life Orientation Test Revised (LOT-R) developed by Scheier and Carver, Civility Scale developed by Meterko et.al, and the 18 items Organizational Citizenship Behavior Scale developed by Organ. Data were analyzed using the multiple regression analysis and results of analysis revealed that employees' resilience, hope and optimism significantly jointly predict workplace civility and organizational citizenship behaviour. Results also revealed that whereas resilience, hope and optimism individually significantly predict OCB, only hope and optimism individually significantly predict workplace civility..

Keywords: Resilience, Hope, Optimism, workplace civility, organizational citizenship behavior.

INTRODUCTION

The study of positive organizational behavior was first introduced in the Journal of Organizational Behavior about 8 years ago and has received considerable attention through its major construct of psychological capital (Harms & Luthans, 2011).

Psychological capital is a multidimensional construct of an individual as characterized by high hope, optimism, and resilience.

Past researches have shown that for any organization to function effectively, among other things, it must have people who undertake innovative and spontaneous activities that go beyond prescribed role or job requirement (Katz and Kahn, 1978). The people's personality traits for spontaneous and innovative activities constitute what Harms and Luthans (2011) conceived as psychological capital (psycap).

In an organization, every individual is expected to perform certain roles as specified by job descriptions and superior's expectations. However, sometimes individuals perform certain tasks or exhibit certain behavior above and beyond his call of duty. There is large number of instances in organizations when employees assist their fellow employees which are not part of their job duties. This assistance is spontaneous and does not result in any formal reward. Such extra role behavior is termed as organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Performance of OCB, however, may be contingent upon high hope, optimism, and resilience on the part of an employee in terms of satisfaction of individual outcomes and organizational-level outcomes.

One aspect that has not been extensively examined but has strong theoretical support for its connections with outcomes is workplace civility. Most researches on workplace civility have been carried out in health sector. Health sector is also an organization that provides services for people just like the Civil Service Commissions; which controls and coordinates the civil servants in all states in Nigeria.

In the civil service, assessing the status, organizational effects, and mechanisms to increase civility may be especially important. This is particularly so because civil servants are the main vehicle through which services are delivered to citizens, and the highly demanding emotional drain of interacting with citizens put them at risk for burnout (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993) in addition to personal costs to civil servants. Thus, an efficient, courteous and committed civil servant may require some degree of resilience, hope, and optimism to function optimally.

In Christianity, hope is one of the three theological virtues alongside faith and charity because it arises from the grace of God for his subjects. Christian hope is not to be understood as the mere probabilistic anticipation of something desired, but as a 'confident expectation', a trust in God and his gifts that free the believers from hesitation, fear, greed, and anything else that might keep them from charity, which

according to I Corinthians 13:13 in the holy Bible, is the greatest of the three theological virtues. Thus, Christian hope is more akin to faith. It is faith in the future tense. Like prayer, it is an expression of the subject's limitations, his connection and dependence on something other and greater than himself. Hope is attractive because it is an act of piety and of humility.

In psychological parlance, hope is one of the important components of positive organizational behavior. Hope is commonly used in everyday language (for example, 'let us hope for the best that our business venture succeeds'). According to Snyder, Irving, and Anderson (1999), hope is defined as a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of success namely: (1) agency, goal-directed energy and (2) pathways, planning to meet goals. Luthans, Youssef, and Avolio (2007) maintained that central to this definition of hope is the idea which is the basis for a problem-solving solution. Snyder (2000) states that, as a psychological construct, hope consist of three major conceptual foundations: agency, pathways, and goals. The agency component of hope can be thought of as having the will to accomplish the intended or desired effect. For that reason, hope involves agency or motivational energy to pursue a goal. In addition, hope also involves the pathways that include not only identifying goals and sub-goals, but also alternative ways to reach those goals. Those high in hope utilize contingency planning as they forecast obstacles to achieving goals or sub-goals and proactively identify multiple pathways to attain the targeted goals. In other words, hope comprises the will to succeed and ability to identify, clarify, and pursue the way to success.

Hope has been shown to be applicable and to relate to performance in various domains, including the workplace (Adams, Snyder.....Pulvers, 2002; Curry, Snyder, Cook, Ruby, & Rehm, 1997; Youssef & Luthans, 2006). Practical approaches for developing hope include setting challenging 'stretch' goals, contingency planning, and regaling when necessary to avoid false hope (Luthans, et al., 2006; Snyder, 2000). Thus, hope meets the POB inclusion criteria.

Optimism can be defined as a stable personality trait related to positive expectations regarding future events. Optimists are people who expect that good things will happen to them, while pessimists expect bad things to happen (Scheier & Carver, 1985). Thus, the definition of optimism is supported by positive expectations about future outcomes. It presumes that when a goal is important, the person will act to reach the desired goal, hoping for positive results (Scheier & Carver, 1985; 1993).

A substantial body of research has linked optimism to effective coping and to positive mental and physical health outcomes (e.g. Taylor, Kemeny, Reed, Bower, & Gruenewald, 2000). A smaller number of studies have also shown that optimism leads to better social functioning. Social functioning in this context may include workplace civility and organizational citizenship behavior. For example, optimism is associated with lower social alienation (Scheier & Carver, 1985) and with longer lasting friendships (Geers, Reilley, & Dember, 1998). In romantic relationships, two prior studies have suggested that optimism about a particular relationship predicts greater satisfaction in that relationship and reduces likelihood of relationship dissolution (Helgeson, 1994; Murray & Holmes, 1997), although the mechanisms explaining such a relation were not directly tested.

One of the greatest assets an organization can have is a workforce with the agility to survive unexpected crisis and to find opportunity to thrive in the face of potentially terminal events. This arsenal of coping mechanism possessed by employees is believed to make the most of the human capital that characterized the modern organization and offer one of the greatest prospects for differentiating the successful organization on the world stage.

Also, in the fast-paced world of email, bottom-lines, conference calls, and endless meetings, it is no surprise that many employees feel 'under the gun' in being able to juggle their workload and maintain a relatively stress-free work-life. Heavy work demands may result in negative consequences such as minimized collegial coworker relationship, reduced citizenship behaviors and the creation of a workplace climate that is devoid of respect and dignity (Pearson, Andersson. & Porath, 2000, 2005). Over time, such behavioral patterns can become encrypted into the norms and customs of the organization, and may consequently lead to a self-perpetuating environment of disrespect (Pearson, Andersson, & Wegner, 2001).

The general definition of incivility is uncivil, rude, or discourteous behavior. Uncivil behaviors are characteristically rude and discourteous, displaying a lack of regard for others (Cortina, 2008; Ismail & Zakuan, 2012). Incivility may undermine the dignity, lordliness and self-esteem of employees, suffering unnecessary conditions (Cortina, 2008; Ismail & Zakuan, 2012).

Targets of incivility report decreased job satisfaction (Lim & Cortina, 2005; Lim & Lee, 2011; Miner-Rubino & Reed, 2010), motivation, commitment, and organizational citizenship behaviors (Johnson & Indvik, 2001). Incivility experiences are associated with

work withdrawal and turnover intentions (Miner Rubino & Reed, 2010) and also have a negative influence on indicators of psychological well-being (Lim & Lee, 2011). Recent findings further explicate the toxic nature of incivility, as it is linked to interpersonal conflict and counterproductive work behavior (Penney & Spector, 2005), lower performance for targets and bystanders (Porath & Erez, 2007), and lower ratings of customer service quality (Sliter, Jex, Wolford, & McInerney, 2010).

It is not out of place to contend that high performing organizations rely heavily on employees who exceed their contractual duties to discharge official tasks successfully. Organizations could hardly survive or prosper without their members behaving as good citizens by engaging in all sorts of positive behaviors. This study is therefore poised to assess employees' resilience, hope and optimism as predictors of workplace civility and organizational citizenship behavior among civil servants in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Investigate if employee's resilience, hope and optimism will individually and jointly predict workplace civility among civil servants in Ekiti State, Nigeria.
2. Examine if employees' resilience, hope and optimism will individually and jointly predict citizenship behavior of civil servants in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

The findings from this research may help organizations to understand their role in personnel selection and placement processes to influence outcomes of the organization.

METHODS

Research Design: This study is a survey research incorporating, independent groups and correlational designs. Thus, it was possible to know the individual and interaction influences of the identified independent variables on the dependent variables.

Participants for the Study: A total number of 262 participants were used for this study. They comprised of 108 males and 154 female participants who were randomly selected from among the civil servants in Ekiti State. The participants' selection cut across various ministries among the civil servants in Ado Ekiti metropolis (e.g. ministry of health, ministry of finance, ministry of education, ministry of local government and chieftaincy affairs, ministry of works and ministry of youth and sport). The participants' age ranges between 18 and 64 with a mean age of 36 years.

Measures: A questionnaire comprising of six sections was used for this study. The first

section consisted of questions designed by the researcher to collect demographic data of the participants such as sex, age, marital status and religion. Section B consisted of some questions designed to measure resilience. The Brief Resilience Scale (BRS) developed by Smith et al. (2008) was used for the purpose. The BRS consists of six items; three negative items and three positive items. According to Smith et al., items 1, 3 and 5 are positively worded and items 2, 4, and 6 are negatively worded. Respondents were asked to answer each question by indicating their agreement with each statement by using the following scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree. Smith, et al. (2008) reported the reliability and validity of the instrument. The BRS demonstrated good internal consistency with the value of Cronbach alpha ranging from .80 to .91. Convergent validity and discriminant predictive validity were also reported by Smith et al. (2008) as part of the validation analysis. A cronbach alpha reliability co-efficient of .45 was recorded for the scale in this study.

Beck hopelessness scale was in section C of the questionnaire. Beck hopelessness scale is a 20 items scale measuring negative attitudes about the future. This scale was developed by Beck in 1974. Reliability coefficient ranging between .82 to .93 was recorded for this scale. If an individual is low on hopelessness scale, it means the individual is hopeful, but an individual that is high on hopelessness is hopeless. A Cronbach alpha reliability co-efficient of .73 was recorded for the scale in this study.

The Life Orientation Test- Revised (LOT-R) was used in section D of this questionnaire to measure optimism. It's a 10-item scale developed by Scheier & Carver. (1985). It assesses individual differences in generalized optimism versus pessimism. This measure has been used in a good deal of research on the behavioral, affective, and health consequences of this personality variable (as well as its predecessor, the LOT). The LOT was revised because its original items did not all focus as explicitly on expectations for the future as theory dictated. Items 2, 5, 6, and 8 are filters. Responses to "scored" items are to be coded so that high values imply optimism. Item 3, 7, and 9 are to be reversed. The authors reported a coefficient reliability of .80 for this scale. A Cronbach alpha reliability co-efficient of .85 was recorded for the scale in this study.

The dependent variables in this study (i.e., Workplace Civility and OCB) were measured in sections E and F of this questionnaire respectively. Civility levels of the participants was measured in section E of this questionnaire by an 8-item civility scale developed by Meterko, Osatuke, Mohr, Warren, & Dyrenforth (2007). The scale measures aspects of workplace civility through employee ratings of personal interest and respect from coworkers, cooperation or teamwork in the workgroup, fair conflict resolution, and

valuing of individual differences by coworkers and supervisor. Item-to-scale correlations ranged from .67 to .83 for the eight items. A Cronbach alpha reliability co-efficient of .78 was recorded for the scale in this study.

Organizational citizenship behavior scale was in section F of the questionnaire. It is an 18-item scale designed to assess the behavior that can be regarded as citizenship behavior within the organization. The scale was developed by Organ (1990). Organ (1990) provided the psychometric properties for the scale with a coefficient alpha of .77. Each of the 18-items has a score between 1 and 5 with 1 standing for never; 2= seldom; 3= sometimes; 4 = often; 5 = always. The individual score were summed up to know the level of organizational citizenship behavior they display. A Cronbach alpha reliability co-efficient of .85 was recorded for the scale in this study.

Procedure for Data Collection

The researchers personally administered the questionnaires to the participants in their various ministries and personally retrieved the administered questionnaires from the participants. Averagely, a questionnaire takes approximately 25 minutes to be completed by a respondent and the whole process of data collection took about 3 months. This is because the researchers have to always wait until letters to the ministries for permission for the study are treated and permission granted.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected from the field were analyzed using Regression analysis.

RESULTS

The data obtained from the study were subjected to statistical analysis. The result of the analysis of data is presented below.

Table 1: Regression Summary Table Showing Individuals and Joint Prediction of Employees' Resilience, Hope and Optimism on Work place Civility.

Predictor	B	t	p	R	R ²	F	p
Resilience	-.023	-.368	>.05	.179	.170	18.371	< .05
Hope	-.180	-3.140	< .05				
Optimism	.377	6.092	< .05				

Results from table one above revealed that resilience does not predict work place civility [(t = -.368; p > .05]. Results however showed that hopefulness significantly predict work place civility [(t = -3.140; p < .05]. It is also revealed that optimism significantly predict

work place civility [$t = 6.092$; $p < .05$]. Moreover, results from the table showed that employees' resilience, hopefulness and optimism significantly jointly predicted workplace civility [$F(3,255) = 18.371$; $p < .05$].

Table 2: Regression Summary Table Showing Individuals and Joint Prediction of Employees' Resilience, Hope and Optimism on Organizational Citizenship Behavior.

Predictor	B	t	p	R	R ²	F	p
Resilience	.683	3.596	< .05	.243	.234	26.999	< .05
Hope	-1.045	-5.265	< .05				
Optimism	.420	4.057	< .05				

Results from table two above revealed that resilience, hope and optimism both individually and jointly predict organizational citizenship behavior.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The results of hypothesis one revealed that resilience does not predict work place civility [$t = -.368$; $p > .05$]. However, it was shown that hopefulness significantly predict work place civility (depicting that the more hopeful one is, the more civil he/she will behave) [$t = -3.140$; $p < .05$]. It was also revealed that optimism significantly predict work place civility [$t = 6.092$; $p < .05$]. Results also showed a significant joint prediction of workplace civility by employees' resilience, hope and optimism [$F(3,255) = 18.371$; $p < .05$].

The result which revealed that resilience does not predict workplace civility contradicts the position of Bonanno (2004) who posited that resilience is not just a minimal coping or neutralizing agent for difficult times, but rather it is viewed as proactive attribute which may lead employees to engage in civil behavior and invariably bring positive gains. Reivich and Shatte (2002) supported the proactive nature of resilience in describing it as the capacity to overcome, steer through, bounce back, and reach out to pursue new knowledge and experiences, deeper relationships with others, and finding the meaning of life. Ryff and Singer (2003) further assert that resilient people experience enhanced self-reliance, self-efficacy, self-awareness, self-disclosure, relationships, emotional expressiveness, and empathy. This finding also contradicts the position of Larson & Luthans, (2004) who argued that Psychological Capital (i.e., resilience, hope and optimism) are related to organizational commitment, reduced stress and decreased employees' turnover and, in turn, may enhance workplace civility. In a related study, Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter & Taris (2008) in their work; 'towards a

model of work engagement', argued that engagement is related to civility and also fall under positive organizational behavior. According to these scholars, organizations expect their employees to be active, show initiative, develop a sense of responsibility and be committed to the execution of high performance standards. To encourage engagement in organizations, personal resources such as optimism, self-efficacy and resilience could be employed, as it is suggested that these personal resources facilitate work engagement and these resources fall under the heading of employee psychological capital (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Variations in findings here may therefore be attributed to the samples used in terms of their cultural and characteristic differences. For example, Nigeria is a developing nation high in corruption index and at the throes of anarchy owing, perhaps, to the devastating consequences of structural adjustment programme forced on the nation by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. An average Nigerian, according to Ekeh (1975) is characteristically hungry, greedy, corrupt and manipulable. Such character may not be civil therefore but always look for 'available' ways to cut corners to achieve a means of livelihood.

The result of this study also showed a significant predictive value of hope on work place civility. This suggests that the more hopeful one is in the workplace, the more civil he tends to be. This result is consistent with the finding of Snyder (2000) who found out that those high in hope utilize contingency planning as they forecast obstacles to achieving goals or sub-goals and proactively identify multiple pathways to attain the targeted goals. In other words, hope comprises the will to succeed and ability to identify, clarify, and pursue the way to success. Luthans, Van Wyk and Walumbwa (2009) found out that managers who have hope that they will achieve their goals regardless of any problems that they may encounter are more engaged.

Result that showed optimism as a significant predictor of workplace civility has been supported by several researches. Studies have frequently found that job resources lead to work engagement. However, since engaged workers also seem to be engaged outside work life, engagement does not only stem from job resources, but from personal resources as well. Personal resources are state-like, positive self-evaluations that are linked to resiliency and refer to individuals' sense of their ability to control and impact upon their environment successfully. Psychological capital can be viewed as such personal resource that seems to link job resources with engagement (Hobfoll, Johnson, Ennis, & Jackson, 2003). Personal resources have been recognized as the most important determinant of work engagement together with job resources, especially self-efficacy and optimism which are both psychological capital components (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2009).

The findings of this study is also in line with the findings of Sweetman & Luthans, (2010) who are of the opinion that optimistic employees are able to meet their work goals, and are persistent in the face of difficulties. As a result, engagement occurs through the facilitation of goal attainment. Optimistic employees always strive for positive outcomes and are likely to believe in their potentials regardless of previous failures. These qualities keep them energetic, maintain their perseverance in the face of demands, and also enable engagement.

A significant joint prediction of employees' resilience, hope and optimism on workplace civility was also recorded in this study. In a related study, some researchers found out that Psychological capital was significantly better predictor of the workers' satisfaction and commitment than their measured human and social capital (Larson & Luthans, 2004). According to the research conducted by Youssef & Luthans (2007), a significant relationship between Psychological Capital and performance and positive organizational behaviors was recorded. On the other hand, the workers' positive states of hope, optimism, and resiliency, separately and when the three were combined into a core construct of psychological capital, significantly correlated with their performance (Luthans et al., 2005). According to them, these three facets as a composite higher-order factor predicted work performance and satisfaction. All three components of psychological capital are related to job satisfaction. Moreover, Youssef and Luthans (2007) reported that employees' optimism related to their performance evaluations, their job satisfaction, and work happiness.

The results of hypothesis two revealed a significant prediction of OCB by resilience [$t = 3.596$; $p < .05$]. It was found that hope predicts organizational citizenship behavior (suggesting that an employee will take on pro-social behaviors in an organization when he/she is hopeful than otherwise) [$t = -5.265$; $p < .05$]. Results also showed that optimism predicts organizational citizenship behavior [$t = 4.057$; $p < .05$].

Moreover, results showed that resilience, hope and optimism significantly jointly predicts organizational citizenship behavior [$F(3, 255) = 26.999$; $p < .05$].

The possible linkage between resilience and organizational citizenship behavior can be derived from the work of Bakker and Demerouti (2007) in which they have propounded the job demand-resources (JD-R) model. The JD-R model demonstrates that resilience as a personal resource capacity influences organizational outcomes like commitment and citizenship behavior. The research suggested that providing employees with resources resulted in work engagement which, in turn, led to positive outcomes like organizational

citizenship behavior (Hu & Schaufeli, 2011). These resources could be organizational or individual. Individual resources are one's own psychological capacities which provide strength and support to deal with difficult or harsh situations. These resource capacities (such as resilience) help employees remain calm and relaxed even under pressure and consequently generate positive emotions instead of frustration and irrational behaviors.

Finding from this study also revealed a significant influence of optimism on OCB. This finding is consistent with those of Avey, Avolio, Crossley, & Luthans (2007) who found employees' optimism to be related to their performance evaluations, their job satisfaction, and work happiness. According to these researchers, positive organizational behaviors reduced absenteeism, increased performance and organizational citizenship behavior. This study also revealed a significant effect of hopefulness on organizational citizenship behavior. This is in line with the finding of Youssef & Luthans (2007) who found out that employees who exhibited higher levels of hope were found to be more satisfied, perhaps because through their jobs, they were enabled to have both the motivation and a plan to make the best of their situation. Even higher satisfaction may occur when such hope is accompanied by optimism and self-efficacy in performing a task and thus, increase the resilience to respond favorably to any setbacks encountered on the job. To this end, psychological capital should be related to employees' performance and satisfaction above and beyond each individual construct's bivariate relationships with performance and satisfaction.

A significant joint prediction of OCB by employees' resilience, hope and optimism was also recorded in this study. According to the research conducted by Youssef & Luthans (2007) also, a significant relationship between Psychological Capital and performance and positive organizational behaviors was recorded. Van Dyne and Pierce (2004) also found that psychological ownership for the organization was positively related with employees' levels of organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and organization-based self-esteem, as well as work behavior and performance.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be said that employees' resilience does not predict workplace civility among civil servants in Ekiti State, Nigeria, whereas, hope and optimism does. It can also be said that employees' resilience, hope and optimism jointly predict workplace civility among the civil servants. From the study also, it can be concluded that employees' resilience, hope and optimism independently and jointly predict OCB among civil servants in Ekiti State, Nigeria

RECOMMENDATION

1. Since it is believed that overtime, the cumulative OCB exhibited by employees influence organizational effectiveness, organizations should therefore constantly seek new ways to enhance employees' organizational citizenship behavior.
2. For organizations to maintain a healthy working environment and encourage citizenship behavior among workers, it is important to develop genuine connections with the employees in order for them to trust the organization so that they, in turn, would always strive to be civil in their behaviors within the organization.

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