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Original Research Article

## **Organisational Family Culture Relationships to Organisational Citizenship Behaviour: Implications to Business Managers**

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**Abstract:** This paper discusses how organisational family culture is connected with organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) with particular implications for business managers. The paper uses social exchange theory, person-organisation fit theory and relational psychological contract theory to explain how family-like cultural values characterised by cohesion, trust, mutual support, long-term orientation, and egalitarian norms influence the development of discretionary, non-mandatory employee behaviours that are not limited by the formal role requirements. Through a thorough analysis of both empirical and theoretical sources, it is evident that organisations that have developed a family culture have much higher rates of OCB in its five dimensions: altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy and civic virtue. The moderating variables, such as perceived organisational support, quality of leader-member exchange and job satisfaction, are critically discussed. The paper also outlines the implications of the study to business managers in practice with references to the design of an inclusive organisational culture, development of transformational leaders, and incorporation of family-oriented HR practices. Difficulties and possible constraints of family culture models are discussed as well. The paper concludes with a call to intensify managerial deliberateness in developing relational workplace climate, which stimulates sustainable OCB results.

**Keywords:** Organisational Family Culture, Organisational Citizenship Behaviour, Social Exchange Theory, Perceived Organisational Support, Leader-Member Exchange, Business Management

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## **Introduction**

In contemporary organisational scholarship, the intersection of organisational culture and employee behaviour has emerged as one of the most fertile areas of inquiry. Among the numerous aspects of organisational culture, one of them, family culture, a relational, communal orientation, which is characterised by shared values, mutual care, trust, and long-term commitment, has received an increasing empirical and managerial interest. At the same time, organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB), which was originally theorised by Organ (1988), has been identified as a key factor of organisational effectiveness, innovation and competitive advantage. The intersection of the two constructs is insightful in both theoretical and practical terms, especially to business managers who need to develop high-performing sustainable organisations.

This line of inquiry is significant due to macro-environmental changes in the world of work. The emergence of remote and hybrid working practices, the growing diversity in the workforce, the decline of traditional employment-related practices, and the growing pressure on organisational agility have all put fresh emphasis on voluntary and discretionary employee behaviour. Organisations that depend solely on contractual compliance increasingly find themselves outcompeted by those that cultivate intrinsic motivation, relational commitment, and prosocial behavioural norms. The family culture, its focus on belonging, reciprocity and a common fate is one of the strong cultural paradigms according to which OCB can be cultivated.

Although the family culture as a driver of OCB is a concept with intuitive appeal, the current literature has a disjointed image. Some of the dimensions of family culture, namely, family culture-trust, cohesion, and egalitarianism, have been studied empirically without incorporating their overall impact on the multidimensional construct of OCB. Furthermore, little has been done to examine the practical implications of these results to business managers. The paper will fill these gaps by synthesising empirical and theoretical evidence that will explain how organisational family culture influences OCB, and translating these implications into actionable managerial implications. The paper has the following structure: first, it defines the two fundamental constructs, then outlines the theoretical framework, and then summarizes the existing empirical evidence, key moderating variables, and finally finishes with a practical implication and limitations recognition.

## **Conceptual Framework**

### **Defining Organisational Family Culture**

Organisational family culture is a cultural orientation that is reflected in an organisation that reflects the relational, affective and communal processes that are typically implied by family structures (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). The clan or family culture type in the Competing Values Framework (CVF) of Cameron and Quinn (2011) is identified as internal focus and integration, which focuses on flexibility, cohesion, and human development. Strong family cultures in organisations are characterised as organisations that

seem to be like extended families, where leaders act as mentors or parental figures, loyalty and tradition are valued and long-term relationship development of employees take precedence over short-term performance indicators.

The major characteristics of family culture are high interpersonal trust, psychological safety, mutual care between the organisation and members, egalitarian norms deemphasizing hierarchical distance, and long-term orientation to the welfare of the employees (Schein, 2010). All these dimensions produce an organisational environment where employees feel that they are a part and parcel of a community, and not replaceable economic units. Such a feeling of belonging and relational identity is hypothesised as a strong antecedent to discretionary prosocial behaviour.

Organisational family culture should be differentiated with familism as a societal value or nepotism as a dysfunctional cultural consequence. The latter is the positive relational orientation based on the real care and reciprocity, and the latter can also be the exclusionary or prejudice-motivated practices that degrade the organisational justice. The present paper concentrates solely on positive aspects of family culture as hypothesised in the management literature (Hofstede et al., 2010).

### **Organisational Citizenship Behaviour definition**

Organisational citizenship behaviour is discretionary and voluntary behaviour among employees that extend beyond the job descriptions and is not directly compensated by the organisations formal reward system, but instead, results in organisational effectiveness over time (Organ, 1988; Organ et al., 2006). The term indicates the notion that organisations cannot operate on a contractual compliance basis only; they need workers who can put in extra-role effort, support co-workers, defend the organisation, and participate positively in organisational processes.

The classic taxonomy of OCB by Organ (1988) has five dimensions of OCB: altruism (voluntarily helping colleagues with work-related problems), conscientiousness (doing work with diligence beyond minimum requirement), sportsmanship (putting up with workplace inconveniences without complaint), courtesy (consultation with others before making consequential decisions) and civic virtue (participation in organisational governance). Later theorists, such as Podsakoff et al. (2000), further expanded this taxonomy, however the five factor model by Organ has been frequently referred to in the literature.

Williams and Anderson (1991) also made a distinction between OCB towards individuals (OCB-I) and towards the organisation (OCB-O), a distinction which has since been helpful in analysing the way in which cultural antecedents selectively predict particular dimensions of OCB. The difference applies to the present analysis since family culture is theorised to follow unique routes towards the interpersonal and organisational types of citizenship behaviour.

## **Theoretical Underpinnings**

### **Social Exchange Theory**

The culture-OCB relationship has been most commonly explained by social exchange theory (SET), which was discussed by Blau (1964) and subsequently by Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005). According to SET, social actors are involved in exchange relationships, in which norms of reciprocity are applicable: as one party offers a resource, support, or other desirable outcomes to another, the other party will be motivated to reciprocate. Relationally, developmentally and in the family type of organisational culture, where organisations invest in their employees, organisational employees are likely to reciprocate by putting in more effort, loyalty and discretionary prosocial behaviours.

Importantly, SET makes a distinction between economic and social exchanges, with the former being characterised by detailed, contractual obligations, and the latter being unspecified, diffuse obligations, which rely on trust and goodwill. It is prototypically the case that family culture, with its focus on relational relationships and long-term mutual investment, is connected with social exchange dynamics. Workers who are part of family cultures feel that their association with the organisation is more of a social than an economic transaction that in theory, inclines them to participate in OCB as a way of reciprocal contribution (Organ et al., 2006).

### **Person-Organisation Fit Theory**

Advanced by Chatman (1989) and O'Reilly et al. (1991), person-organisation (P-O) fit theory argues that when people believe that there is congruence between their personal values and those of an organisation, they feel more committed, satisfied, and motivated to perform behaviours that will support the organisational objectives. When the family culture of an organisation resonates with the natural values of community, care and mutual support of employees-which are especially high among those with collectivist cultural backgrounds-the ensuing value congruence is a potent force behind OCB.

The empirical evidence will always support the fact that P-O fit moderates the relationship between organisational culture and OCB. High P-O fit employees have increased chances of internalising organisational values, building stronger affective commitment and practicing citizenship behaviours, which indicate true identification with organisational relational norms (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Family culture will enable P-O fit by building an organisational identity that is built on relational values that appeal to a broad group of employees.

### **Relational Psychological Contract Theory**

The psychological contract theory, firstly advanced by Rousseau (1989) focuses on the distinction between transactional contracts, which are determined by particular, short-term and economic exchanges, and relational contracts, which are determined by the open ended and long-term socio-emotional commitments. Family culture is also linked to the establishment of relational psychological contracts where employees view their work relationship to include commitments of loyalty, care and development.

When relational psychological contracts are made-i.e., when the organisation has shown care, support and investment in the welfare of the staff in a way which is consistent with the cultural expectations in the family-employees are more likely to respond with an increased OCB as a way of fulfilling the contract (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). On the other hand, when psychological contract breach occurs in family-culture settings, it is especially harmful because it contravenes highly cherished expectations in relationships, which can result in drastic drops in OCB. This theoretical understanding highlights the need of stability and genuineness in the implementation of family culture.

### **Organisational Family Culture and OCB: Review of Evidence**

Empirical studies of the relationship between organisational family culture and OCB have expanded significantly in the last twenty years and across different national and sectoral contexts. One of the similarities between studies is that the type of the clan or family culture measured by the Organisational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI), which was based on the CVF, has a positive and significant relationship with several dimensions of OCB (Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Yildiz, 2014). Nonetheless, the processes and conditions of such a relationship are worth a closer look.

#### **Trust, Cohesion and Altruistic OCB.**

The strongest established antecedents of altruistic OCB include interpersonal trust, and family culture is one of the major cultural substances of trust. In their meta-analytic review, Dirks and Ferrin (2002) established a significant role of trust in leadership and colleagues in predicting OCB and especially helping behaviours towards peers. Trust is developed within family-culture organisations by adhering to regular patterns of behaviour-transparent communication, fair treatment, and expressed interest in the welfare of the employees-that lead to less social uncertainty and motivates employees to invest in the success of their colleagues.

Another major aspect of family culture, group cohesion, also supports altruistic OCB by enhancing interpersonal relationships and a sense of group identity. Employees who have a strong sense of belonging to their work group and identify as part of an integrated group will tend to become involved in helping behaviours, knowledge sharing and mentoring (Podsakoff et al., 2000). Family culture promotes unity through the focus on common values, communal feasts and the institutionalization of practices that strengthen the feeling of belonging.

#### **Long-Term Orientation and Civic Virtue**

The conditions of civic virtue OCB are produced by family culture in terms of long-term orientation its focus on long-term commitment to the development of employees and long-term organisational relationships. When employees have a feeling that their employment relationship is long term and they have a mutual interest, they tend to participate more in the governance of the organisation, decision making processes and also represent the interests of the organisation (Organ, 1988). This type of OCB is an expression

of a psychological ownership orientation, as workers feel that the organisation is a part of themselves and their interests.

In Asian and Middle Eastern cultures, where family-oriented values are also deemed as the cultural norms, empirical research studies have found especially strong linking between long-term employment orientation with civic virtue OCB (Farh et al., 2004; Yen & Niehoff, 2004). But similar trends are also being witnessed in the West with organisations strategically developing family cultures being used to overcome employee disengagement and turnover. This cross-cultural convergence implies that the family culture-civic virtue OCB relationship is not only a result of social values but is actively created through organisational practices.

### **Egalitarian Norms and Conscientiousness.**

Higher levels of conscientious OCB are linked with egalitarian norms in family cultures-where there is less hierarchical distance, open communication and fair treatment. When subordinates feel that the working environment is just and they are being appreciated irrespective of their ranks in the hierarchy, then they will strive to apply discretionary efforts beyond those required by the contract (Moorman, 1991). A construct close to egalitarian norms, perceived organisational justice has been demonstrated to fully or partially mediate the link between family culture and OCB, indicating that perceptions of fairness are an important psychological process (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001).

### **Moderating Variables**

Although the family culture creates a favorable environment to promote OCB, the strength and nature of such a relationship is mediated by various individual and contextual variables. These moderators are crucial to understanding the OCB-eliciting potential of family culture by business managers who want to maximise it.

### **Perceived Organisational Support**

Perceived organisational support (POS) is the perceived beliefs of employees worldwide on the scale to which the organisation appreciates their input and considers their welfare (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Theoretically and empirically POS is placed in the center of mediating the relationship between family culture and OCB: family culture establishes the relational context that produces high POS, which subsequently drives OCB due to the reciprocity processes in accordance with SET. The meta-analysis results of a meta-analysis conducted by Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) involving more than 70 studies showed that POS strongly predicted OCB in heterogeneous organisational contexts.

To business managers, what this understanding means is that family culture programs should be converted into perceivable and real support as opposed to mere symbolic acts. The workers should have tangible signs of organisational investment-in the shape of developmental possibilities, fair salaries, work-life provision, and receptive management-to family culture so as to create high POS and, by implication, high OCB. In situations where family culture is still just an aspirational rhetoric with no behavioural content, its ability to produce OCB is grossly mitigated (Wayne et al., 1997).

### **Leader-Member Exchange**

The theory of Leader-member exchange (LMX) was formulated by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) who assume that leaders form differentiated, dyadic relationships with their subordinates that may be characterised by low-quality transactional, or high-quality partnership with their subordinates that is based on trust, respect, and mutual obligation. The quality of LMX is a strong moderator of the relationship between family culture and OCB: the relationships between LMX of high quality enhance the prosocial behavioural predisposition produced by family culture, whereas the relationships of low quality may destroy it in allegedly family-oriented organisations.

It was shown that LMX quality moderated the relationship between perceived organisational climate and OCB with the culture-OCB relationship being much stronger in the context of high-LMX (Ilies et al., 2007). This observation has direct managerial implications: business managers are the key brokers of family culture to their subordinates. The behaviours such as whether they show authentic care/individualised consideration and mutual trust translate the overall cultural values of the organisation into the high quality exchange relationship that drives OCB.

### **Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction, which is basically described as a good mood following an evaluation of job experiences (Locke, 1976), has been a long held theorisation on the role of a factor in between organisational culture and OCB. In line with the Organ (1988) satisfaction-OCB thesis, family culture facilitates job satisfaction by satisfying the needs of the employees to achieve their affiliation, recognition and meaningful social relationship at work, which consequently leads to OCB. Extensive meta-analyses have established positive and significant correlations between job satisfaction and OCB with respect to its various dimensions (LePine et al., 2002).

Notably, satisfaction and OCB relationship is not simply affective, but is mediated by the perception of employees towards fairness and moral obligation. Satisfied employees who work in the family-culture organisations in terms of their relational experiences have a real feeling of gratitude and moral responsibility in contributing to the common good beyond the hedonic driving forces relating to satisfaction (Organ et al., 2006). Business managers are thus advised to not only focus on extrinsic sources of satisfaction but also on the relational and moral facets of employee experience in the family cultures.

### **Implications for Business Managers**

The theoretical and empirical research examined by this paper has far-reaching implications on the business managers who may want to utilise the organisational culture as a lever to OCB, and consequently to the overall organisational performance. There are three wide areas of managerial implication addressed: cultural design, leadership development and human resource management (HRM) practices.

### **Developing a Family-Oriented Culture.**

Business managers have the major role to play in determining the cultural nature of their organisations. To establish a truly family-oriented culture, it is not enough to be rhetorically committed to it, but the organisational structures, processes and practices must be aligned with the fundamental values of care, trust and collective responsibility. The articulation and modelling of relational values, physical and virtual working space design that supports informal social interaction and institutionalisation of rituals and ceremonies that reward collective successes and individual efforts can help managers initiate cultural transformation (Schein, 2010).

One of the most crucial strategic drivers is how the organisation has dealt with conflict and failure. In real family cultures, interpersonal conflicts and poor performance are dealt with with empathy and problem-solving orientation instead of blame and punitive reactions. Managers, who react positively to mistakes and to psychological safety, provide an environment in which employees feel safe enough to indulge in citizenship behaviours involving social risk, including speaking out, confronting dysfunctional practices, or taking on high-visibility jobs (Edmondson, 1999). Psychological safety, which is developed by relational leadership and family-culture norms, is thus an important facilitator of proactive OCB.

Also, the business managers should be deliberate in terms of inclusiveness in the framework of family culture. Any of the aforementioned family cultures that implicitly prefer some groups of demographics-either through informal networks, cultural assumptions, or exclusionary social practices-will not produce the universal sense of belonging that motivates OCB. Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programs should thus align with the family culture strategies and the relational norms of the organisation must truly be available to all employees irrespective of their identity, background and working arrangement (Ely & Thomas, 2001).

### **Leadership Development**

Considering the key position of LMX quality and perceived supervisory support in mediating family culture-OCB interaction, the main managerial implication is to invest in leadership development. Transformational leadership development programmes should be emphasised by the business managers to enable the individualised consideration, inspirational motivation and the ability to have high-quality relational exchanges with the subordinates. Transformational leaders, who also pay attention to the developmental needs of followers, express attractive collective visions and provide examples of what care and integrity mean, are especially fit to achieve the OCB-inducing potential of the family cultures (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

This, practically, means that the relational competencies-empathy, active listening, conflict resolution, and mentoring- should be incorporated into the system of leadership selection and development. The performance management systems must evaluate not only the financial and operating performance but also the quality of the relational leadership

behaviour such as the level at which managers have inspired trust, promoted employee growth and demonstrated the values of family culture. The fact that organisations assess and compensate relational leadership speaks volumes of an organisation that believes in the family culture and thus enhances the credibility that is crucial in maintaining high POS and OCB (Wayne et al., 1997).

### **HRM Practices.**

HRM practices are a potent tool that managers can use to institutionalise family culture, and establish the organisational conditions that enable long-term OCB. There are a number of particular HRM practices that are of relevance. Such selective staffing practices which put more emphasis on the P-O fit-assessed candidates which are not only technically competent but also fit the family culture values- will make sure that the new employees are predisposed to relational and citizenship behaviour (Chatman, 1989). The formation of relational identification and OCB motivation can be expedited by comprehensive onboarding programmes that socialise new members of the organisation into the family-oriented values, norms, and rituals of the organisation.

Relationally oriented training and development programmes, such as mentoring, coaching, team-based learning, and cross-functional collaboration initiatives, help to reinforce values of family culture whilst at the same time developing the competencies that facilitate OCB. Pay-based and benefits systems that demonstrate a true concern in regard to employee welfare such as flexible work arrangements, family support benefits, health and wellbeing programmes and recognition systems that recognize the value of contributions to citizenship, physically reflect family culture values and create the high POS that underpins OCB (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). The long-term orientation that is characteristic of family culture and predictive of civic virtue and other types of OCB is retained by strategies of retention that focus on long-term employment relationships-via career development pathways, succession planning, and internal mobility opportunities.

### **Challenges and Limitations**

Although there is a general agreement in the evidence discussed in this paper as to the usefulness of family culture as an OCB-enabling model, business managers should be mindful of various problems and constraints that tarnish blind acceptance of this cultural model. To begin with, family culture has implicit insularity and homogeneity risks. Organisations that develop a high level of in-group relationship can do so unintentionally, pushing out others who fail to follow the prevailing relational patterns either because of their cultural background, character or personal situation. This may generate sidelining forces that deter organisational justice and, ironically, negate OCB among peripheral employees who feel part of the family (Ely & Thomas, 2001).

Second, organisations can use the culture of the family as a weapon to extract undue emotional and discretionary labour out of their employees without any corresponding investment back. When organisations use the family norms to make unreasonable claims on the time, energies, and personal boundaries of the employees under the guise of loyalty or

community responsibility, they subvert the true reciprocity that is the culture-bound norm of the family culture and OCB. Managers should be keen on abusing relational norms and the obligation expressed by the family culture should be directed both ways, with the family culture obligations flowing in both ways between the organisation and the members (Hochschild, 1997).

Third, one should have a closer look at cross-cultural applicability. Although the family culture-OCB relationship has been reported in many countries with different national settings, there is a significant difference in the mechanisms and cultural content of family culture between different societies. Family culture may be practiced in high power distance cultures such as the paternalistic leadership style as opposed to the egalitarian norms and the implications on the dimensions of OCB most strongly predicted may be different (Farh et al., 2004). Managers of business working in a multinational or culturally diverse environment should be aware of such differences and not foist culturally specific models of family cultures on workforces of various cultures.

Fourth, the methodological shortcomings of the existing literature should be mentioned. To a large extent, empirical data on the relationship between family culture and OCB is based on cross-sectional self-reports that is prone to common method errors and cannot be used to infer cause and effect. To provide more rigorous evidence on the directional processes and the dynamics of this relationship over the long term, longitudinal and experimental studies are required. The practical implications of this literature should be applied by business managers with due caution and therefore should be seen as guidelines and not prescriptions.

## **Conclusion**

This paper has looked into the connection between organisational family culture and organisational citizenship behaviour, synthesising theoretical and empirical insights to shed light on the mechanisms, moderators and managerial implications of the organisational family culture-organisational citizenship behaviour connection. The data continually indicate that family culture, characterized by trust, cohesion, egalitarian norms, mutual care, and long-term orientation, offers an effective cultural substrate of OCB on its various dimensions. The social exchange theory, the person-organisation fit theory, and the relational psychological contract theory are the collective reasons as to why employees who are embedded in the culture of family are inspired to perform discretionary prosocial behaviours which go beyond the contractual requirements.

For business managers, the findings of this review carry compelling practical implications. The deliberate nurturing of family culture-leadership modelling, organisational practices inclusive, HRM system relational, and long-term investment in the welfare of the employees, is a strategic focus of organisations that view the full motivational and performance-promoting potential of their human resource. This is to be a real, behavioural adherence to the relational values on which family culture is based, rather than just rhetorical approval. The characteristics of family culture, which maintain high

POS, good LMX relationships, and effective OCB, are authenticity, consistency, and reciprocity.

In the future, the changing nature of work, characterized by technological disruption, fragmentation of the workforce, and increased employee demands for meaningful, relational work experiences, makes the development of family culture more strategically critical than ever. The family culture-OCB nexus provides an integrative approach as organisations grapple with the need to meet efficiency requirements and the human desire to belong and community. Managers in business who make wise investments in this area are uniquely placed not only to attract and retain talent but also to develop organisations that can work in a sustained, discretionary, collective effort to achieve long-term competitive advantage.

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