

Effect of Time Pressure on Organizational Citizenship Behavior: Moderating Role of Agreeableness

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Abstract

The aim of this research was to analyze the time pressure impact on organizational citizenship behavior and also to find the moderating role of Agreeableness between the relationship. Data was collected from service sector of different cities located in Pakistan. The study used time lag research design. For time pressure and Agreeableness were gathered at time 1 (Self-Reported) whereas data for organizational citizenship behavior was gathered at time 2 (Supervisory-Rating Method). Sample size of this study was (n=300) and convenience sampling technique was used. Results of this study revealed that time pressure negatively and significantly associated to OCB, while agreeableness was positively and significantly associated with OCB. Furthermore, it was found time pressure association with organizational citizenship behavior is moderated by agreeableness. This study also contributed in the area of organizational behavior.

Key words: Time Pressure, Conscientiousness and Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Introduction

For a past few decades, the nature of jobs, across the world, has become more complex and demanding (Dunnette, 1998). Today, the technological innovations, increasing competition and pressure to perform better are encouraging the organizations to take essential steps in order to make their employees more productive. The overall work environment is influenced by these changes thereby affecting the human performance in a workplace. At times, organizations themselves create hurdles and obstacles in the way of their employees by exposing them to stressful events (Jamal, 2007; Jex, 1998; LePine et al., 2005; Malik, Nawab, Naeem, & Danish, 2010). Scholars suggest that pressure of the performance triggers stress among the employees which subsequently have undesirable outcomes for both the individuals and the organizations (Hancock, Williams, & Manning, 1995; Robert & Hockey, 1997).

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Previous researches provide inconsistent evidence concerning the relationship of time pressure with various outcomes of the job. For example, time pressure was shown to be positively associated with proactive behavior for different occupations and professions across the organizations (Fay & Sonnentag, 2002; Sonnentag, Binnewies, & Mojza, 2010). Individuals functioning under the pressure targets not only use it for improving the productive capacity at work, but also capitalize it as time management skill (Labianca, Moon, & Watt, 2005). LePine et al. (2005) also indicated constructive consequences of time pressure and stated that employees working under pressure have better chances of achieving other work related outcomes.

In contrast, many studies state that time pressure results in negative consequences at the workplace. For example, it was that found time pressure, dangerous and unfavorable for employee's health and well-being, as well as for the performance (Ohly & Fritz 2010). Time pressure might be detrimental or dangerous when employees find it illicit or illegitimate like working in an unfavorable atmosphere or irrationally high expected environment (Semmer, Jacobshagen, Meier, & Elfering, 2007). Recently, Gilboa et al. (2008) in their meta-analysis recognized time pressure as a stressor. These authors suggested that time pressure might affect job performance both positively and negatively. In another study, the laboratory experiment of Hui, Organ and Crooker, (1994) revealed that time pressure had an adverse effect on OCB. Furthermore, Organ and Hui (1995) using field surveys conducted the same study. Their study revealed that organization citizenship behavior was not hindered by time pressure.

In the meanwhile, another stream of research suggests that the strategies adopted to cope up with stress vary across individuals (Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989; Watson & Hubbard, 1996) thereby suggesting the likelihood of the presence of moderators in the relationship of stressors-outcomes. Studies also suggest that conscientiousness has the capacity to mitigate the effects stressors in a workplace. For instance, a study found that conscientiousness buffers the effect of organizational politics (Hochwarter, Witt, and Kacmar, 2000) which is considered an acute stressor in a workplace. Similarly, Grant and Langan-Fox (2007) revealed that conscientiousness reduces the undesirable effects of occupational stressors on consequences. However, unfortunately the moderating role of agreeableness in the relationship between time pressure and OCB has not been investigated.

According to the meta-analysis stressors like time pressure and workload do not explain a significant variance in performance of the employee (Tubre & Collins, 2000). These authors proposed future research to examine the moderators between stressors and

performance. Similarly, Ohly and Fritz (2010) suggested the exploration of potential moderators in the relationship between time pressure and several occupational outcomes for the future. Since agreeableness is theoretically related to OCB (Chiaburu, Oh, Berry, Li, & Gardner (2011) therefore, we believe that agreeableness may probably buffer against the negative effects of time pressure on OCB.

Moreover, recently researchers raised concerns about the generalizability and marginal conditions of the studies tested in Western settings. Researchers suggest that unless these theories are tested in non-Western settings researchers and practitioners will have little confidence about their generalizability and applicability in the non-Western settings (Tsui, Nifardkar, & Ou, 2007).

Henceforth, the objectives of this study are three folds. Firstly, the study observes the effect of time pressure and agreeableness on OCB. Secondly, the study examines the moderating role of agreeableness in the relationship between time pressure and OCB. Thirdly, the study tests these relationships in a new (an Eastern) context thereby providing proof for external validity of the theories established and tested in Western context.

Theory and Hypotheses

Time Pressure and OCB

The study of Baer and Oldham (2006) shows that “time pressure is degree to which employees’ believe inadequacy of time to perform their job tasks or obligation to perform work earlier than it should be”. Time pressure can be defined in terms of insufficiency of time to perform particular tasks.

In several studies time pressure has been conferred as a type of stress predominantly in decision-making context (MacRae, 2002), auditing (Solomon & Brown 1992), marketing (Heroux, Laroch, & McGown, 1988) and business management (Bronner, 1982). Scholars argue that performing under environment of time pressure, may lead to occurrence of negative consequences on individual functioning and the well-being (Hancock et al., 1995; Hockey, 2011). Past researches found time pressure to have adversely associated with various outcomes work (Solomon & Brown, 1992).

For coping with high time pressure in an organization, individuals should increase their efforts; if they are able to manage the circumstances effectively, they feel a sense of accomplishment and achievement and will receive formal appreciation and acknowledgment (Podsakoff et al., 2007). Different researchers (Kelly & McGrath, 1985; Shergold, 1995; Turnage & Spielberger, 1991) described accomplishing deadlines and other time pressure situations as a common element that lead to creation of stress in organizational environment.

This shows that organization are working to handle pressure of time because of its two-fold effect, on one end, it may encourage individuals but on other, it may cause problems of well-being for the individuals. (Jeanie, 2005). Gilboa et al. (2008) observed time pressure as a workplace stressor, and shown that it can have both adverse and productive effects in relation to job performance.

In a recent research, Ohly and Fritz (2010) found that individual perceive time pressure as challenging factor and challenging appraisal is related to creativeness and proactive behavior among employees. Similarly, LePine et al. (2005) also informed positive effects of time pressure on desirable job outcomes. These scholars suggested employees working under time pressure are more likely to accomplish other organizational work related targets. Some researchers have also found time pressure to be positively associated to preventive behavior of employees working in different occupations (Fay & Sonnentag, 2002; Sonnentag, Binnewies, & Mojza, 2010). Ohly, Sonnentag, and Pluntke (2006) also found positive relationship between time pressure and preemptive behavior. Accordingly studies also suggest that stressors like time pressure usually positively impacts the work or job performance (Freedman & Edwards, 1988).

In contrast, Ohly and Fritz (2010) defined time pressure as hostile for individual's health, and also found time pressure to be negatively correlated with work performance. It has been also suggested that time pressure might be detrimental or dangerous when employees find it illicit or illegitimate like working in an unfavorable atmosphere or irrationally high expected environment (Semmer, Jacobshagen, Meier, & Elfering, 2007). Other researchers considered the relationship of time pressure and performance in decision makers' perspective and found U-shaped relation between the two, which is also assumed as negative relation (Anderson, 1976; Bronner, 1982; Easterbrook, 1959).

Moreover, a laboratory experiment conducted by Hui, Organ, and Crooker, (1994) to investigate the effect of perceived time pressure on OCB and found that negative influence of time pressure on OCB. Later, the same study was replicated by Organ and Hui (1995) using field surveys. They found that organization citizen behaviors were not hindered by time pressure. In the face of these controversial findings regarding the effects of time pressure on various job outcomes, I believe that time pressure may cause individuals to avoid extra role behaviors. Individuals exposed with high time pressure may find no time to demonstrate citizenship behaviors as these individuals themselves are occupied with heavy workload with deadlines.

Transactional theory of stress and coping developed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) suggests individual evaluate the situation according to their own cognition and resources i.e. either the situation is harmful or not, or they have enough resources to tackle the situation. As time pressure is the threat to one's job and ability to perform up to the extent in the limited amount of time individual consider this situation as a threat and restrain their resources to indulge in other sort of activates that is OCB.

Therefore, we propose that time pressure will negatively affect the citizenship behaviors. Consequently, the following hypothesis was developed:

H1: Time pressure is negatively related to OCB.

Agreeableness and OCB

Agreeableness being the personality traits is associated with kindness, sympathy, cooperation, and warmth. Agreeable individuals are empathetic and caring and understand the sentiments of others (Graziano, Habashi, Sheese, & Tobin, 2007), are helpful and sociable (John & Srivastava, 1999), and are able to limit and control the negative emotions (Graziano et al., 2007). Agreeable people are less irritated and aggravated by the wrong doing and misconduct of others as compared to less agreeable individuals (Meier, Robinson, & Wilkowski, 2006) and have less hostility and resentment (Meier et al. 2006). These individuals are more capable maintain good and healthy relationships with other colleagues at the workplace (Jensen-Campbell & Graziano, 2001). Agreeableness is important for better job performance (Hancock et al., 1995; Moberg, 1999). Tett et al. (1991) found a positive and strong association between agreeableness and job performance. Chiaburu, Oh, Berry, Li, and Gardner (2011) in their meta-analysis found that agreeableness had stronger relationship with OCB.

Past research suggests that agreeable individuals are more likely to engage in citizenship behaviors at the workplace. Individuals who are high on agreeableness perform better (Hurtz & Donovan, 2000). Highly agreeable individuals are more intended to help their co-workers than those low on agreeableness (Organ & Ryan, 1995). A significant relationship between agreeableness and OCB was found by Ashton et al. (2004). Furthermore, a positive association between agreeableness and OCB was also reported by Berry, Ones, and Sackett, (2007) and Ones and Viswesvaran, (2001).

Therefore, we also anticipate that individuals with high agreeableness exhibit high levels of citizenship behaviors in the workplace. Corresponding to Lazarus and Folkman (1984) Transactional theory of stress and coping, appraisal of situation largely depends on the cognitive cognition of the employee. And individual on the higher end of agreeableness are

able to develop better and healthy relations with their peers in the workplace (Jensen-Campbell & Graziano, 2001). As Hurtz and Donovan (2000) state that individuals who are high on agreeableness perform better. As they appraise the situation less stressful due to their personality trait. So in the light of transactional theory of stress and coping it can be said the personality trait agreeableness is more likely to show helping behavior and indulge in OCB. Consequently, the following hypothesis was developed:

H2: Agreeableness is positively related to OCB.

Moderating role of Agreeableness

Past studies suggest that personality characteristics may help to explain whether an individual perceives work deadlines as either positive or negative. The current study proposes that agreeableness may moderate the relationship between time pressure and OCB.

Agreeable individuals are concerned and understand the sentiments of others and are compassionate (Graziano, Habashi, Sheese, & Tobin, 2007), cooperative and sociable (John & Srivastava, 1999) and are able to limit and control negative emotions (Graziano et al., 2007). Individuals high on agreeableness get less frustrated and less aggravated on the wrong doing and misconducts of others (Meier, Robinson, & Wilkowski, 2006) and are aggressive and antagonistic (Meier et al., 2006).

We believe that agreeableness will buffer the negative effects of time pressure on OCB. Individuals who are exposed with time pressure may exhibit low levels of OCBs. However, those who are highly agreeable may prevent against the negative consequences of time pressure organization citizenship behaviors. Particularly, individuals with agreeableness may show high levels of OCB, even under higher time pressure. Since agreeable individuals are empathetic and caring and understand others' emotions, are cooperative and friendly and are able to limit and control their negative emotions, we expect that these individuals may easily handle time pressure and demonstrate citizenship behaviors under situations where time pressure and work load is high.

As agreeable individuals are caring, empathetic and sympathetic (Graziano, Habashi, Sheese, & Tobin, 2007), cooperative and sociable (John & Srivastava, 1999), they are able to limit their undesirable emotions (Graziano et al., 2007). Furthermore, their social support seeking ability is high, and their ability to seek positivity in every situation helps them reevaluate the situation according to their personality trait. As Park and Folkman (1997) state that personality trait also plays an imperative role in assessment of situation as individual who have faith in their ability and of generous nature, has the ability to avoid negativity will

be more prospective to see the stressful situation as challenge rather than hindrance or stress. Consequently, the following hypothesis was developed:

H3: Agreeableness moderates the relationship between time pressure and OCB such that the negative effects of time pressure on OCB will be weaker for individuals high on agreeableness.

Methodology

Sample and Data Collection Procedures

We collected data from employees working full time, in public and private sector organizations from four different cities in Pakistan. Unfortunately, majority of previous studies in the domains of stress have used cross sectional design to test theoretically causal models, thereby reducing efficacy in their findings. Recently, scholars suggest that time lagged or longitudinal designs should be used to test theoretically causal models (e.g., Wallace, Edwards, Arnold, Frazier, and Finch (2009). Therefore, we used a time-lagged design to collect the data. For time pressure and Agreeableness data were collected in time 1 through self-reports whereas for OCB data were collected in time 2 (one month later) using supervisory-reports. Data were gathered from white collar workers employed at different levels including training officers, Assistant Managers, Managers and Directors. The questionnaires distributed were in English as it is commonly understood among all white collar workers. Previously, researches conducted in Pakistan have also distributed surveys in English language (e.g., Abbas, Raja, Darr, & Bouckenoghe, 2014; Butt, Choi, & Jaeger, 2005; Khan, Abbas, Gul, & Raja, 2013).

A cover letter was attached that described the purpose of research and the respondents were ensured strictest confidentiality of their responses. We distributed 500 questionnaires among employees working in different private and public sector organizations. These organizations included three telecom companies, seven manufacturing firms, and one banking firm. Of these 500 surveys we received 360 surveys back in time 1. One month later the supervisors of these 360 employees were contacted to provide data on OCBs. Some of the supervisors did not respond to the surveys. Finally 300 subordinate-supervisor paired responses were collected yielding a response rate of 60%.

Measures

Time pressure and agreeableness were assessed using self-reports whereas supervisory-reports were used to measure OCB to avoid self-report bias issues. The responses were assessed on a 5-points likert scale, 1 representing strongly disagree while 5 representing strongly agree.

Time pressure. We used 9-items time pressure scale by Dapkus (1985) to measure time pressure. Example includes, “I feel pressed for time” and “There just does not seem to be enough hours in a day”. The reliability Cronbach’s alpha for the scale was 0.892.

OCB. The scale developed by Williams and Anderson (1991) was used to evaluate Organizational citizenship behavior which consisted of 14-items . Example includes, “helps others who have been absent”. “This scale had good internal reliability with a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.85”

Agreeableness. Agreeableness was measured using the IPIP scale by Goldberg (1981) with 10 items. Example includes, “I sympathize with others' feelings”. The scale was found to be highly reliability with Cronbach’s alpha 0.82

The demographic section of questionnaire consisted of the information regarding particulars of the respondents where each respondent provided information regarding his/her gender, age, education background, position in the organization, job tenure, and nature of employment.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics such as Means and Standard Deviations, and correlations are reported in Table 1.

About 90% of the respondents were male. About 43% of the sampled population was entry level officers, 39 % were Assistant/Deputy managers and remaining respondents were at General Manager/Director level positions. The sample included 54% from manufacturing sector and 46 % from service sector. About 92 % of the respondents were undergraduate, and 8% had graduate degrees.

Table 1

Means, standard deviation, correlation and reliabilities

32	Mean	S.D	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.Age	31.60	8.84	-						
2.Gender	1.10	0.30	-.24**	-					
3.Education	1.06	0.23	-.091	-.08	-				
4.Tenure	4.60	4.79	.62**	-.16*	-.12	-			
5.Time Pressure	0.004	0.58	-.11	-.08	-.01	-.049	(0.68)		
6.OCB	3.56	0.55	.02	.06	-.01	.066	-.130*	(0.74)	

7.Agreeableness	3.87	0.59	-.02	-.064	-.022	-.010	-.032	-.131	(0.68)
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Note. *N* = 230; Cronbach’s alphas presented in parenthesis; For Gender was coded as “1” for male and “2” for female.

* *p* < .05, ** *p* < .01

Regression Analyses

Multiple linear regression analyses was used to test the direct effect hypotheses and moderating effects as proposed by Cohen, Cohen, West, and Aiken (2013). To detect significance of slopes for low and high moderation, simple slope tests were used as suggested by Aiken and West (1991).

Table 2 provides the main effect results that Time Pressure exerts on OCB. Time Pressure had significant negative significant relation with OCB ($\beta = -.21, p < .01$). Individuals experiencing time pressure demonstrated low levels OCBs. The finding is consistent with finding of past studies (e.g., Choo & Firth, 1998; McDaniel, 1990; Solomon & Brown, 1992) revealing that time pressure has negative relationship with desired job outcomes (Choo & Firth, 1998; McDaniel, 1990; Solomon & Brown, 1992). These results render support for hypothesis 1. In addition, the findings also suggested that agreeableness was positively related to OCB ($\beta = .20, p < .05$). In other words, individuals high on agreeableness demonstrated higher levels of OCBs than those low on agreeableness. These finding are consistent with results of some previous studies (Ashton et al., 2004; Graziano et al., 2007; John & Srivastava, 1999). These result support hypothesis 2.

For moderation analyses, we focused on moderating and the independent variables. The scores for Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and tolerance statistics were also computed (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001), which is degree to which collinearity between predictors affects the accuracy and accuracy of a regression model. Scores of VIF less than 5 (Chatterjee & Price, 1991) and scores for tolerance above than .10 (Hair et al., 1998) are normally assumed acceptable. In all analyses he scores of VIF were below 2 and scores of tolerance were greater than .5 which demonstrates there was no multicollinearity.

The results revealed that agreeableness positively and significantly moderates time pressure and OCB ($\beta = 0.10, p < .10; \Delta R^2 = .03, p < .07$). Figure 1 presented that, consistent with hypothesis 3, time pressure had a strong negative relation with OCB for less agreeable individuals. However, time pressure had no effect on OCB for high agreeableness. Simple

slope tests displayed that the negative slope for low levels of agreeableness was significant ($\beta = -.28, p < .01$); however, high levels slope was insignificant ($\beta = -.10, ns$).

Table 2

Regression results for time pressure, agreeableness and OCB

	OCB	
	B	ΔR^2
Step 1:		
Tenure	.11**	.007***
Step 2:		
Time Pressure	-.21	
Agreeableness	.20**	.010***
Step 3:		
Time Pressure x Agreeableness	.10*	.03

Note. N = 230; Standardized Coefficients are reported. Gender was coded as “1” for male and “2” for female.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$

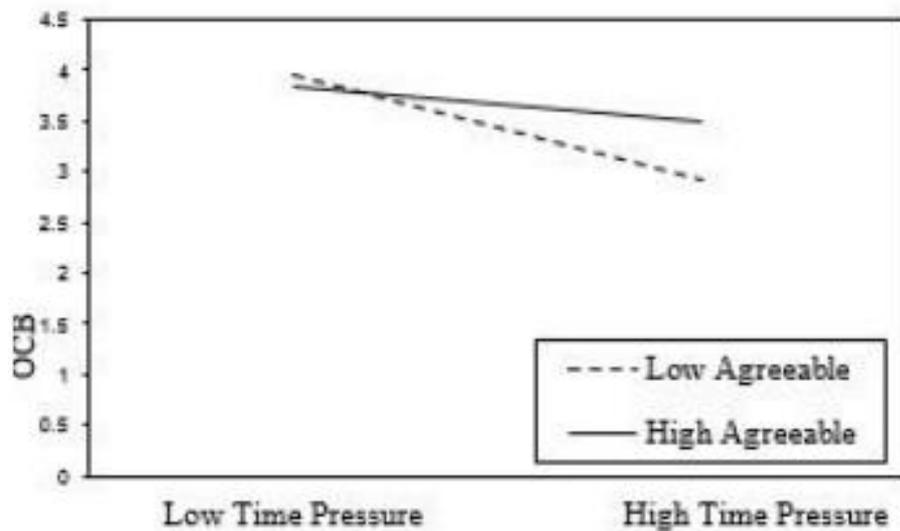


Figure 1: Interactive effects of Time pressure and Agreeableness on OCB

Discussion

According to Hancock, Williams, and Manning, (1995) and Robert and Hockey, (1997) the stress can be triggered in employees as a result of pressure to perform well which subsequently result in negative consequences for both the individuals and the organizations. Generally, the previous literature provides inconsistent results of association between time

pressure and several of job outcomes. Particularly, the influence of time pressure on OCBs has gained some controversy in OB literature. Some scholars suggest that time pressure has a positive effect on OCB whereas other suggest that time pressure is harmful for the demonstration of citizenship behaviors at the workplace.

This study investigated the influence of time pressure and agreeableness on employee citizenship behaviors. This study found good support for the hypotheses developed. Our findings proposed that time pressure had a negative effect on citizenship behaviors. Particularly, employees who were exposed to high time pressure demonstrated low levels of OCBs than those who were exposed to low time pressure. The research finding suggest that in Pakistan's work context the effect of time pressure is adverse and it prohibit employees to demonstrate OCB. This finding aligns with findings of past researches which suggest a negative relationship between time pressure and desirable job outcomes (Choo & Firth, 1998; McDaniel, 1990; Solomon & Brown, 1992).

Similarly, the study found positive effect of agreeableness on OCBs. Specifically, individuals on higher end of agreeableness demonstrated higher levels of OCBs as compared to those low on agreeableness. This finding is also consistent with prior theory that suggests that individuals high on agreeableness keep concerns for others and are trust worthy. Such individuals are more likely to exhibit citizenship behaviors in the workplace.

Moreover, our findings also suggest OCB and time pressure association is moderated by agreeableness. Consistent with the hypothesis, time pressure had a negative impact on OCB for low agreeableness than for high agreeableness. In other words, when exposed to time pressure, low agreeable individuals demonstrated low OCB as compared to high agreeable individuals. It appears that high agreeable individuals keep on exhibiting citizenship behaviors even when they are exposed with high time pressure at their jobs.

Future Directions

For future research, the current study offers suggestions on several avenues. As the current study mainly concentrated on the effects of time pressure, future research may assess other stressors in order to understand their harmful effects, if any, on desirable job outcomes. Future research may replicate our findings in other work settings to see if cultural differences explain any difference in how individuals perceive work stressors. Future studies may directly examine culture as an explanatory mechanism to explore the harmful and/or constructive effects of various work-related stressors on job attitudes and behaviors.

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