

Commitment as a Mediator between Psychological Climate & Citizenship Behaviour

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The psychological climate of the workplace is viewed as one of the most important environmental factors affecting an individual's workplace attitudes. At the same time, a favourable climate in the absence of commitment can be a source of misuse of workplace freedom by individuals. The present paper attempts to examine the mediating role played by affective commitment between psychological climate and organizational citizenship behaviour. Data for the present study were collected from manufacturing as well as service sector organizations all over India. The results and their theoretical and practical implications are discussed in detail.

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Native Mores & Behavioural Aspects of Business

The increasing global spread of business and the greater participation of multi-national corporations (MNCs) in developing markets call for focusing attention towards management practices in different parts of the world (Budhwar 2003, Napier & Vu 1998). It is necessary to examine the cultural factors that affect the behavioural features of managerial effectiveness in the organizational context (Biswas 2006). This viewpoint is further corroborated by an earlier study by Zucher (1968) wherein it is mentioned that in a cross-cultural context it is necessary to study behavioural constructs especially with the continuous growth of worldwide commercial operations.

With reference to India in particular, it was observed that its national culture has a rich heritage which is helpful in clarifying different human actions. These cultural facets are deeply ingrained in the individual psyche and are relevant in positive cognition and affect of individuals at the workplace (Rao & Abraham 2003). The indigenous culture

of India has been quick to accept alien customs and mores while preserving its distinctive values and rules (Biswas et al. 2006). This has established the Indian social order as a classic example of the oriental world. In terms of socio-cultural ethos therefore, India stands as a leader in establishing the norms and practices that dominate managerial practices in the contemporary borderless business environment (Ralston, Holt, Terpstra & Kai-Cheng 1997). In a cross-cultural framework, the above discussion indicates that the stature of India is quite elevated in the global socio-economic map. Varma, Budhwar, Biswas & Toh (2005) noted that India's traditional cultural systems are acting as fulcrum of the South East Asian business environment.

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England and Lee (1974) noted that during periods of environmental turmoil, societies in emergent economies such as India tend to follow a path that leads to stability. This further implies that in a bid to maintain internal homogeneity and acclimatize to the external changes, society focuses on retaining certain behavioural aspects that are indigenous and at the same time give way to a certain level of novelty. Given that organizations operate within the domain of societal norms and values, it is evident that behavioural aspects of managing organizations call for further study. The present study examines the interrelationship between three behavioural con-

structs namely, psychological climate, affective commitment, and organizational citizenship behaviour. More specifically, the present study investigates the causal impact of psychological climate on organizational citizenship behaviour through affective commitment which acts as the mediator.

Theoretical Background

Before the introduction of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1991, the Indian business environment was discernible through the dominance of firms in the manufacturing sector. These firms, whether public or private, were usually large organizations and were marked by mechanistic processes and rigid practices (Biswas & Varma 2007). In fact, firms belonging to the service sector such as, educational institutions, healthcare organizations, and media and communications were basically owned by the state. This was a direct consequence of Nehruvian welfare philosophy that emphasized pluralistic utilitarianism. The fall out of such a socio-political arrangement was the lack of emphasis on individual behavioural aspirations (Varma et al 2005). Thus, till the privatization of the Indian economy in the early 1990s, Indian organizations were extremely bureaucratic and were characterized by one-way flow of decision making from the top to the bottom. Indeed, Hofstede (2001) observed that such managerial philosophies and practices are not uncommon in social cultures that are dominated by collectivism and high power distance norms. With liberalization of the Indian business

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environment, managerial practices especially those related to cognitive and affective facets of individual employees at the workplace underwent major alterations. Human resource (HR) practices in Indian firms have experienced a sea change, as contemporary HR policies and practices are designed in a manner that promotes individual involvement on-the-job and encourages extra-role behaviour in addition to the in-role behaviour of employees (Biswas 2006, Budhwar & Khatri 2001, Pattnaik & Biswas 2005). As Biswas and Varma (2007: 666) observed: "HR practices in India are increasingly geared towards improving the way individual employees perceive their day-to-day working environment, or the way they perceive the *psychological climate* [italics added] in the workplace".

Thus, to understand the group of actions in relation to the administration of members of an organization, the appropriate literature recommends an investigation of those variables that are related to an individual's acuity a propos their immediate workplace atmosphere based on their everyday experiences (Schneider 1975, Strutton, Pelton, & Lumpkin 1993). It is worth noting here that the relevant literature recommend the examination of psychological cli-

mate as a primary antecedent of a variety of individual-level outcomes such as affective commitment, job involvement, and organizational citizenship behaviour (James, James, & Ashe 1990, Parker, Baltes, Young, Huff, Altmann, Lacost & Roberts 2003, Woodard, Cassill, & Herr 1994). This paper seeks to empirically inspect these theoretical suggestions in the context of the commitment of a person at the work place, revealed in a variety of behaviour such as obligation to his/her organization, his/her immediate workgroup, or to another individual at office (Meyer & Allen 1997). The current study conceptualizes affective commitment as an attitude borne out of an individual's awareness about his/her daily work settings and the extent to which he/she is devoted to his/her employing organization (Blau & Boal, 1987, Porter, Steers, Mowday & Boulian 1974). In fact, affective commitment is one of the three factors along with normative and continuance commitment that makes up the higher-order construct of organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen 1997).

Affective commitment has been stated in literature to be linked with the variables that pertain to individual character of employees such as attachment to job and other role-related issues like job characteristics, professional behaviour, and work experiences (Hrebiank & Alutto 1972, Koch & Steers 1978, Morris & Koch 1979, Steers 1977, Welsh & Le Van 1981). Of all the frequent consequences of affective commitment, job involvement and organizational citizenship behaviour have received extensive consideration in

the relevant literature (Hom, Katerberg, & Hulin 1979, Ibrahim & Rue 1994, Mathieu & Zajac 1990, Meyer & Allen 1986, O'Reilly & Chatman 1986, Smith, Organ, & Near 1983, Tett & Meyer 1993, Williams & Anderson 1991).

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The literature reviewed for the present study suggested that apart from extrinsic returns, intrinsic rewards induce employees to improve their performance to a great extent (Deckop, Mangel & Cirka 1999). However, when organizations target enhancement of effectiveness as well as efficiency, they call for their affiliates to bear certain extra-role responsibilities over and above their in-role actions (Smith et al. 1983). These extra-role responsibilities are considered as those which are not stated overtly in their job descriptions. At the same time, the accomplishment of these tasks does not result in any individual gratuity.

Studies indicate that such extra-role behaviour displayed by individuals contribute favourably towards overall business efficacy (Deckop et al. 1999, Smith et al. 1983). Conceptually, citizenship behaviour displayed by organizational members reflects these extra-role activities, that is, responsibility undertaken by individuals beyond what is officially selected for them (Netemeyer, Boles, McKee & McMurrian 1997).

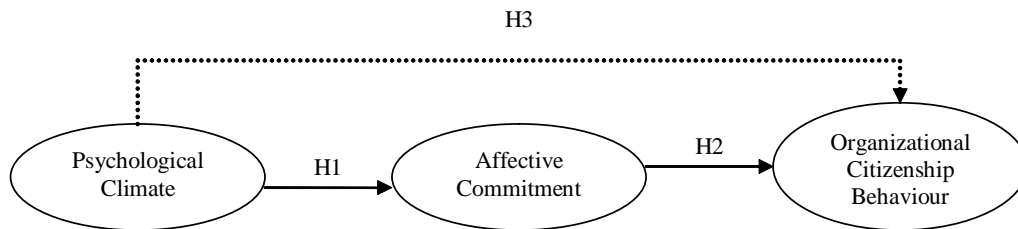
On the basis of the above discussion, the following hypotheses were tested (Figure 1 presents the conjectured model):

H1: An individual's perception of the PC will have a significant and positive influence on his/her affective commitment towards his/her employing organization.

H2: The level of an individual's affective commitment will have a significant positive impact on his/her OCB.

H3: Affective commitment will significantly mediate the relationship between PC and OCB.

Fig. 1: The Conceptual Model



Data Collection

The respondents involved in the study were executives/managerial cadre employees from different organizations. Data were collected from a total of 357 participants through a survey questionnaire. A covering letter describing the reasons of the study was attached with each questionnaire. This letter gave details about the voluntary and anonymous nature of the study. Participants were assured that the responses would be used only for research purpose. The questionnaires, when completed, were returned to the researcher via mail.

Sample

Of the 357 participants, 180 (50.42 per cent) belonged to the manufacturing sector while 177 (49.58 per cent) belonged to service sector. While 83.9 per cent of the survey participants were males, 16.1 per cent were females. The average age of participants was 36.9 years. The average weekly hour spent by the participants at work was 52.4, and their average years of work experience was 10.7. Finally, 7.3 per cent of those surveyed belonged to senior management, 35.6 per cent were from middle management, and 57.1 per cent reported working at junior management levels.

Measures

Psychological climate was calculated using the Psychological Climate Measure (Brown & Leigh 1996) comprising six factors namely, supportive management, role clarity, contribution,

recognition, self-expression, and challenge and included 21 items. The reliability measure of this scale was found to be .90.

Affective commitment was measured using the eight items (Meyer & Allen 1997). The reliability coefficient of this scale was .82.

OCB was measured using 16 items (Moorman 1993) out of which four measured conscientiousness, another four courtesy, three altruism, and five civic virtue. The Cronbach's alpha of this scale was .81.

Data Analysis Technique

The Statistical Package for Social Science version 10.0 (SPSS 10.0) and the Analysis of Moments Structure (AMOS 4.0) were used to analyze the data. The statistical analyses that were conducted included a measurement and a structural equation model (SEM). The path model based on the hypotheses emerging out of the review of literature was subjected to structural equation analysis and fit tests. Apart from the regression analysis, a variety of statistics including the normed Chi-square ($\chi^2/d.f.$), goodness-of-fit, centrality parameters, and normed-fit-indices as provided by AMOS 4.0 (Arbuckle & Wothke 1999) were utilized to achieve the results.

Results

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, correlations, and reliability

indices for the key variables of the study. The key variables were significantly correlated; psychological climate and affective commitment ($r = .38, p = .01$); and affective commitment and organizational citizenship behaviour ($r = .33, p = .01$).

Table 1: Descriptive statistics and Correlation Matrix (N=357)

	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3
1. Psychological climate	3.65	.53	(.90)		
2. Affective commitment	3.52	.64	.38*	(.82)	
3 Organizational citizenship behaviour	3.45	.49	.44*	.33*	(.81)

* $p < .01$

Values in parentheses are reliability indices (Cronbach's alpha)

In order to examine the causal linkages, multiple regression analyses were conducted on the variables. Table 2 shows the standardized regression estimates between the key constructs. Affective commitment was significantly influenced by psychological climate (standardized $\beta = .64, p \leq .01$). Affective commitment significantly and positively influenced organizational citizen-

ship behaviour (standardized $\beta = .54, p \leq .01$).

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Table 2: Regression Estimates

	Standardized β	C.R.	Remarks
Psychological climate \diamond affective commitment	.64*	7.90	H1 accepted
Affective commitment \rightarrow organizational citizenship behaviour	.54*	7.22	H2 accepted

* $P \leq .01$

In order to calculate the fit indices that explained the relationship between the hypothesized paths among the latent constructs, AMOS 4.0 SEM procedures (Arbuckle & Wothke 1999) was used. The present study used the maximum likelihood estimation (MLE) algorithm to determine the fit indices. The Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) and the Root

Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) were reported as the absolute fit measures. According to Byrne (2001) absolute fit measures should be used for comparison of the hypothesized model in the absence of any other model. The other measures which were also reported were the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) and the Comparative Fit Index

(CFI). These indices indicated a comparison between the hypothesized model and the model with maximum constraints. Finally, the normed chi-square value was also used as an acceptable measure of fit.

Table 3 shows the fit measures of the proposed model. For the model as de-

picted in Figure 1, the normed χ^2 value is 2.59. The GFI is .87. The TLI is equal to .86, the NFI value is .82, and the CFI value is .88. With the threshold value of RMSEA being 0.07, the value of RMSEA for the proposed model is 0.07. Finally, the AGFI and the PGFI values are equal to .83 and .69 respectively, thus confirming a good fit of the model.

Table 3: Fit Indices

	Normed χ^2	GFI	TLI	NFI	CFI	AGFI	PGFI	RMSEA
Proposed Model	2.59	.87	.86	.82	.88	.83	.69	.07
Independent Model	12.67	.37	.00	.00	.00	.31	.34	.18

Mediator Analysis

The history of mediator analysis is quite long and significant in the area of social science research (Alwin & Hauser 1975, West & Wicklund 1980). In this article, mediator analysis followed the guidelines proposed by Baron & Kenny (1986) and MacKinnon, Warsi & Dwyer (1995). With the aim of placing affective commitment as the mediator variable, the following two conditions were taken into account:

(i) whether the direct path from the antecedent to the consequents were

greater than the paths under the condition of mediation; and,

(ii) whether the direct path from the predictors to the criteria under the mediated condition was significant.

Since condition (i) was negative and condition (ii) was positive, the results showed that affective commitment is a full mediator between the predictor, i.e. psychological climate and the criterion variable, i.e. organizational citizenship behaviour. These results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Analysis of Affective Commitment as a Mediator

	Whether (direct path) > (direct path under mediated condition)?	Whether (direct path under mediated condition) is significant?	Results of the mediator analysis
Psychological climate → affective commitment → organizational citizenship behaviour	NO	YES	Affective commitment is a full mediator

Discussion & Conclusion

The results established the relationships between psychological climate as the antecedent of organizational citizenship behaviour mediated by affective commitment. This implies that positive perception by an individual of his/her day-to-day work environment leads to a greater attachment with his/her organization. Given that affective commitment is an affect related component of an individual's attitude, acceptance of the second hypothesis serve as an empirical support for the premises which argue that contemporary HR managers must give due weightage to the emotional fall-

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outs of HR policies and practices as this can have important bearing on employee performance which in turn will reflect upon increased organizational efficacy. Moreover, as an individual's work lies within the broader framework of organizational activities, the acceptance of the second hypothesis further corroborates the theoretical presumption that an individual's attachment to his/her workplace as reflected by his/her level of affective commitment will complementarily influence the degree to which he/she is involved in his/her job. The results of the study proved that affective commitment is a positive antecedent of organizational citizenship behaviour. This again is a testimony to the earlier theo-

retical statement that emotional connection to one's organization charges up an individual to carry out activities that are not formally required of him/her.

Finally, analysis of affective commitment as a mediator variable and the results obtained thereof (Table 4) has its own theoretical reinforcements. It shows that mere provision of an encouraging day-to-day work environment may or may not translate into higher levels of job involvement or display of affirmative citizenship behaviour by an individual employee. It is only when individual employees perceive that the psychological climate is sympathetic enough for him/her to be committed to his/her organization that such favourable individual-level outcomes can be expected.

The results of this study are not without implications for the practicing managers especially those who are concerned with the human resource functions in an organization. Firstly, managers should note that they should provide such a daily working environment to their employees that the latter does not feel cognitively or affectively cramped in discharging his/her duties. This can be done by providing ample scope for individuals to express themselves at their workplace. Secondly, managers should also observe whether the provision of an encouraging psychological climate is contributing to an individual's affective commitment. In the absence of a transformation of a positive psychological climate into a greater affective commitment, there exists a possibility of mis-

use of workplace freedom by the employees. Finally, managers should understand that for an employee who is committed to his/her organization, it is important that his/her immediate work settings are valuable to him/her to the extent that it reduces his/her cognitive and affective dissonance. Reduction of cognitive dissonance will lead to higher levels of job involvement, whereas lesser the level of emotional dissonance, higher will an individual exhibit his/her citizenship behaviour.

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Implications for HR Management

Management in India is currently in a dynamic state (Agarwala 2003). This study has some pointers for human resource management in India *vis-à-vis* the indigenous culture of the country. Firstly, the study underlines the fact that managers should endeavour to maintain the worker's self respect and dignity and not merely allocate work to him/her. This is in keeping with the normative ethics propounded by Indian philosophy. Secondly, the Indian sense of spirituality which highlights *shraddha* (faith), *santosha* (contentment), *kshama* (control of mind), and *dama* (control of senses) are essential for the development of managerial ethos and the basis for pragmatic human resource practices (Mathur

2001). By establishing an interrelationship between the key variables, this study underlines the need for considering these basic *sanskara* (cultural mores) to achieve *samadhanamental* (equilibrium).

Thirdly, the nebulosity of the contemporary business environment in India requires that managers look for employee motivation in tools that are social, interpersonal, or even spiritual (Sparrow & Budhwar 1997). This study offers a starting point for Indian HR practitioners in the sense that it emphasizes some affective constructs which they need to develop and practice for enhanced performance of their subordinates.

Finally, the Indian workplace is an extension of the social and filial network for an average Indian employee where significant decisions are influenced more by interpersonal affinities than by task requirements (Sinha & Sinha 1990, Kanungo & Mendonca 1994, Sharma 1984). In the light of this characterization of the Indian workplace scenario this study has offered the basic indicators for effective HR intervention for the Indian practitioner.

It is worth noting that the perceptual change of managerial viewpoint as discussed above was derived not only from the turbulence of the business environment caused by global competitors entering the Indian market, but also due to the changing profile of the average Indian employee. These shifting paradigms of HR management practices in India have necessitated that managers start

anticipating human resource requirements and plans keeping in mind not only the present expectations of a potential applicant, but also his/her possible future aspirations *vis-à-vis* the organization's capability to fulfil them. These are issues that have made talent management, employer branding, and employee engagement matters of significant topical interest in the Indian management scenario.

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When on the one hand, requirements of high-skilled, highly committed, and highly motivated workers are ever increasing, Indian employers are also keen on recruiting effective managers who provide valuable strategic leadership to steer the organization through the tumultuous business environment which has more or less become the order of the day with regards to the global economy. Increasingly, Indian managers are questioning the traditional assumptions of business. There is a definite focus on multi-disciplinary and cross-functional views of doing business. This is being supplemented by a change from traditional centralized management to developing flexible organizational structures and innovative methods of doing work. All in all, there appears to be an exemplary conversion in the shared values, beliefs, and assumptions of the Indian employee and

his/her management. Indeed, practices such as 'joining bonuses', 'flexitime', and 'work-from-home' which were hitherto in conflict with traditional Indian work ethos are now quite common in the Indian managerial parlance. In fact, Government of India has taken steps for a massive overhaul in the compensation structure of the public sector employees irrespective of their sectoral affiliations through the implementation of the recommendations of the Sixth National Pay Commission. The contention of the present study is that while, such extrinsic actions are necessary for the improvement of employee performance standards, the sufficiency clause shall be achieved when these efforts are complemented by socio-psychological interventions as posited by the conceptual model presented in Figure 1 above.

Future Research Scope

Three areas of future research emerged out of this study. Firstly, one may examine the role of identification as a second-order mediator between psychological climate and citizenship behaviour. Secondly, the current study focused on data related to a single culture, namely that of India. Future research may highlight the cross cultural validity of the study model. Finally, research may also be carried out through longitudinal studies on whether affective commitment continues to act as the mediator variable between psychological climate on the one hand and organizational citizenship behaviour on the other.

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