

Exploring Organizational Citizenship Behavior and its Critical Link to Employee Engagement for Effectual Human Resource Management in Organizations

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Abstract Organizational Citizenship is one of the emerging management concepts that are being emphasized for its unique constitution. Organizations strive to establish organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) among their employees for attaining exceptionally motivated workforce. The purpose of this paper was to explore Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) and its importance in recent times. It elaborates the extent to which five core job characteristics of Job Characteristic Model (JCM) lead to organizational citizenship and its impact of employee engagement and commitment on OCB. Qualitative research design has been adopted where extensive literature resources have been elaborated in order to understand the relationship. Researchers have presented a detailed model explaining Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) and its critical link with JCM and with employee commitment and job engagement. Findings reveal that four dimensions (task variety, task identity, task significance and task autonomy) Job Characteristic Model (JCM), and employee engagement produces positive impact on OCB. However, the impact of employee commitment on OCB is not yet obvious.

Keywords: Human Resources, Organizational Citizenship, Employee Engagement

1. Introduction

Today professional world is moving towards high performance, effective organizations and the management that could provide high degree of job satisfaction to employees. Organizational Citizenship can play an

important role in achieving these goals. As Bateman & Organ (1983) states, OCB as an effectual role behavior which is not part of an employee's routine job description, which cannot be measured through organizational evaluation system and presence of such behaviors cannot be enforced (Organ, 1988). OCB includes extra role behaviors such as co-operation with workers, coming at workplace earlier and leaving late, helping others, using organizational resources with care, spreading positivity in organization (Turnispeed & Rassuli, 2005).

According to (Nemeth and Staw, 1989), organizational citizenship can help organizations to improve performance and gain competitive edge as it motivates employees to perform beyond the formal job requirement. To be successful in today's competitive environment organizational citizenship behavior helps organizations to accelerate towards innovation and productive approaches. As Organ (1988) emphasized, organizational citizenship leads towards effective organizations and bring new resources for them.

Hackman & Oldham (1975), proposed job characteristic model (JCM) describing five core job characteristics (Task variety, task identity, task significance, task autonomy and task feedback). The premise behind introducing this model was that motivation level of employee is directly linked with the task assigned to the employee. According to them motivational feelings can never be linked with a monotonous task. Only a well defined and challenging task can arouse such feelings among employees. According to Hackman & Oldham (1975), five core job characteristic of JCM put their impact on three psychological states of an employee that are: meaningfulness of the task, accountability of an outcome and actual knowledge of an outcome. Literature suggests that JCM'S core job characteristic leads to organizational citizenship and produces positive impact on employee motivation.

This study aims to explore Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (OCB) particularly its five most discussed categories (altruism, courtesy, conscientiousness, sportsmanship and civic virtue) and how it can be related to Job Characteristic Model (JCM) and its five dimensions (task variety, task identity, task significance, task autonomy and task feedback). Also, the model entails the crucial link of Organizational Citizenship behavior with employee engagement which is physical and emotional attachment of employee towards his work and his commitment with his personal goals and that of organization.

2. Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)

Competitive advantage cannot be achieved by organizations just by offering products or delivering services but human resource undoubtedly plays a vital role. That is the reason today many organizations are paying great attention on employee engagement by motivating them to achieve organizational goals effectively.

In recent time immense attention is being given to extra-role behavior that is OCB for the fact that it leads to better organizational performance and employee retention (Werner, 1994; Podasakoff, & Mackenzie, 1994; Podasakoff, Ahearne & Mackenzie, 1997; Walz & Niehoff, 2000). Another reason behind OCB's popularity is that organizations have realized the importance of extra-role behavior and the fact that those organizations which totally rely on written roles and behaviors are actually weak and cannot survive in today's dynamic time where innovation and being spontaneous is hour's need (Wyss, 2006).

Employee behavior can be broadly classified into two categories; in-role behavior and extra-role behavior. In-role behavior of employee is task dependent behavior which has to be performed in all circumstances as they are part of employee job description where as an extra-role behavior is beyond normal standards which are not prescribed in written rules of organization. These are such behaviors for which one cannot be penalized or held accountable if not performed (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986).

The concept of Organizational Citizenship behavior was initially introduced by Denis Organ in mid 1980's which focuses on extra-role behavior. According to Organ (1988), "Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) is individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and in aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization". In simple context Organizational Citizenship (OCB) can be defined as providing voluntary help to fellow workers and going for

extra-mile for the organizational development without requesting for reward or pay. If Organizational citizenship is seen in global context, it is all kind of positive organizational behaviors whether they are part of prescribed (written) role or not and they must be exhibited by every employee at workplace (Graham, 1991; Van Dyne *et al*, 1994).

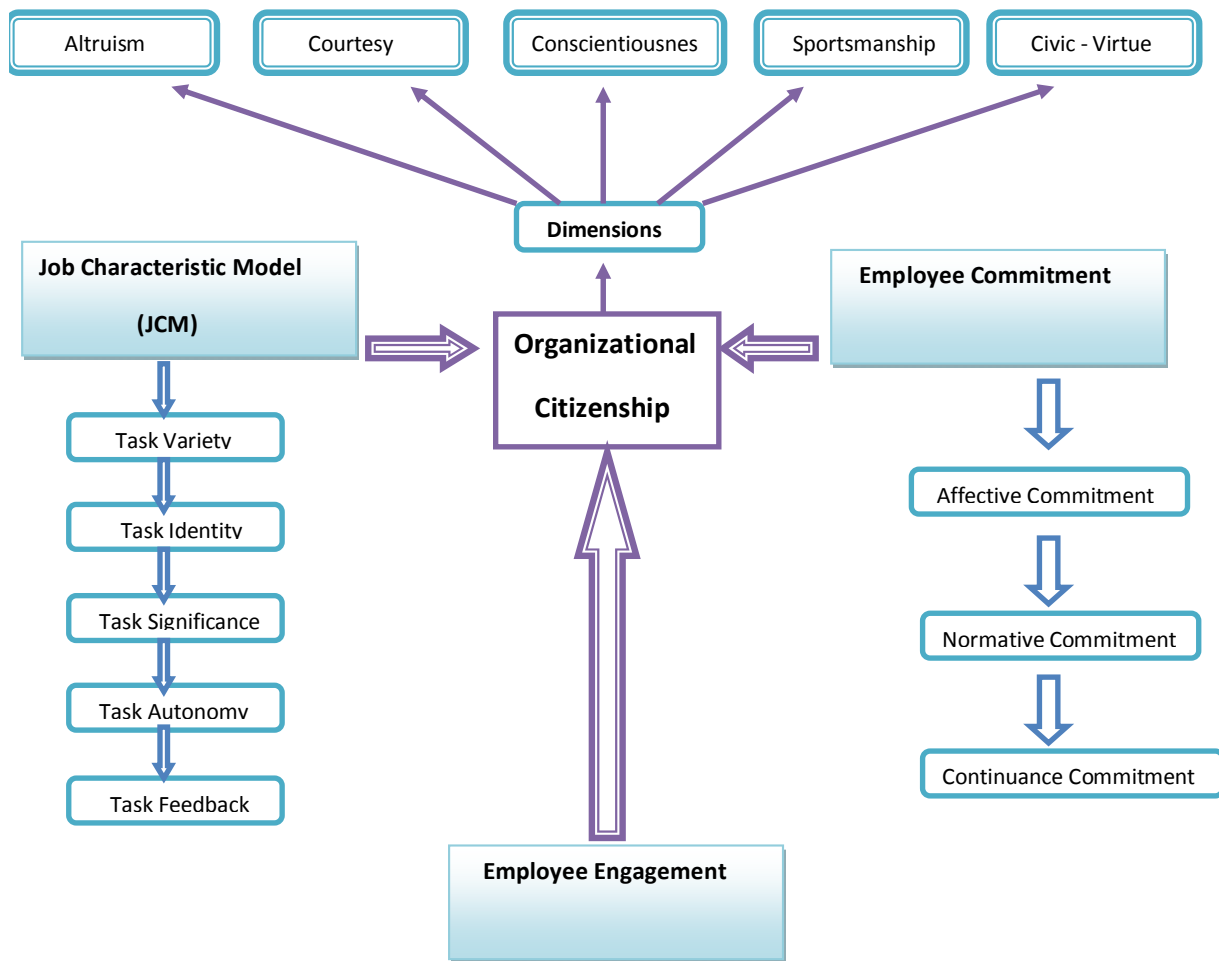
Ethical behaviors like helping a new comer to understand the internal structure of the organization, helping fellows in completing their assigned task and doing such things which are not part of their job description but contributing in organization's performance are few things which can be linked to Organizational Citizenship Behavior OCB (Schnake, 1991).

An immense amount of scholarly work has been conducted to identify behaviors that can be associated with Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (OCB). Five dimensions or categories of OCB have been identified that are: Altruism, Civic virtue, Conscientiousness, Courtesy and Sportsmanship (Organ, 1988; Moorman, 1993) which explain the concept purposefully. Firstly, Altruism: Helping the fellow worker on assigned task or problem (Organ, 1988; Werner, 2007). This help can be provided in terms of providing relevant information, assisting fellow employees in solving problems or helping in use of new machinery or equipment. Secondly, Civic Virtue: Participating in organizations events, decision making or in other words contributing in organizational governance (Organ, 1988). When organizational members attend as well as participate in organizational events that reflect a unity and bonding between members and create a good will and positive image in front of public this is referred as civic virtue (Allison *et al*, 2001). Thirdly, Conscientiousness: When employees start performing their duties and job above the minimum level of requirement (Organ, 1988). Behaviors such as arriving early and leaving the work place late, not wasting time in chit chat, gossips or breaks and giving sincere suggestions whenever needed by someone (Tayyab, 2005). Fourthly, Courtesy: Informing or alerting others from threat which might affect them or their work (Organ, 1988). It is a thoughtful behavior that can prevent or at least alert others from some kind of harm that might affect them (Werner, 2007). For instance, notifying an employee who reports late to work before taking any disciplinary action. Fifthly Sportsmanship: Abstain to complain about minor issues faced at workplace (Organ, 1988). Tolerating unpleasant situations or inconveniences at workplace without complaining (Allison & Dryer, 2001). These unpleasant situations can be completing a project with old equipment or sudden changes in the date of deadline.

According to Graham (1991), OCB can be categorized in three subdivisions: Organizational obedience, organizational loyalty and organizational participation. *Organizational obedience* is accepting rules and regulations, structure, as well as policies developed by the board of governance. *Organizational loyalty* can be described as giving priority to organizational interest over individual interest and identifying with organizational leaders. *Organizational Participation* is involvement of individuals in different organizational task.

Podsakoff, Mackenzie & Bachrach (2000) studied more than 200 published studies in between 1983 and 1999 and came up with antecedents and consequences of Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB). The focus of their research was on four antecedents of OCB: Individual characteristic, task characteristic, organizational characteristic and leadership characteristic. Literature also gives brief knowledge about consequences of OCB. OCB has positive impact on employees as well as organization (Podsakoff *et al*, 2000). OCB dimensions such as civic virtue and sportsmanship seems to produce positive impacts but negative results had been associated with altruism (Podsakoff & Mackenzie, 1994).

Fig. 1 Organizational Citizenship Model



3. Relation between Job Characteristic Model (JCM) and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB):

Since last twenty years Job Characteristic Model has been in massive discussion in order to develop in depth insights about employee behavior. Literature depict a positive association between job characteristic and employee behaviors (Farh, Podsakoff, & Organ, 1990; Packer & Walt, 1988; Samuel & Aubrey, 2006) but the relation between job characteristic and OCB is still unaddressed. Only few studies can be found in this regard (Podsakoff, Niehoff, Mackenzie & William, 1993; Samuel & Aubrey, 2006; Su & Hsiao, 2005) which elaborate the said relationship. To examine relationship between OCB and job characteristic good, work has been done mostly in western countries (Cappelli & Rogovsky, 1998; Drago & Carvey, 1998; Farh et al., 1990; Pearce & Gregersen, 1991; Samuel & Aubrey, 2006) and few studies have been conducted in non western culture (Chnien & Su, 2009; Su & Hsiao, 2005). One of the research objectives of this paper is to examine relation between OCB and JCM.

Hackman & Oldham's (1975, 1980) proposed JCM based on 5 major job characteristic which influence employee work related behavior and its outcome. The five core dimensions are: Task Variety – The ability of an employee to use different skills while performing work related task. Task Identity – The degree to which a task is completed by a single employee or a piece of work to which an employee can identify with. Task significance – The degree to which a performed task makes significant impact on organization as well as on other fellow employees. Task Autonomy – The degree of freedom given to an employee to perform task the

way he wanted to perform. Task Feedback – The degree to which employee get feedback about performance from fellow workers, employer and customers. The predicted outcomes of JCM are employees behaviors which are highly motivated, satisfied and work more effectively by altering core dimensions of JCM that are task variety, task identity, task significance, task autonomy and task feedback in the presence of moderating variables such as knowledge, skills, abilities, need for growth and employee satisfaction (Banks, 2006).

There are two theories in literature which worked on Job characteristic and OCB relationship. One is *Social Exchange Theory* (Konovsky & Pugh, 1994) and the other is *Psychological Control Theory* (Robinson & Morrison, 1995). According to these theories there is a “reciprocity rule” that employees’ reciprocates OCB towards those who are benefited in some manner and employees who reciprocates OCB are the one’s who are satisfied and motivated with their job.

While examining a direct relationship between job characteristic and OCB it was found that task variables directly impact OCB’s two dimensions altruism and compliance (Farh, Posdakoff, & Organ, 1990). When there is intrinsic motivation among employees to perform the job nothing can work better than this in organizational interest. Moreover task characteristic also produces significant impact on OCB’s dimensions: altruism, conscientiousness, courtesy and civic virtue (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Boomer, 1994). Job feedback and tasks which satisfy employees intrinsically are positively related to OCB. Routinization of work has been negatively related with OCB. These results are quite consistent with findings of Podsakoff & Mackenzie (1993) in the survey of organizational citizenship behavior on evaluation of sales person performance.

According to Drago & Garvey (1988), task variety produces positive impact on OCB dimensions of altruism. On the other hand task significance and job identity positively impact three dimensions of OCB that are altruism, conscientiousness and sportsmanship (Samuel & Aubrey, 2006). Su & Hsiao (2005), conducted a study, which was based on 270 Taiwanese employees, proved a positive relationship between task variety, task significance and OCB. According to Namm (2003), there is a significant relation between OCB and job feedback.

Job Autonomy leads to OCB especially its two dimensions altruism and conscientiousness. As autonomy gives freedom to employees, to perform the task in the way they wanted to perform it, which directly creates positive motivation to perform the task and increases employee’s conscientiousness, but the fact cannot be ignored that job autonomy could also result in resource abuse (Jinyue, 2007). A survey of 802 hospital nurse was conducted by Anderson & Williams (1996), according to which job autonomy and job interdependence enhances helping behavior. However, there is reasonable criticism that Job Feedback does not lead to organizational citizenship. According to (Jinyue, 2007) job feedback dimension of JCM could not produce significant impact on job identity, altruism or conscientiousness as human nature does welcome positive and constructive feedback but only to certain extent.

According to Krishnan et al, (2010), three job characteristic (task autonomy, task variety, and task significance) of JCM leads towards OCB. These findings are quite consistent with the findings of Farh et al. (1990), Cappelli & Rogovsky (1998), and Drago & Garvey (1998). However, Krishnan et al.,(2010) research results are inconsistent with Su & Hsiao (2005) who found that, the relationship between job autonomy and OCB was not significant however found significant relationship between task variety, task significance and OCB. Krishnan et al,(2010) emphasized that greater the job autonomy, job variety and its perceived significance in employee’s mind, greater the chances will be for an employee to display OCB.

4. Employee Engagement and Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Kahn (1990), defines employee engagement as physical, emotional and cognitive involvement of employee with his work or in other words employee’s psychologically presence with his extreme zeal and zest in performing organizational roles. Different researchers use different measures of engagement like interest and zeal while performing the work and they also link it with many other variables such as employee turnover

rate, extent of customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and to some extent financial criteria's (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes 2002). Employee engagement is energy, involvement and self efficacy in performing work which is contrary to burnout dimensions that are exhaustion, cynicism and inefficacy (Maslach *et al.*, 2001). Employee engagement serves as direct predictor of organization's financial Performance and success (Bates 2004; Baumruk 2004; Harter *et al.* 2002; Richman 2006). But the harsh reality of today's time is that employee engagement is towards declining trend as organizations and workers both tend to be more materialistic (Bates 2004; Richman 2006). In today's workplace enormous engagement gap can be seen (Bates 2004; Johnson 2004; Kowalski 2003).

A series of studies were conducted by Gallop organization to examine the level of employee engagement in US upon various measuring standards. The results showed that 20% of employees were not engaged in their work at work place, 54% were neutral in their work related task and only 26% were actively engaged (Fleming, Coffman, & Harter, 2005). The most comprehensive study on this issue was done by (Perrin, 2007), and according to him only 14% employees are actively engaged in their work.

Employee engagement leads to organizational citizenship behavior as it focuses on employee involvement and secures their commitment which definitely lies outside the prescribed parameters of any organization. Rukkhum (2010), states a positive relationship between employee engagement and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB). As discussed earlier OCB has several dimensions proposed by different researchers. Narrowing the work of all, seven dimensions are of great importance: altruism (helping others), sportsmanship, loyalty towards organization, compliance, civic virtue, taking initiatives (at individual level) and focus on self development. Altruism is voluntarily helping other or solving problems. Loyalty towards organization refers to be engaged with organization and with its people even in worse situations. All these dimensions of OCB are indeed characteristic of employee's active engagement, but the OCB dimension which most strongly co-relates with employee engagement is "taking initiatives individually" which means going an extra-mile (Dicke, 2010).

However, literature depicts several criticisms on said relationship as well. According to Robinson, Perryman & Hayday (2004), employee engagement exhibit characteristics of both Organization Citizenship Behavior (OCB) and employee commitment but it is not alike with either, as employee engagement has a two way nature. Employees are not actively engaged but also have business awareness and neither employee commitment nor organizational citizenship behavior reflects these qualities Robinson *et al's* (1995) statement of "two way nature" was argued by Williams & Anderson (1991). They contradicted with view of Robinson on Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB). According to them OCB performance is a result of fair treatment with all employees and fairness in organizational policies and practices. According to (Saks, 2006) OCB differs from employee engagement in the sense that OCB involves voluntarily behaviors that are not part of someone's job requirement whereas employee engagement is a formal role an employee performs. It is indeed not an element of an employee's job description going for an extra role behavior, but Saks's view was argued by Dicke (2010). According to him, going an extra-mile is a common description of employee engagement which is indeed a voluntary behavior and challenged Saks's statement that it is "one's formal role performance".

5. Employee Commitment and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)

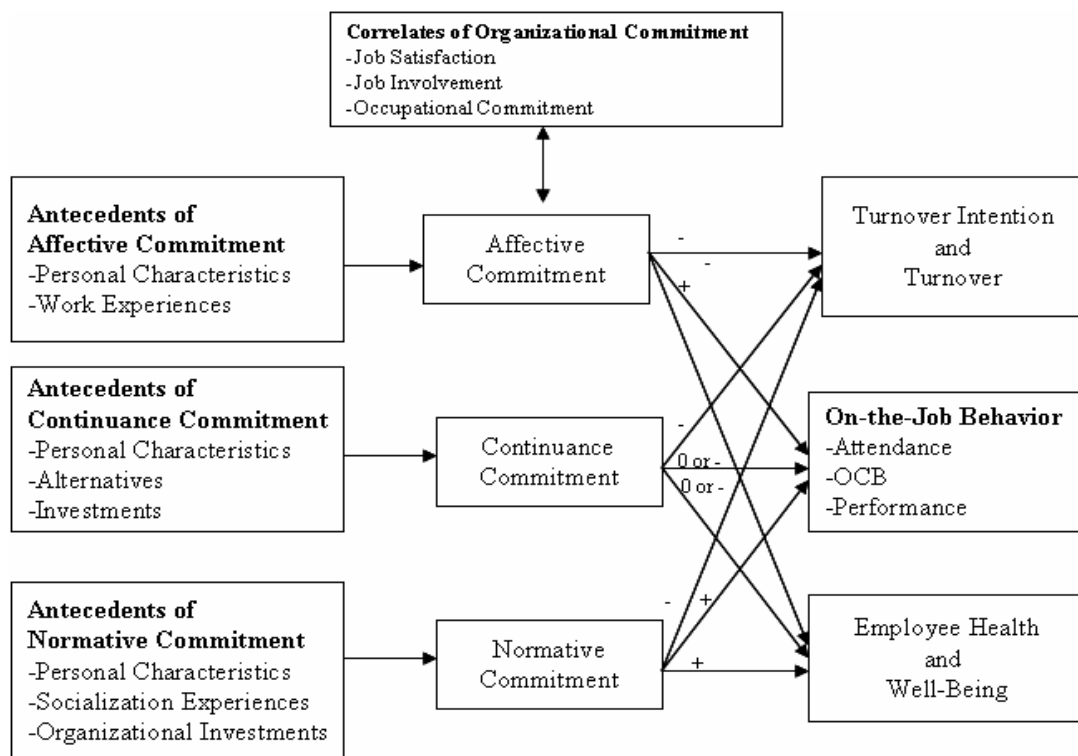
Different scholars gave different views on employee commitment but fail to agree on common ground (Buchanan, 1974; Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1979; Sheldon, 1971). According to Porter *et al.*, (1974), employee commitment is actually an employee attachment, identification and involvement with an organization. According to Buchanan (1974), "employee commitment is partisan affective attachment to its goals and values of organization, to one's role in relation to goals and values and to the organization for its own sake, apart from its purely instrumental worth". Becker's (1960) side-bet theory gained considerable importance in literature towards employee commitment as he highlighted two universal perspectives of

commitment one is calculative approach and other is affective or attitudinal approach.

According to Becker's (1960), when an individual has invested (time, emotions, hard work) in an organization he would not make that investment worthless so to avoid such losses individuals stay with organizations and such commitments are referred as behavioral and calculative commitments. According to Porter, Steers & Modway (1979), behavioral commitment can be defined as "Behaviors that exceed formal or normative expectations to avoid losses". This type of employee commitment is referred as continuance commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991). The second type of employee commitment is attitudinal or effective commitment. In this type of employee commitment individual goals of a person is congruent and aligned with those of organizational goals (Porter, Steers, & Mowday, 1979). Another type of employee commitment is normative commitment. This type of employee commitment occurs when an employee stays with an organization because of some external pressures like organizations give rewards in advance which built moral pressures on employees to stay within (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Meyer et al (2002), introduced three component model of organizational commitment. In this model they explore how different types of employee commitment leads to different organizational on the job behaviors (OCB). According to this model OCB is positively related to affective or normative commitment and on the other hand continuance commitment is either negatively related or unrelated to OCB.

Figure 2.



Source: Adopted From: A Three Component Model of Organizational Commitment (Meyer, Stanelly, Herscovitch & Topolnysky, 2002)

Many researchers state employee commitment as a mediating variable. According to Vandewalle, Dyne, & Kostova (1995), employee commitment act as a mediating variable between psychological ownership and OCB. On the other hand Tompson & Werner (1997) found it as mediating variable between inter- role conflict and OCB. Similarly, according to Allen & Rush (1998), employee commitment acts as mediating variable between judging employee performance and OCB.

According to Organ & Ryan (1995), employee commitment and OCB are highly correlated with each other. According to Meyer & Allen (1991), in their Three-component Conceptualization of Organisational Commitment mentioned that employees who are highly committed towards their organizations are willing to go beyond their prescribed job roles and are more desired by organizations than others and employee commitment and OCB are actually two constructs in which employees go beyond their prescribed job roles. Scholl, (1981) states employee commitment as a predictor of Organizational Citizenship.

Most of the theoretical literature available on employee commitment and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) state a significant relationship between the two constructs. The greater the level of employee commitment, greater is the chances to exhibit organizational citizenship. However, there are also some contradictory views on relationship between employee commitment and organizational citizenship. According to Meyer (1993), employee commitment leads towards OCB but Ang & Dyne, (2003) opposed Meyer's view that there is no relation between the two constructs. Shore & Wayne (1993) states, that employee commitment decreases OCB among employees. According to them it is not employee commitment which leads to OCB but indeed its employee's feelings of obligation towards the organization and other fellow workers which leads to OCB. Literature on employee commitment suggests that relation between employee commitment and OCB largely depends upon the type of commitment being studied. The concept of *identification* (a concept introduced by Freud which is an emotional attachment of a person to something without any prior relation) and *internalization* (accepting rules and regulation and norms of a place established by governing authorities) are quite similar to the concept of affective commitment which leads towards OCB (O' Reilly & Chatman, 1986). Conversely, William & Anderson (1991), finding on relation between employee commitment and OCB were not consistent with that of Reilly and Chatman's finding (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986). According to them there is no significant relation between the two constructs. The reason behind this inconsistency can be because of the difference in subject being observed. O' Reilly and Chatman (1986) focused on self reports to observe the relationship between the two on the other hand William and Anderson (1991) gathered data from managers of different organizations.

Literature on employee commitment suggests a positive relation between employee commitment and OCB but there can be chances of weak as well as strong relation between these two. According to Wiener (1982), affective commitment can lead to organizational citizenship as it is the most ethical way to behave in an organization. Meyer & Allen (1997) suggests, that affective commitment of employees leads to such outcomes which are desired by most of the organizations such as employee retention, organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) self analysis of performance and contribution towards improving the operational cost and sales of the organization.

On the other hand continuance commitment of employee does not lead towards OCB as affective commitment. In this employee have a feeling of being stuck in an organization and definitely such a feeling can never lead to citizenship behavior (Shore & Barksdale, 1991). In literature regarding employee commitment many researchers questioned the issue that whether there is a linkage between continuance employee commitment and OCB or the two construct are totally unrelated. According to Lynn & Sandy (1993), there is a negative relationship between continuance commitment and OCB but they insisted to prove that there is a relation same as in continuance employee commitment where employee exhibit their in-role behavior which is also a part of OCB but leads to a lower level of performance. As a result OCB are not observed thus a relation exists but a negative one.

6. Conclusion

Organizational citizenship has gained considerable importance in recent times because of its significance in organizational well being. The focus of current study was to explore organizational citizenship and to examine its impact on JCM, Employee engagement, Employee commitment. It can be concluded that JCM's four core dimensions task variety, task identity, task significance and task autonomy leads to OCB. However, Jinyue

(2007) highlighted the crucial issue regarding task autonomy that it is positively related to OCB but can sometimes result in resource abuse. As far as last dimension of JCM is concerned that is task feedback, consensus has not been achieved. Namn (2003), claimed that there is a significant relation between the two but Jinyue (2007) study proved that they are unrelated. There is also a significant relation found in literature between organizational citizenship and employee engagement. The more actively an employee is engaged in his work greater are the chances to exhibit citizenship behavior. As far as relation between employee commitment and OCB are concerned contradictory views are given by researchers. Some report a significant relation between two construct (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Modway, 1978) and few report as insignificant (Van Dyne & Ang, 1998). Many reported that employee commitment act as mediating variable (Vandewalle, 1995; Tompson & Werner, 1997; Allen & Rush, 1998). If studying employee commitment on the basis of its type than affective and normative commitment leads to OCB. The more the affective and normative commitment, the greater chances to exhibit organizational citizenship would exist. On the other hand continuance commitment of employee is not positively related to OCB even some claim it to be unrelated.

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