NURTURING ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOURS BY OPTIMISM SUBCULTURE
Empirical Evidence from Pakistan

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Abstract. The main purpose of this study is to assess empirically to what extent sales force perceptions of optimism subculture are related to their Organizational Citizenship Behaviours directed towards organization (OCB-O) in the context of pharmaceutical industry of Pakistan. Survey methodology with descriptive research design is used to test the hypotheses. The results of hierarchical regression analyses of one hundred and ninety seven pharmaceutical sales persons’ responses revealed that optimism subculture had significant positive effect on OCB-O and its dimensions such as civic virtue and conscientiousness, with exception of sportsmanship, controlling the effects of gender, education, age and selling experience of sales force. Practical implications of study findings and future research suggestions are presented, too.

Keywords: Pharmaceutical sales force, Pakistan, Optimism subculture, Civic virtue, Conscientiousness, Sportsmanship, OCB

JEL classification: F00, J12, M10, M14

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I. INTRODUCTION

Organ (1988) defined organizational citizenship behaviour as “individual behaviour that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization. By discretionary, we mean that the behaviour is not an enforceable requirement of the role or the job description, that is, the clearly specifyable terms of the person’s employment contract with the organization; the behaviour is rather a matter of personal choice, such that its omission is not generally understood as punishable.” Despite the growing interest in citizenship-like behaviours, literature review on this topic revealed lack of agreement about the dimensionality of this construct indicating almost 30 potentially different forms of citizenship behaviour (Podsakoff et al., 2000) including Organization Citizenship Behaviours directed towards Organization (OCB-O) and Organization Citizenship Behaviours directed towards Individual (OCB-I). Williams and Anderson (1991) note that citizenship behaviours directed toward organization, inclusive of sportsmanship, civic virtue and conscientiousness dimensions, promotes the welfare of the organization.

Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) is important in promoting organizational effectiveness (Yen and Neihoff, 2004) and producing short and long-term higher outcomes for the organizations (Joireman et al., 2006; Dick et al., 2006). The absence of OCB may generate negative consequences such as lower performance and high turnover (Lamude, 1994; Motowidlo, 2003). However, the organizations whose workers engage in OCB may enjoy improved strategic planning, rising managerial productivity and efficient ‘on-boarding’ of new hires (Podsakoff and MacKenzie, 1997). A recent meta-analysis conducted by Podsakoff et al. (2009) demonstrated evidence for the individual benefits (e.g., “managerial ratings of employee performance”, “reward allocation decisions” and variety of withdrawal-related criteria) and organizational benefits (e.g., productivity, reduced costs, customer satisfaction unit-level turnover) of organization citizenship behaviours. Therefore, the antecedents of OCB captured attention by past OCB researchers. In their literature review Podsakoff et al. (2000) noted four antecedent categories of OCB such as individual characteristics, task characteristics, organizational characteristics and leader behaviours. One important determinant is organizational culture which can also influence OCB (Mustaffa et al., 2007). Organization culture was extensively investigated by researchers in last few decades but optimism subculture, defined as work unit cultural values directed at encouraging innovation, focused on result rather than activities, considering the effect of outcomes on employees and stressing teamwork.
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(Green Jr. et al., 2004), remained ignored regarding its role in nurturing OCB.

Most empirical research on OCB was conducted in the West, using US employee’s samples (Farh et al., 2004). The studies conducted in the non-Western context, particularly in Pakistan, are limited in number. Podsakoff et al. (2000) urged for the need of future research to examine the potential impact of culture on citizenship behaviours (Jena and Goswami, 2014). In addition to it, currently there is a dearth of studies that connects optimism subculture with important organizational construct such as OCB-O and its dimensions. Hence, the need of the hour is to investigate whether or not optimism subculture contributes to fostering OCB-O and its dimensions in the selling context of Pakistan. Therefore the main goal of this research investigation was to extend the research on optimism subculture as antecedent of OCB particularly OCB-O and its three important dimensions from the perspective of pharmaceutical sales persons in Pakistani context.

Social exchange theory was used to provide conceptual logic by which optimism subculture may affect OCB-O. Review of the social exchange literature suggests that employees can have distinct social exchange relationships with their organization as a whole (Wayne et al., 1997; Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). When sales persons perceive positive work environment in terms of team collaboration focus, people orientation, creativity and outcomes emphasis, then they may reciprocate favourably by directing their citizenship behaviours toward the organization (Williams and Anderson, 1991; LePine et al., 2002). Previous research indicated the role of culture and work conditions in OCB (Gautam et al., 2005) and demographic variables might confound the effect of perceived optimism subculture on OCB-O and its dimensions. Therefore, the following research question and related hypotheses were addressed in the present study:

**Research Questions**

To what extent do sales persons’ perceptions of optimistic subculture values relate to OCB-O and its dimensions taking into consideration demographic variables?

Therefore, the following relationships are expected:

**Hypothesis 1**

‘Perceived optimism subculture’ is positively related to OCB-O of pharmaceutical sales persons while controlling for the effect of demographic variables such as gender, education, age and selling experience.
Hypothesis 1a-1c

‘Perceived optimism subculture’ is positively related to OCB-O dimensions: (1a) civic virtue, (1b) sportsmanship, and (1c) conscientiousness of pharmaceutical sales persons while controlling for the effect of demographic variables such as gender, education, age and selling experience.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

Survey methodology and descriptive research design was used to ascertain the degree of association of sales persons’ perceptions of optimism subculture with OCB-O and its three dimensions. Structured questionnaires were successfully administered to one hundred and ninety seven pharmaceutical sales persons by using mixed mode of communication comprising of email, self and personal administration. Seven-item measure of optimism subculture developed by Green Jr. et al. (2004) by using four dimensions, people orientation, outcome orientation, team orientation, creativity and innovation orientation, of organization culture profile (O'Reilly et al., 1991). OCB-O was measured by nine items (MacKenzie et al., 1993) from its three dimensions such as civic virtue (three items), sportsmanship (three items) and conscientiousness (three items). The conceptual definition of sportsmanship (Organ, 1990b) used in this study was “willingness to tolerate the inevitable inconveniences and impositions of work without complaining.” Conscientiousness definition used was pattern of going well beyond minimally required levels of attendance, punctuality, housekeeping, conserving resources, and related matters of internal maintenance (Organ, 1988; 1990a; 1990b). Whereas Organ (1988; 1990a; 1990b) defined civic virtue, as used in this study, as responsible, constructive involvement in the political process of the organization, including not just expressing opinions but reading one’s mail, attending meetings, and keeping abreast of larger issues involving the organization. A 5-point Likert response format having extreme anchors “1” for “strongly disagree” and “5” for “strongly agree” was employed for all the validated scales. Demographic variables of pharmaceutical sales persons such as gender, education, age and selling experience were used as control variables in all study hypotheses. Hierarchical regression procedure was used for data analysis to test expected relationships.

III. RESULTS

Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation of all the study constructs and demographic variables are presented in Table 1.
### TABLE 1

Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Constructs</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Optimism Subculture</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCB-O</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Virtue</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sportsmanship</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selling Experience</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (Years)</td>
<td>27.26</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Hypothesis Testing**

As regards hypothesis 1, perceived optimism subculture was expected to relate positively to OCB-O of pharmaceutical sales persons while controlling their demographic characteristics. The results of hierarchical regression analysis pertaining to the first hypothesis are presented in Table 2. OCB-O was first regressed on demographic variables of pharmaceutical sales persons such as gender, education, age and selling experience. Interestingly, none of demographic variables was found to be significantly related to OCB-O. However, when OCB-O was regressed on optimism subculture along with demographic variables, it contributed about 7 percent unique variance in OCB-O beyond demographic variables. The analysis indicated that optimism subculture had highly significant but weak positive relationship with OCB-O ($\beta = 0.26, t = 3.78, p < 0.001$) which was in line to hypothesis 1.

As regards hypothesis 1a, perceived optimism subculture was expected to relate positively to civic virtue of pharmaceutical sales persons while controlling their demographic characteristics. The results of hierarchical regression analysis pertaining to this hypothesis are presented in Table 3. Civic virtue was first regressed on demographic variables of pharmaceutical sales persons such as gender, education, age and selling experience. Interestingly, none of demographic variables was found to be significantly related to civic virtue. However, when civic virtue was regressed on optimism subculture along with demographic variables, it contributed about 18 percent unique variance in civic virtue beyond demographic variables. The analysis indicated that optimism subculture had highly significant but
weak positive relationship with civic virtue ($\beta = 0.29$, $t = 4.27$, $p < 0.001$) which was concurrent to hypothesis 1a.

**TABLE 2**

**Model Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>$R$</th>
<th>$R$ Square</th>
<th>Adjusted $R$ Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
<th>$R$ Square Change</th>
<th>F Change</th>
<th>Sig. F Change</th>
<th>ANOVA F (sig.)</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$t$ (sig.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.151$^a$</td>
<td>0.023</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.49431</td>
<td>0.023</td>
<td>1.114</td>
<td>0.351</td>
<td>1.11 (0.351)$^a$</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.301$^b$</td>
<td>0.091</td>
<td>0.067</td>
<td>0.47799</td>
<td>0.068</td>
<td>14.329</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>3.82 (0.003)$^b$</td>
<td>OptSCul: 0.26 3.78 (0.000); NS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Selling Experience, Age, Education;
b Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Selling Experience, Age, Education, Optimism Subculture (OptSCul);
c Dependent Variable: OCB-O; NS: All demographic variables were non-significant

**TABLE 3**

**Model Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>$R$</th>
<th>$R$ Square</th>
<th>Adjusted $R$ Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
<th>$R$ Square Change</th>
<th>F Change</th>
<th>Sig. F Change</th>
<th>ANOVA F (sig.)</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$t$ (sig.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.145$^a$</td>
<td>0.021</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.64041</td>
<td>0.021</td>
<td>1.028</td>
<td>0.394</td>
<td>1.03 (0.39)$^a$</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.326$^b$</td>
<td>0.106</td>
<td>0.083</td>
<td>0.61342</td>
<td>0.085</td>
<td>18.265</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>4.55 (0.001)$^b$</td>
<td>OptSCul: 0.29 4.27 (0.000); NS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Selling Experience, Age, Education;
b Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Selling Experience, Age, Education, Optimism Subculture (OptSCul);
c Dependent Variable: Civic Virtue; NS: All demographic variables were non-significant
As regards hypothesis 1b, perceived optimism subculture was expected to relate positively to sportsmanship of pharmaceutical sales persons while controlling their demographic characteristics. The results of hierarchical regression analysis pertaining to this hypothesis are presented in Table 4. Sportsmanship was first regressed on demographic variables of pharmaceutical sales persons such as gender, education, age and selling experience. Interestingly, none of demographic variables was found to be significantly related to sportsmanship. However when sportsmanship was regressed on optimism subculture along with demographic variables, neither demographic variables nor optimism subculture contributed significant variance in sportsmanship which was contrary to hypothesis 1b.

TABLE 4

Model Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>$R$</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>Adjusted $R^2$</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
<th>Change Statistics</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$t$ (sig.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$R^2$ Square Change</td>
<td>F Change</td>
<td>Sig. F Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.189$^a$</td>
<td>0.036</td>
<td>0.016</td>
<td>0.94050</td>
<td>0.036</td>
<td>1.781</td>
<td>0.134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.204$^a$</td>
<td>0.042</td>
<td>0.017</td>
<td>0.94008</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>1.173</td>
<td>0.280</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Selling Experience, Age, Education;
b Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Selling Experience, Age, Education, Optimism Subculture (OptScul);
c Dependent Variable: Sportsmanship; NS: All demographic variables were non-significant

As regards hypothesis 1c, perceived optimism subculture was expected to relate positively to conscientiousness of pharmaceutical sales persons while controlling their demographic characteristics. The results of hierarchical regression analysis pertaining to this hypothesis are presented in Table 5. Conscientiousness was first regressed on demographic variables of pharmaceutical sales persons such as gender, education, age and selling experience. Interestingly, none of demographic variables was found to be significantly related to conscientiousness. However, when conscientiousness
was regressed on optimism subculture along with demographic variables, it contributed about 3 percent unique variance in conscientiousness beyond demographic variables. The analysis indicated that optimism subculture had significant but weak positive relationship with conscientiousness ($\beta = 0.18$, $t = 2.56$, $p < 0.01$) which was concurrent to hypothesis 1c.

### TABLE 5

Model Summary$^c$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>$R$</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>Adjusted $R^2$</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
<th>Change Statistics</th>
<th>$\beta$ $t$ (sig.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.173$^a$</td>
<td>0.030</td>
<td>0.010</td>
<td>0.70748</td>
<td>R Square Change 0.030</td>
<td>F Change 1.486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.250$^b$</td>
<td>0.062</td>
<td>0.038</td>
<td>0.69743</td>
<td>R Square Change 0.032</td>
<td>F Change 6.573</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Selling Experience, Age, Education;
b Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Selling Experience, Age, Education, Optimism Subculture (Optscul);
c Dependent Variable: Conscientiousness ; NS: All demographic variables were non-significant

### IV. DISCUSSION

Given the practical implications of organization directed OCB pertaining to organization effectiveness, performance, productivity and turnover, the present study ascertained to what extent positive organization environment could foster OCB-O of pharmaceutical sales persons in Pakistani context. The results indicated that perceptions of optimism subculture had its positive role in cultivating pharmaceutical sales force organization oriented pro-social behaviours (overall) and its important characteristics such as civic virtue and conscientiousness with the exception of sportsmanship. These results confirmed most of the study hypotheses for positive link between optimism subculture and OCB-O and its dimensions. These findings are consistent to the postulations of social exchange theory that employees may reciprocate favourably to employers by engaging in organizational directed citizenship behaviours such as civic virtue and conscientiousness. Conceptual logic of
organizational informal control such as optimism subculture might explain why it is positively related to OCB-O. The work unit or sales organization cultural values might have expected sales persons to be engaged in favourable organization behaviours such as OCB-O, civic virtue and conscientiousness. Taking into consideration study findings, the sales organization leadership or management should take immediate necessary interventions to develop optimistic cultural values by improving focus on team orientation, people orientation, creativity and risk taking besides outcome orientations. Future researchers should take the longitudinal research, experimental and mixed method designs rather than cross sectional design to assess the robustness of these study findings.
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