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Environmental Leadership And Employees' Organizational Citizenship Behavior Towards The Environment (OCBE): Psychological Distance As A Moderating Variable

Keywords: Environmental Leadership, Organizational Citizenship Behavior towards the Environment, Psychological Distance

INTRODUCTION

Global warming and climate change has become a rigorous worldwide topic that poses many dangers to the environment and human systems (Robertson & Barling, 2013) which eventually affect human health (McMichael, Woodruff & Hales, 2006; Patz et al., 2005). Worse still, it impacts heavily on low-income countries (Haines et al., 2006) and developing countries (Hoegh-Guldberg & Bruno, 2010). Population and urbanization has been identified as the main factors contributing to global warming and climate change. Population on the earth is not likely to stop growing and is expected to increase to 9.6 billion in year 2050 to 10.9 billion in year 2100 (Gerland et al., 2014), and most of the increase in population occur in the continent of Africa and Asia. Without doubt Malaysia too has experienced continues growth in population. According to Malaysia's Statistics Department, the Malaysian population has tripled since 1963 and reached 30 million on February 2014 (The Star, February 26, 2014). The crucial increase of population in Malaysia and rapid process of urbanization places a great challenge to Malaysia's government agencies in terms of service delivery processes (Mutalib, 2013) one of the major service deliveries concerns is environmental waste disposal.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Study in industrial and organizational (I-O) psychology has increasingly focused on the features and reasons of "green" employee behavior (Bissing-Olson et al., 2013) and organizational greening initiatives (Ones & Dilchert, 2012a). In addition, human activity has caused dramatic climatic changes (Robertson & Barling, 2013). Environmental programs should be contingent with employees' behaviors (Daily, Bishop & Govindarajulu, 2009), therefore promoting employees' pro-environmental behavior inside the organization is important (Robertson & Barling, 2013; Ones & Dilchert, 2012a; Paillé & Boiral, 2013), "it is imperative that public agencies should play significant roles in sustainable development."

In this regard, Roberts & Diederichs (2002) suggested that proper leadership is essential. Egri & Herman (2000) and Ramus & Steger (2000) stated that the organization's environmental management success very much depends on the environmental leadership. This study would like to propose that organizational employees' reactions to organizational citizenship behavior towards the environment (OCBE) depends on his or her perception of leadership greening encouragement and support (Blok et al., 2015; Graves, Sarkis & Zhu, 2013; Robertson & Barling, 2013; Ones & Dilchert, 2012b; Egri & Herman, 2000). The study by Blok et al., (2015) showed that environmental leadership has a profound influence on employees' pro-environmental behaviors.

Boiral & Paillé (2012) have developed and validated an instrument named OCBE to capture three dimensions on a 10-item scale i.e., eco-helping, eco-civic engagement and eco-initiatives and lately Paillé and Raineri (2015) used this instrument to measure OCBE eco-initiatives dimensions, while Lamm, Tosti-Kharas & Williams (2013) established a single dimension scale instrument with 12 indicators.

Even though construct of OCBE was advanced based on the idea and constructs of organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) (Boiral & Paillé, 2012), yet, construct of OCBE and OCB seemed related but distinct in nature; OCBE are mainly focused on the wider environment wherein the organization runs and employees behavior related to environmental issues abound (Lamm, Tosti-Kharas & Williams, 2013). Both constructs are categorized as a discretionary behavior and fall under the construct of extra-role behaviors (Lamm, Tosti-Kharas & Williams, 2013) and voluntary in nature (Norton, Zacher & Ashkanasy, 2014) in industrial and organizational psychology literature. Boiral (2009, p. 223) defined OCBE as "individual and discretionary social behaviours that are not explicitly recognized by the formal reward system and that contribute to a more effective environmental management by organizations."

Based on the idea of OCB and organizational performance tie (Smith, Organ & Near, 1983), Daily, Bishop & Govindarajulu (2009) had extended the relationship between OCBE and environmental performance by proposing that OCBE is positively related to environmental performance. Their argument was that employees who exceed their job descriptions to advance an environmental friendly practice and assist workmates in environmental related behaviour would eventually help to boost the organizational environmental effectiveness and efficiencies. The study by Temminck and colleague's also show that employees who engage in voluntary environmental activities can contribute to a decrease of environmental damage by organizations (Temminck, Mearns & Fruhen, 2013). Thus characteristics of OCBE framework are summarized in Figure 1.
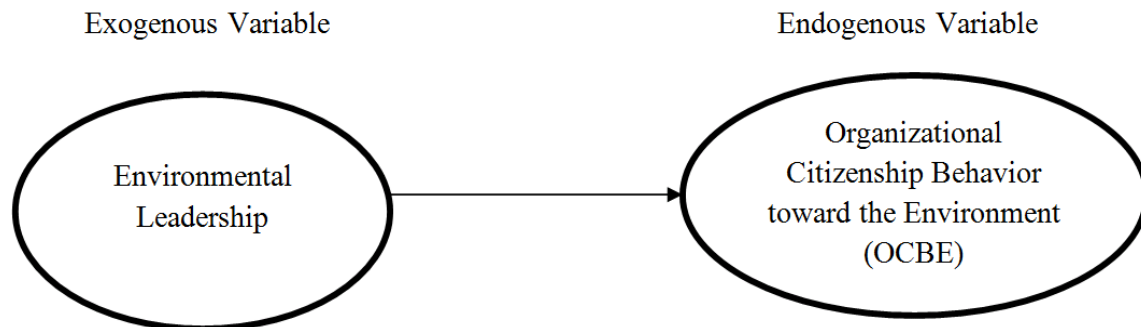

Figure 1: Framework of OCBE

O'Connor, Bord & Fisher (1999) pointed out that the behaviour pertinent to climate change is somewhat complicated. Therefore, an environmental leadership as a variable alone in estimating OCBE is rather simple, so this study proposes an exogenous variable of psychological distance as a moderator to better explain the employees' environmental behaviors (Spence et al., 2011; Spence, Poortinga & Pidgeon, 2012).

Construal level theory (CLT) is a theory of psychological distance (Trope & Liberman, 2003), in which psychological distance effects individuals' thinking and behaviour (Trope, Liberman & Wakslak, 2007). Past studies have shown that psychological distance constructs influence intellectual construal and, consecutively, steer human's prediction, evaluation, and behaviour (Trope, Liberman & Wakslak, 2007). Psychological distance constructs are generally divided into four dimensions i.e., temporal distance, spatial distance, social distance, and hypotheticality, e.g., how certain it is that an event will happen

(Spence, Poortinga & Pidgeon, 2012). Each dimension is related to the person's psychological decision making (Trope, Liberman & Wakslak, 2007).

Trope & Liberman (2003) established that temporal distance may affect a persons' reaction to future events. Spence, Poortinga & Pidgeon (2012) and Spence et al., (2011) study on environmental and promoting sustainable behaviour showed that lower psychological distance was commonly related with higher levels of concern about climate change and greater readiness for environmental friendly behaviours, such as preparedness to reduce energy use. Spence et al., (2011) pointed out that individuals have no initiative to alleviate climate change due to lack of first-hand experience. Their study stated that individuals across the UK showed that flooding experiences had a significant relationship with perceptions relating to climate change, those who had flooding experiences showed significantly higher levels of concern about the effects of climate-change. The available instrument to measure psychological distance of climate change is a 10-item scale (with good reliability i.e., cronbach's $\alpha = 0.76$) based on indicators from the study of Spence et al. (2011) and Spence, Poortinga & Pidgeon (2012).

As far as is reasonably known, until this point of time, there are no methodical studies on various aspects of psychological distance as an exogenous variable interact with environmental leadership on environmental friendly behaviour for instance OCBE. Thus, in order to gain a better understanding of employees' OCBE, this new framework is proposed as shown in Figure 2.
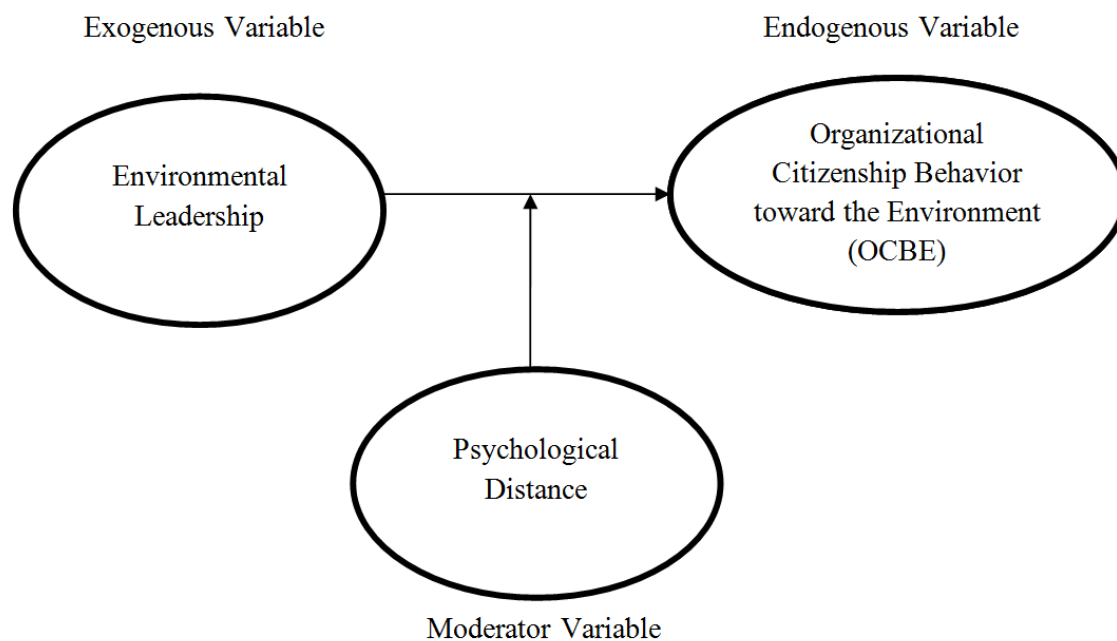

Figure 2: New Framework of OCBE

CONCLUSION

Even though environmental leadership may function as an exogenous variable interact with psychological distance of climate change in predicting person's environmental friendly behaviours. Study also advocate that potential exogenous variable which may function as an exogenous variable in interacting with psychological distance would be environmental attitudes and knowledge (Schlegelmilch, Bohlen & Diamantopoulos, 1996), organizational climate (Norton, Zacher & Ashkanasy, 2014; Norton, Zacher & Ashkanasy, 2012) green co-worker climate (Norton, Zacher & Ashkanasy, 2014), environmental concern

(Kaklamanou et al., 2015; Bamberg, 2003), green identity (Kaklamanou et al., 2015), environmental belief (Chou, 2014), environmental policies (Norton, Zacher & Ashkanasy, 2014; Ramus & Steger, 2000) and personality (Swami et al., 2011).

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