How Proactive Personality Influences Organizational Citizenship Behavior: The Mediating Roles of Organizational Commitment and Leader Member Exchange

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Abstract

While the association between proactive personality and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) has been recognized, the individual level mechanism underlying this relationship and its boundary conditions remained poorly understood. This research has conceptualized the quality of organizational commitment (OC) and Leader–Member Exchange (LMX) at individual level as a mediator to recognize the role of proactive personality and OCB among the employees of the Federal Government of Pakistan. Adopting a purposive sampling technique, data was collected from 292 employees serving in seven public sector institutions to inspect the hypothesized models. Results inferred that proactive personality was positively correlated with OCB, OC and LMX. Furthermore, the mediating role of OC and LMX in the context of proactive personality and OCB was also confirmed.

Keywords: Proactive personality, OC, LMX and OCB.

Introduction

A growing consent about the employees ingenuity and proactivity is crucial for organizational effectiveness and success, particularly when employment practices becomes more flexible than the past (Li, Liang, & Crant, 2010). In this regard, Crant (2000) argued that proactive personality denotes behaviors recognizing opportunities, endorsing changes and controlling the environment to avail opportunities. Proactive personality refers to individuals' behavior to identify opportunities and to manoeuvre the situation to act on such opportunities (Newman *et al.,* 2017). Bateman and Crant (1993) earlier explained it as the personal character of an individual to impact on the situation and has received significant attention in literature.

Fuller Jr and Marler (2009) meta-analytic specified that proactive personality has allied to diverse individual and organizational consequences. As compared to passive individuals, proactive personalities gain opportunities, vigorously pursue new ideas and take initiative to progress the situation (Ng & Feldman, 2013). Proactive workforce are motivated to change the conditions and don't wait for the environment to change for them (Bakker, Tims, & Derks, 2012). Seibert, Kraimer, and Crant (2001) argued that proactive personality demonstrates itself to search new thoughts, improve employment practices,

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skill development and know organizational politics. Research found that proactive personality is autonomous from the 'Big Five' personality traits and are prognostic of supporter behaviors (Bakker *et al*., 2012).

Despite sufficient and growing literature of proactive personality, numerous queries are open for further exploration. Though a wide range criteria has been inspected, some essential organizational conduct has sustained inadequate attention, which includes OCB (Li *et al*., 2010) and OC (Parker, Williams, & Turner, 2006).

Griep and Vantilborgh (2018) argued that OCB denotes discretionary actions of employees which are beyond the formal job requirements and endorse the active functioning of institutions. Suresh and Venkatammal (2010) defined OCB as a set of optional behaviors which expand individual basic job description. OCB research has been widespread since its commencement (Bateman & Organ, 1983). OCBs are categorized as pro-social (toward the organization and individuals; OCB-O and OCB-I) and proactive (change oriented; OCB-CH (Allen & Rush, 2001; Organ, Podsakoff, & MacKenzie, 2005). Proactive personality modifies and improves organizational aspects positively through (change-oriented citizenship; OCB-CH).   In connection with this, Organ (1997) argued citizenship behaviors as "*contributions to the maintenance and enhancement of the social and psychological context that supports task performance*"

Yousef (2017) defined OC as the feelings of obligation to stay in the institution. It is the degree of identification and contribution of employees to their engaging organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). It is a "*morale*" influence, that together with other elements, is an important ancestor of OCB (Organ & Ryan, 1995). Though, a high degree positive emotion does not mean that individual are involved in proactive behavior (Parker *et al.*, 2006). Frese and Fay (2001) conjured it has an undesirable affect, for instance discontentment that arouses proactive behavior. Parker (2000) found that OC is frequently expressed in relation to "*put in extra effort*". There is theoretical dilemma regarding the mediating role of OC and LMX in the connotation of proactive personality and OCB, based on the assumption that proactive people make auspicious situations helpful to organizational commitment, LMX and work performance. As concepts of proactive personality grow, it is imperative to stipulate the mediating relationships, hence, to comprehend the process by which proactive behavior translates into expressive action (Parker *et al*., 2006; Thompson, 2005).

Different mediators' enquiries of proactive literature fail to find interpersonal relationships in the work place and such linkages have inferences for the employees' attitude and behavior (OCBs) (Chen, Boucher, & Tapias, 2006). Some studies found that proactive employees engage in counterproductive behaviors (Campbell, 2000). Few enquiries have found the benefits connected with the employees' proactivity. Studies

have examined the situations that meditate the effects related with proactivity (Fuller, Marler, & Hester, 2006) and Grant and Ashford (2008) recommended more studies in this regard.

To address the gap in literature, this study focuses on the employees of the Federal Government of Pakistan to test a model of mediating relation linking proactive personality with different behaviors at work place. Our choice of meditators was supported by relational philosophies. Optimistic transaction courses build and uphold expectable, reciprocating systems of associations (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Proactive personality infers an inclination to be intricate and yield initiative for contributions (Crant, 2000). Proactive workforce energetically creates exchange relationships in organization and show positive work attitude and behavior.

This research is intended to expand on previous studies in four different ways. Firstly, it explores proactive personality relationship with behavioral dimension (OCB). Secondly, it investigates the relationship of OC and LMX with OCB. Thirdly, proactive personality with LMX and OC and lastly the indirect effect of LMX and OC between proactive personality and OCB.

As two important constructs in the field of management are OC and OCB, which have significant implications for administrative outcomes i.e. switching, performance and absenteeism (Podsakoff, *et al.,* 2009; Staw, Bell & Clausen, 1986), this study is planned to examine the mechanism by including organizational commitment (OC) and (LMX) as mediators to clarify how proactive personality discloses its impact on employees OCB. Indeed, such relational mechanisms have theoretical overlapping with social capital perspective (Thompson, 2005); though OC focuses on the bond between employees and organization and LMX emphasizes on the quality of individual affiliation with the instant supervisor. We considered generality of proactive personality in the federal government of Pakistan, most extant researches have gathered data from western samples and a need was felt in sub-continental perspective.

Literature Review

Proactivity in the Workplace

Wang *et al.* (2017) defined proactive personality as a separate change factor taking the behavioral propensity towards showing proactive behaviors to enact positive situational changes. The concepts of proactive personality have operationalized at individual level (Simard & Marchand, 1995) and at institutional level (Kickul & Gundry, 2002). In this study our concentration is related to proactive work behavior at individual level. Despite diverse labels and hypothetical foundations, notions of proactive behavior emphasize on self-driven and future-oriented deeds to improve and change the condition one's efforts (Crant, 2000). Hence, Crant (2000) denotes proactive behavior as

"taking initiative in improving current circumstances; it involves challenging the status quo rather than passively adapting present conditions" (p. 436).

Wu, Deng, and Li (2018) conjured that proactive personality involved in such behavior lifts their wits of capability over time. Frese *et al.* (1996) earlier argued that proactive personality focuses on self-initiative (to do something without being directed or without job requirement), proactivity (focus on long-term objectives and seeing opportunities) and determination (eliminating barriers to facilitate change). Jiang (2017) found that such personalities are action oriented but emphasize on improving working conditions. Such personalities connect ideas for task modification (Staw & Boettger, 1990), role novelty (Schein, 1971), voice (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998) and supreme behavior (Bateman & Porath, 2003). Frese and Fay (2001) refer to it collectively as "*active performance concepts*". Traditional concepts of performance focus on given tasks while proactive employees go beyond given duties, set goals for themselves and adopt long term perception to avert problems. Proactive behaviors are sometimes confused with contextual performance or with OCB (Speier & Frese, 1997). However, studies have shown disagreement, for instance Crant (2000); Griffin *et al.,* (2001) have suggested that individuals involve themselves in different jobs, including both contextual and task elements, with diverse levels of proactivity. Hence, there is consensus that proactivity is confined to the contextual domain only.

This research expands previous studies in four ways. First, we investigate proactive personality with OCB. Second, both OC and LMX are taken as dependent variables while proactive personality as an independent variable. Third, OC and LMX (mediators) as independent while OCB as dependent and lastly, OC and LMX as mediators between proactive personality and OCB. LMX emphasizes on the complexity and quality of employees' relationship with the immediate supervisor and OC focuses on the loyalty of employees with the organization. In the management literature OC, LMX and OCB have been deeply investigated because of the imperative consequences for institutional results such as switching, absenteeism and performance (Podsakoff, Whiting, Podsakoff, & Blume, 2009).

Proactive Personality and OCB

Proactive personality is a form of emotional stability, disclosed as having meaningful linkages with OCB (Chiaburu, Oh, & Marinova, 2018). OCB and proactive personality both focus on actions which go beyond direct role requirement, and help the organizational success indirectly (Frese *et al.,* 1996). Active employees voluntarily search opportunities to assist organization and perform activities beyond their formal job requirements. Therefore, a connection of proactive personalities and OCBs have been wished for (Campbell, 2000; Crant, 2000). Lin *et al.* (2018) argued that proactive

workforce is agent focused, is self-initiated and self-driven, and motivated to enhance the organizational performance. Crant and Bateman (2000) suggested that proactive personality is significantly correlated with OCB. Lin and Ho (2010) argued that proactive workforce led to higher levels of OCBs. In the same vein Li. (2010) also found positive relation of proactive personality with OCB. Liguori, McLarty, and Muldoon's (2013) results showed a positive association between proactive personality and organizationally citizenship behaviors. Recently, Newman *et al*. (2017) also found a connection between proactive personality and OCB among Chinese multinational firms. As the traditional form of OCBs is shifting because of contemporary issues in management, more studies are recommended to inspect proactive behaviors (Grant & Ashford, 2008) and with fresh primary studies concentrating on pro-social and proactive citizenship (Parker *et al*., 2006; Turban, 2007; Van Dyne, Kamdar, & Joireman, 2008).

Proactive Personality and Organizational Commitment

Khai Nguyen (2012) argued that proactive personality is linked with OC because of advancement in career provided by the organization. Crant (2000) suggested that OC is one of the major concern of proactive attitudes. Meta-analysis results also support this argument (Fuller Jr & Marler, 2009). Several studies contended that managers who are proactive at work, exhibited greater job performance and organizational commitment. Researchers have identified consequences and antecedents in organizational literature relating proactive personality with OC (Crant, 2000). Joo and Lim (2009) also argued that workforce showed the highest level of OC when they assumed learning opportunities and greater occupation complexity and found a noteworthy association between proactive personality and OC. Risell (2018) also found the same positive connection of proactive personality with effective commitment.

The Mediating role of LMX

LMX means emotional attachment and exchange of main resources between manager and subordinate (Liden *et al.,* 2008). It developed the reciprocal social exchange relation of employees with immediate supervisor (Masterson *et al*., 2000). Nie and Lämsä (2015) argued that such relationship is high if both parties have shared respect, trust and obligation for each other. Proactive employees are committed towards the institutional goals, exhibit effort and better performance (Campbell, 2000), and in response, supervisors provided support and autonomy (Nie & Lämsä, 2015). Empirical studies found that job autonomy and LMX is linked with proactive behaviors (Ashford, 2008; Grant, 2011). Supervisors prefer initiative-taking employees who regulate and peruse their duties without direction. This argument is parallel with the combination of LMX and subordinate base on sequence of role making affairs (Graen & Scandura, 1987; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Hence, proactive employees and supervisors are committed to

maintain integral exchange relationships. Empirical results explained that followers' feedback system is a kind of proactive behavior which is linked with the superiority of LMX (Lam, Huang, & Snape, 2007). The association between exchange quality and employees work attitude is well established (Gerstner & Day, 1997; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). In such case, they can trust and help each other, thus, enhancing organizational loyalty (OC) (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Liden & Maslyn, 1998). The supervisory support assists employees in handling job related issues, thus stimulating OC and OCB. LMX philosophy has been used as a mechanism which explains the process by which proactive personality and OCB are mediated. Liden *et al*. (2008) investigated that LMX develops the level of employees' OCB. Mutual trust and support stimulate the LMX relation between the leader and the subordinate beyond specific job description. Van Dierendonck (2011) suggested that LMX effects subordinate OCB. Walumbwa, Hartnell, and Oke (2010) elaborated that LMX mediates the impact of manager's behavior on the follower because of creativity, job performance and OCB.

To enhance reciprocated long lasting LMX relation and to keep an equitable and balance social exchange with the leader, employees are required to perform beyond the formal job requirements (Ilies, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2007), a demonstration of OCB (Wayne *et al.,* 2002). To support such declarations, meta-analysis highlight a relationship between LMX and OCB (Ilies *et al*., 2007). Hackett *et al.* (2003) conducted a meta-analysis showing .32 correlation between LMX and OCB. Yang *et al.* (2017) investigated the public hospitals in China and elaborated that subordinate and leader proactive personalities on the follower work engagement was justified. Newman *et al*. (2017) conjured that proactive personality moderates the effects of LMX and recommended more studies in different contexts. Keeping in view the findings we expect that LMX and OC will mediate the association of proactive personality and OCB in the public sector of Pakistan. These arguments provide the basis to develop the following hypotheses:

$H_{1:}$ *Proactive personality has a significant impact on OCB*

$H_{2:}$ *Proactive personality has a significant impact on OC*

H_3: *Proactive personality has a significant impact on LMX*

H_4: *Organizational commitment will mediate the relationship between proactive personality and OCB.*

H_5: *LMX will mediate the relationship between proactive personality and OCB.*

Method

Sample and Data Collection

The target population of this investigation was seven federal government departments, including Capital Development Authority (CDA), Accountant General

Pakistan Revenue (AGPR), Finance Division, National Vocational and Technical Education Commission (NAVTEC), Federal Government Employees Housing Foundation (FGEHF), Pakistan Customs, Controller General of Accounts (CGA) and Youth Affair Division. The sample frame consist of 940 officers serving in Basic Pay Scale (BPS) 17 and 18. Based on the specific location i.e. Islamabad, the number of organizations (7 federal government departments) and rankings (BPS 17 and 18), the purposive sampling technique was used. A total of 370 questionnaires were distributed. The researcher personally visited the selected organizations and requested the specified respondents to fill the questionnaires. The distributed questionnaires were collected after a week. In response, 292 useable questionnaires were returned, yielding a response rate of 78 percent. The average age of the respondents was 37 years (SD_15.18), consisting 77% male and 23% female. The mean tenure was 11.83 (SD_10.13) years. The respondents were assured that the data will be used for the research purposes only and confidentiality was emphasized.

Research Instruments and Measurements

Data for the investigation was gathered from two different sources. Data regarding proactive personality, organizational commitment and LMX was collected from the respondents and information about OCB was provided by their immediate officers. A 5-point Likert scale was used for all study items. In this study, original English language self-reported survey has been adopted to fold the required data. Conversion of questionnaire from English to inborn language was not compulsory as English is the official language in all public-sector institutions of Pakistan.

To measure the proactive personality of employees, the Bateman and Crant (1993) scale was used. It consists of six items, was used in a prior similar investigation (Parker, 1998) and have depicted a sturdy correlation with the original 17-item scale (Claes, Beheydt, & Lemmens, 2005). A sample item is *"If I see something I don't like, I fix it." Bauer and Green (1996)* eight items scale was used to measure LMX. An example item is "*How would you characterize your working relationship with your leader?"* To measure the level of commitment among the employees, Meyer, Allen, and Smith's (1993) twelve items scale was used. OCB was investigated through Williams and Anderson (1991) scale, consisted of fourteen items. Two diverse groups of OCBs were measured. Seven items are used to gage the behaviors of individual recognized as OCBI, and the remaining seven items detailed toward the institutions known as OCBO. For instance: "*Adequately completes assigned duties;"* is related to OCBO, and *"Helps others who have been absent"* measures *OCBI.*

Results

Table: 1: *Descriptive Statistics and Reliabilities of Variables*

	Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1	Proactive personality	5.71	.81	(.73)			
2	OC	6.47	.94	.44**	(.79)		
3	LMX	5.58	.91	.52**	.45**	(.77)	
4	OCB	5.28	.92	.61**	.36**	.56**	(.71)

N=292; Cronbach Alpha in parenthesis; **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 above explains the correlation of research variables. It illustrates that proactive personality is positively correlated with OC (r=.44, p< 0.01), with LMX (r=.52, p< .01) and with OCB (r=.61, p<.01). The correlation values give initial support for the proposed hypotheses. The table also demonstrates the reliability via Cronbach's Alpha values of the variables of the study. Cronbach's Alpha values of proactive personality OC, LMX and OCB is .73, .79, .77 and .71 respectively. The values of all variables are above .70 which suggest that the data is internally consistent (Hair *et al.,* 1998).

Regression Analysis

Table 2: *Regression Analysis*

	B	t-values	Sig
Proactivity ➤ OCB	.522	11.311	.000
Proactivity ➤ OC	.621	10.321	.000
Proactivity ➤ LMX	.547	14.345	.000
OC ➜ OCB	.523	13.391	.001
LMX ➜ OCB	.673	9.309	.000

Simple regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship of variables. Table 2 explains that proactivity has significant impact on OCB (β=.52, p<.05). In the same vein, proactivity effects the level of OC (β=.62, p<.05) and LMX (β=.54, p<.05). OC has significant influence on OCB (β=.52, p<.05), and it was further found that LMX is positively correlated with OCB (β=.67, p<.05). All the values are in the range of significance, thus support the hypotheses.

Mediation Analysis

Preacher and Hayes (2004) bootstrapping techniques were used to check the mediating effects of OC and LMX between proactive personality and OCB. In comparison to Barron and Kenny (1986) and the Sobel test, this is considered a superior test (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). 95% confidence interval (CI) was obtained with bias correction method by using the 4000 bootstrapped samples. According to Preacher & Hayes (2004), if zero is not included in the 95% CI for indirect effect, mediation is determined. In Table 3 below, the mediation analysis results are presented.

Table 3: *Mediating effects of OC between pro-activity and OCB*

Path	Total effect	Direct effect[a]	Indirect effect[b]	95% CI[c]	
				Lower level	Upper level
Pro→OC→OCB	.16	.11	.05	.31	.43

Pro (pro-activity), OC(Organizational Commitment) and OCB (Org Citizenship Behavior)
a Proactivity →OC; b (Pro →OC) ×(OC →OCB)
Determined by bootstrapping with bias correction

The direct effect of proactivity on OCB was (.11, p<.01) and the indirect effect via OC was (.05, p<.01, 95% CI=.31,.43) were found significant. The standardized total (direct and indirect) effect on proactivity and OC on OCB was found to be 0.16 that is due to both the direct (unmediated) and indirect (mediated) effects of proactivity on OCB. The results of this investigation indicate that hypothesis H_4 was supported and confirms that OC mediates the relationship between proactivity and OCB.

Table 4: *Mediating effects of LMX between pro-activity and OCB*

Path	Total effect	Direct effect[a]	Indirect effect[b]	95% CI[c]	
				Lower level	Upper level
Pro→LMX→OCB	.37	.11	.16	.52	.71

Pro (proactivity), LMX(Leader Member Exchange) and OCB
a Pro-activity → OCB; b (Pro →LMX) ×(LMX →OCB)
Determined by bootstrapping with bias correction

The direct effect of proactivity on OCB was (.11, p<.01) and the indirect effect via LMX was (.16, p<.01, 95% CI=-.52, 0.71) were found significant. The standardized total (direct and indirect) effect of proactivity and LMX on OCB was found as .37, that is due to both direct (unmediated) and indirect (mediated) effects of proactivity and LMX on OCB. The results of this investigation indicate that hypothesis H_5 was supported i.e. LMX mediates the relationship between proactivity and OCB.

Discussion

Proactive workforce are of great value to institutions (Wang *et al*., 2017). Therefore, the aim of this research was to investigate a model connecting proactive personality with the OCB and to study the mediating role of LMX and OC between proactive personality and OCB. Results of the study showed positive significant connection between proactive personality and OCB among the employees of the federal government of Pakistan. Chiaburu *et al*. (2018) conjured that proactive personality has strong influence on OCB. Frese *et al.* (1996) also found the same significant association between proactive personality and OCB. The study found positive relation between proactive personality and OC. Joo and Lim (2009) also found the same significant connection. Earlier, Chan (2006) found correlation between proactive personality and OC. Moreover, OC and LMX has a significant connection with OCB. Previous studies have found the same significant relationship (Wang *et al.*, 2005; Zayas-Ortiz *et al.*,

2015). Newman *et al*. (2017) investigated the positive relationship of LMX with OCB. Lapointe and Vandenberghe (2018) found positive relationship of LMX with OC. The results further found that OC and LMX meditate the association between proactive personality and OCB. Thus, the study highlights the relative importance of OC and LMX in the constituted model and this might be the first attempt at federal level to explain the meditating relation. The finding glimpses the mechanisms, amplifying that proactive personality establishes itself in OCBs and strengthens the importance of employees' own competences. It is a general phenomenon that behaviors for instance OC and OCB avert problems. Hence, the cognitive process which leads to proactive behaviors has gotten little consideration. This study enhances researchers' understanding to enlighten that both (LMX and OC) and individual variances (proactive personality) added to the prediction of OCB. This proposes that organizations may recruit individuals having proactive personality and altering institutional practices to enhance OCB.

Further, it is suggested that as the proactive workforce is an asset for institutions, emphasis on the development of colleagues and taking interests beyond the institutions, considered as organizational values, ripen strong personal bonds, commitment, trust, and apprehension for the well-being of the others. Thus, in turn leads them to reciprocate in the form of discretionary or extra role behaviors as reinforced by the social exchange theory.

Managerial Implications of the Study

The study offers a relational mechanism for knowing the significance of proactive personality in measuring OCB in institutions. The complex affairs of proactive workforce, situational prompts and sorts of employee proactive behaviors need the attention of strategic think tanks in today's contemporary management to enhance the level of OCB among employees. The study develops and tests a theoretical model by adding two antecedents (OC & LMX) in the relation of proactive personality and OCB and provides an open avenue for further investigations. Additionally, the study contributes to the management's understanding by investigating the proactive behavior-OCB relationship in the sub-continental culture and finds that more or less, the relationship between the variables is held at par with the western culture.

Research Limitations and Future Research

First limitation of this research is the collection of the data from a single city of Pakistan i.e. Islamabad. Though, the federal government employees are serving all over Pakistan, the cultural background may raise questions on the linkages of proactive personality with OCB. Therefore, it is recommended to study the same relationship in other cities for comparison.

Secondly, OC and LMX association between proactive personality and OCB are stronger in Pakistani context because of collectivistic culture. In such culture subordinate reciprocate constructive behavior to their manager in shape of discretionary behaviors (OCB), however, in an individualistic society there are limited prospects that workforce should respond positively. So, the results of this study may have the problem of generalization.

Finally, the study has investigated the individual level mediating mechanisms of proactive personality and OCB, more studies are needed to investigate the relationship in groups' norms which influence individual behavior.

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