

A Conceptual Study of the Relationships Between Psychological Well-Being, Self-Efficacy, Job Satisfaction, and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour in the Higher Education Sector

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ABSTRACT

Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) has received more attention within the field of human resource management, including in the higher education sector. In Malaysia, higher education institutions face challenges such as occupational stress, which requires an emphasis on internal elements that can enhance organisational sustainability and efficacy. This conceptual study aims to examine the impact of psychological well-being, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction on academic staff willingness to demonstrate organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB). The results of this study are expected to provide foundational guidance to researchers and higher education management in formulating intervention techniques that enhance psychological well-being and human capital development, thereby improving overall organisational performance.

Keywords: Organisational Citizenship Behaviour, Psychological Well-Being, Self-Efficacy, Job Satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions globally, including those based in Malaysia, are encountering intricate and unprecedented challenges. Significant changes are currently taking place in the academic environment, characterised by pressures on teaching, research, and service, alongside resource limitations, technological advancement and increasing student expectations (Psychology, 2024). This environment has transformed the responsibilities of university lecturers, necessitating a commitment that extends beyond formal, prescribed duties.

In this context, Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) has been identified as a crucial factor in supporting institutional excellence. OCB refers to voluntary behaviours that fall outside the scope of formal duties, contributing to organisational effectiveness and resilience (Hassan, R., Amin, H. C., & Ghoneim, 2024). In the higher education sector, these behaviours include active involvement of lecturers in institutional programs, support for colleagues, and participation in student initiatives.

While numerous studies have emphasised the significance of OCB in the education sector, both theoretical and empirical insights into the psychological factors that influence OCB are still lacking. Current studies often evaluate elements like psychological well-being, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction separately, failing to incorporate these components into a unified theoretical framework (Podsakoff et al., 2000; Borman & Motowidlo, 1997). The absence of integration hinders comprehension of the intricate relationships among these three variables and their impact on OCB.

Moreover, the majority of prior research has been conducted at single institutions, thereby constraining the generalisability of the findings. Substantial disparities in organisational culture, governance structures, and resources among institutions can profoundly affect OCB behaviour; nevertheless, these contextual elements are

frequently disregarded (Johns, 2006; Tight, 2013). This limitation is particularly problematic given the increasing diversity of higher education institutional types and the growing emphasis on evidence-based management practices that require generalisable insights (Hazelkorn, 2015).

In Malaysia, the challenges of work-related stress require a focused examination of internal elements that can enhance institutional resilience and sustainability. Prior research indicates a positive correlation between psychological well-being, self-efficacy, and organisational citizenship behaviour (Anfajaya & Rahayu, 2019; Rahman & Karim, 2022). In addition, job satisfaction has been accepted as a significant factor influencing this behaviour. Nonetheless, research that integrates these three psychological variables within a theoretical framework and applies them to the Malaysian higher education context remains quite scarce.

Therefore, this conceptual paper aims to provide a theoretical framework connecting psychological well-being, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction to organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) among academic staff in higher education. This study contributes to the literature by providing a comprehensive conceptual framework and offering suggestions for future empirical investigation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Social Exchange Theory (SET)

Social Exchange Theory (SET) serves as a fundamental framework for analysing workplace behaviour. Carvalho et al (2020) defined the social exchange theory as an i) initiation by an actor directed at the target, (ii) an attitudinal or behavioural reaction from the target in reciprocation, and (iii) the ensuing relationship. According to Blau (1964), social exchange theory serves as the primary explanatory framework, positing that lecturers who receive favourable treatment from their institutions respond with heightened extra-role behaviours. This reciprocal link is further enhanced by social cognitive theory, which asserts that self-efficacy beliefs work as essential mediators that convert institutional support into tangible behavioural engagement (Bandura, 2006). Additionally, the psychological capital paradigm highlights that positive psychological resources, such as confidence, hope, resilience, and optimism, provide a basis for individual well-being and organisational citizenship behaviours (Luthans et al., 2007).

2.2 Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB)

The concept of Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) was initially presented by Organ (1988). Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) refers to voluntary employee actions that extend beyond their formal responsibilities, without direct compensation, yet significantly increase the organisation's efficacy and success (Buil et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2021). This behaviour might include assisting colleagues, engaging in organisational activities voluntarily, and adhering to regulations in the absence of oversight (Mangindaan & Tewal, 2020; Arifin et al., 2022).

In higher education, OCB is a critical factor because lecturers participate in a variety of activities that extend beyond their formal responsibilities, such as mentoring colleagues and students, contributing to curriculum development, and engaging in community service and supporting student activities. (Pedregosa et al., 2025). These behaviours directly enhance institutional success by fostering collaborative knowledge, promoting collegial governance, and establishing inclusive learning communities (Dewangan & Goswami, 2025).

2.3 Psychological Well-Being

Psychological well-being encompasses self-esteem, self-control, effective social interactions, and a sense of purpose in life (Arifin et al., 2022; Kinowska & Sienkiewicz, 2023). In education, this well-being plays a vital role in helping academics handle mental stress and the demands of everyday labour (Ali et al., 2022; Firdayanti, 2022).

Numerous studies indicate a significant correlation between psychological well-being and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB). Individuals in a stable mental condition often possess the psychological resources

to willingly engage in organisational citizenship behaviour (Rahman & Karim, 2022). According to Social Exchange Theory, employees who perceive support and value from the organisation are more inclined to reciprocate with good behaviours, such as OCB (Eisenberger et al., 1997; Maan et al., 2020).

Moreover, environmental elements, including ergonomic workspaces, might affect psychological well-being and employee behaviour (Latip et al., 2022). Thus, organisations that emphasise psychological well-being could reduce worker turnover rates and enhance performance by fostering OCB (Afram et al., 2022; Carroll, 1989). Based on these insights, the following hypothesis is proposed for further investigation:

H1: Psychological well-being significantly influences organisational citizenship behaviour among academic staff.

2.4 Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy refers to an individual's confidence in their ability to carry out tasks proficiently and achieve established objectives (Bandura, 1997, 2016). Besides that, self-efficacy is established through four fundamental processes: cognitive, motivational, affective (emotional), and behavioural selection. The primary factors that shape self-efficacy include past successful experiences, the observation of others' achievements (vicarious experiences), social encouragement, and the individual's emotional and physiological condition (Dani Saadi, 2021; Lopez, 2020).

In an organisational context, individuals with a high level of self-efficacy are more likely to face challenges, take initiative, and contribute voluntarily to the organisation through OCB behaviour (Latip et al., 2020). They do not undertake challenging tasks; instead, they view them as opportunities for growth.

Studies by Anfajaya & Rahayu (2019), Prasetyo et al. (2022), and Mahipalan et al. (2019) support the positive and significant relationship between self-efficacy and OCB. Those who possess a strong sense of self-assurance in their capabilities tend to exhibit elevated degrees of dedication and involvement in their work. Despite numerous studies endorsing this relationship, empirical evidence remains insufficient within the context of higher education institutions in Malaysia. Based on these insights, the following hypothesis is proposed for further investigation:

H2: Self-efficacy significantly influences organisational citizenship behaviour among academic staff.

2.5 Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a fundamental variable in organisational psychology and behaviour. It describes positive emotions or pleasurable emotions that emerge from an individual's comprehensive assessment of their employment (Nurhasanah et al., 2025). According to Carvalho et al. (2020), job satisfaction is not just contingent upon the quality or intensity of one's work, but instead on the degree to which individuals derive pleasure from their employment.

This concept is frequently linked to emotions, attitudes, and the degree of satisfaction with one's work requirements (ShuXia et al., 2024). Job satisfaction that inspires individuals to participate in voluntary behaviours outside the official job requirements, namely, OCB.

Research conducted by M.G.G. (2020) and Shrestha & Bhattarai (2022) confirms this positive correlation, indicating that pleased personnel are more likely to exhibit enhanced dedication and a propensity to assist both the organisation and their peers.

Additionally, a study conducted by Putri (2022) found that job satisfaction accounted for up to 67.7% of the variance in explaining organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB), highlighting the significant role of this variable in fostering positive workplace behaviour. However, this has not been deeply investigated within the framework of higher education institutions in Malaysia, particularly concerning academic staff. To investigate this further, the following hypothesis is proposed for empirical testing:

H3: Job satisfaction significantly influences organisational citizenship behaviour among academic staff.

Table 1: Summary of the proposed hypothesis

No	Hypothesis
H1	Psychological well-being significantly influences organisational citizenship behaviour among academic staff.
H2	Self-efficacy significantly influences organisational citizenship behaviour among academic staff.
H3	Job satisfaction significantly influences organisational citizenship behaviour among academic staff.

2.6 Proposed Conceptual Framework

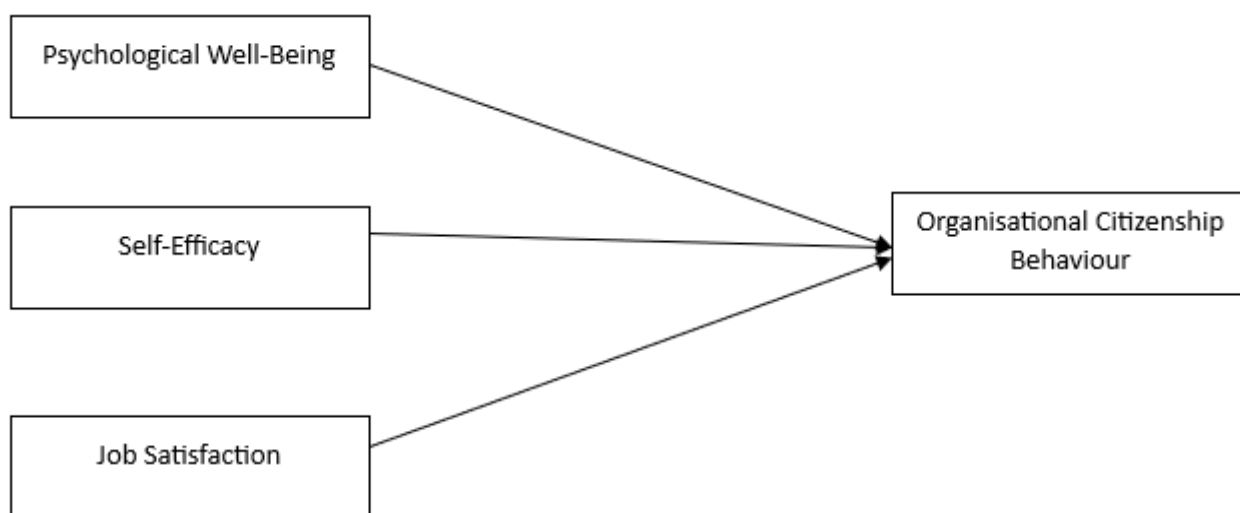


Figure 2.1: Proposed Conceptual Paper

PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

This study will use a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional design to investigate the relationship between psychological well-being, self-efficacy, and organisational citizenship behaviour among employees (academic staff) in the higher education sector. Data will be collected through a structured online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms, which facilitates respondent access and expedites the data collection process. Simple random sampling will be employed to ensure that each employee has an equal opportunity to participate in the study, thereby increasing the feasibility and accuracy of the study's results.

In addition, the data obtained will be analysed using SPSS software for basic statistical examinations such as reliability tests and data normality checks. Next, Structural Equation Modelling techniques using PLS-SEM will be implemented to test the causal relationship and validity of the developed model. This process will ensure that the data and accuracy of the model are built to produce valid and reliable study results.

Emphasis will also be placed on detecting unusual data (outliers) and instrument evaluation as crucial steps in enhancing data quality. It is hoped that this systematic method will contribute in-depth and practical knowledge on the role of psychological well-being, self-efficacy and job satisfaction in influencing organisational citizenship behaviour.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the proposed conceptual framework is designed to investigate the correlation between psychological well-being, self-efficacy, job satisfaction and organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) among academic staff in Malaysia. In a higher education environment that is becoming increasingly challenging to navigate, a deeper understanding of the interplay between these three variables is essential, as it demands a significant level of commitment, emotional resilience, and dedication.

The primary goal of this research is to identify factors that enhance OCB and foster a positive work environment, thereby improving the productivity of academic staff. Additionally, this research has the potential to be a valuable resource for policymakers and management in the development of comprehensive intervention strategies, with a particular emphasis on improving the psychological well-being and self-efficacy of academics.

In general, the concept presented in this paper reinforces the theoretical underpinnings of human resource management and organisational psychology, while also offering a framework that can serve as a reference for future empirical research. The proposed implications also contribute to the enhancement of management strategies in the higher education sector, particularly in areas such as fostering a positive work environment and promoting the well-being of academics. These recommendations are also applicable to other professional industries that exhibit comparable work environment characteristics.

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