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Understanding Reverse Mentoring, Job Satisfaction and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour in the Context of Indian Higher Education Sector

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ABSTRACT: This study examines the relationship between Job satisfaction, Reverse mentoring and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour in the higher education sector using Social Exchange Theory as well as Generational Cohort Theory as its two foundational theories. This aims at how initial levels of job satisfaction affect participation in mentoring programs and how those relationships result in larger, extra work-related activities by academic employees.

Data was obtained from a survey sample of 53 faculty at different universities throughout the Delhi National Capital Region using a quantitative and cross-sectional method. All three variables of interest were positively related to each other with job satisfaction predicting engagement in reverse mentoring with reverse mentoring predicting citizenship behaviour within the organisation (defined as behaviours that help create a supportive work environment). The analysis indicates that reverse mentoring acts as an intermediary form of behaviour between job satisfaction and citizenship within the workplace; therefore, providing pathways to improve faculty development and transfer knowledge across generations in accordance with the National Education Policy, 2020.

KEYWORDS: Job Satisfaction, Reverse Mentoring, Organisational Citizenship Behaviour, Indian Higher Education, Social Exchange Theory, Generational Cohort Theory.

I. INTRODUCTION

As workplace technology changes rapidly, the generational gap is also growing wider. The problem is not the older people as slow learners, but the younger people are native with adaptability of change. The Millennial generation has a natural ease and sophistication with technology and social media that is often lacking in older generations (Marcinkus Murphy, 2012). In addition to these older employees, such as Baby Boomers often have difficulty staying in touch with what's coming in terms of future technology, compared to younger employees in their twenties, who see things through "fresh eyes" and have instantaneous connections to the future. (Murphy, 2012).

Specifically in India, the complex culture hits this gap even harder as per traditional and hierarchal approach, seniority dictates power. However, it points out that Human Resource Management in India is going through a massive transformation. This problem is even more visible in the higher education sector, where teachers often struggle to use new technology and social media, while their students arrive increasingly tech-savvy (Morris, 2017; Bynum, 2015). Recognizing this urgency, recent national policy has started to address the gap. The National Education Policy has set up the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) to share ideas on how technology can improve learning, assessment, and teacher development (Ministry of Education, 2020).

Reverse mentoring is considered an untapped resource in higher education because the majority of existing literature focused on professional and corporate workplace settings, for Higher Education Reverse mentoring has not been fully established in the future where it has been used extensively for the effective transfer of technological skills and knowledge with regard to social media as a resource for the development of workers (Morris, 2017; Jammulamadaka, N.,2020). In an academic approach, where the experienced faculty member guides the student, is still the main form of mentoring (Morris, 2017). It ignores an opportunity to benefit from the implementation of reverse mentoring because millions of young, technology-smart students start school every year; however, these students are not engaged as formal mentors to faculty members who are struggling with the rapidly changing technology and learning environments. (Morris, 2017; O'Connor, 2025).

This study addresses this gap by examining how job satisfaction affects Reverse Mentoring and OCB among faculty in Indian higher education and proposes a pathway grounded in Social Exchange Theory, which suggests that positive workplace experiences and the support that comes from voluntary work relationships motivate employees to engage in extra-role behaviours (Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2012).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

This study's theoretical foundation is the Social Exchange Theory (SET). SET was originally articulated by Gouldner (1960) via the norm of reciprocity, then solidified by Blau (1964). Blau defined social exchange as the “voluntary actions of individuals that are motivated by the returns that they are expected to bring and which usually do in fact bring from others” (Blau, 1964). Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) further expanded SET with their research to determine how positive conditions within organizations cause positive exchange relationships through reciprocity associated with positive behaviors of employees. To give context to the exchange dynamics between generations in the workplace, Generational Cohort Theory (GCT) has been used as an additional theoretical framework. Mannheim (1952) stated that persons born within the same historical period will have similar collective sociodemographic orientations and will have similar foundations of knowledge. Combined, SET and GCT provide the framework to demonstrate how knowledge possessed by generations and shared through the process of reciprocity provides a benefit for all parties involved in the exchange as well as for the organization.

Locke (1976) defined JS as a positive emotional state based on the assessment of one's job. RM is derived from Kram's (1985) mentoring framework and prescribes a mentor relationship between junior and senior employees, particularly for the purposes of enhancing senior employee's technological capabilities and contemporary working styles (Chen, 2013). Social Exchange Theory (SET) states that when employees have a high JS, they are often compelled to reciprocate discretionary and extra-role efforts. Research has also shown that satisfied and engaged employees are more likely to offer knowledge-sharing across generations (Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2012; Garg, Murphy & Singh, 2021). Therefore, a satisfied workforce is an essential prerequisite for the success of RM because it requires employees to voluntarily provide time, patience, and effort considered additional to their formal job description. As such, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Job satisfaction will positively predict engagement in RM.

OCB refers to those individual behaviours that are voluntary and not subject to formal recognition, but that enhance the effective overall functioning of an organisation (Organ, 1988). Five primary dimensions of OCB exist: altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, and civic virtue (Podsakoff et al., 1990; Podsakoff et al., 2000). Traditional downward mentoring has shown a positive influence on OCB. Recent research has found that peer-to-peer learning and interpersonal knowledge networks contribute to OCB (Kaše et al., 2019). Reverse mentoring creates social capital, mutual respect, and may empower younger mentors to engage in OCB towards their colleagues and the organization. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

H2: There is a statistically significant, positive relationship between reverse mentoring engagement & citizenship behaviour in Indian higher education faculty.

There is extensive literature on the link between job satisfaction (JS) and OCB, and Bateman and Organ's (1983) original study laid out the link between JS and OCB. Organ (1988) states that employees who receive fair treatment are reciprocally obligated to repay that fairness through cooperation with others. Therefore, when employees are satisfied with their jobs, they will demonstrate OCB. This has been established in many different countries, including India, where numerous studies in both corporate and higher education settings support the theory that JS is a major antecedent of OCB (Sharma et al., 2010; Swaminathan & Jawahar, 2013). Thus, it is hypothesized that:

H3: There is a positive and significant relationship between job satisfaction and OCB for faculty members of Indian HEIs.

III. OBJECTIVES

RO 1: To discuss the relationship between job satisfaction and reverse mentoring.

RO 2: To study the relationship between reverse mentoring and organisational citizenship behaviour.

RO 3: To discuss the relationship between job satisfaction and organisational citizenship behaviour.

IV. METHODOLOGY

To examine the hypotheses, a qualitative design and cross-sectional survey is used, provided objectives that measured of relationships between variables at a single point in time (Bryman & Bell, 2015), and allow for future replication (Creswell, 2014) because of the detailed, structured nature of survey design that lends itself to standardizing data collection and making possible statistical inference.

The target sample consisted of Delhi NCR; the population was identified by using a stratified convenience sampling strategy. Initially collected 70 but went forward with a sample size of 53 respondents (N=53) after careful data screening to develop a robust demographic overview appropriate to the analyses presented in the study. JS was measured using a 10-item scale developed by Macdonald and MacIntyre (1997), which provides an adequate, comprehensive overview of workers' overall sentiment/perspective regarding their work environment. RM is assessed using a 26-item scale adapted from Garg, Murphy, & Singh (2021), drawing on Chen (2013) and Marcinkus Murphy (2012). OCB was measured using a 24-item scale validated by Podsakoff et al. (1990), covering all five dimensions of discretionary workplace behaviour. Furthermore, five items were reverse-coded to control for response set bias.

Quantitative data analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics programs. After entering the data and calculating composite variable scores, the original measures of internal reliability were once again calculated according to the acceptable Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) standard of $\alpha \geq 0.70$. To empirically test the three primary directional hypotheses (H1, H2, H3), Pearson's product - moment correlation analysis was performed. This parametric technique was chosen to systematically measure the strength and direction of the bivariate relationships of Job Satisfaction, Reverse Mentoring, and OCB. The correlations (r) were interpreted based upon established effect size conventions set forth by Cohen (1988).

V. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

A. Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the internal consistency of the three scales. The results, in Table, indicate that all three scales exceed the 0.70 threshold for acceptable reliability as per Nunnally and Bernstein's (1994) guidelines, thus showing that all three scales demonstrate excellent internal consistency across the total sample of respondents.

SCALE	SOURCE	ITEMS	CRONBACH'S A	INTERPRETATION
REVERSE MENTORING	Adapted Scale	26	0.975	Excellent
ORGANISATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR	Podsakoff et al. (1990)	24	0.901	Excellent
JOB SATISFACTION	Macdonald & MacIntyre (1997)	10	0.903	Excellent

B. To describe the distribution of the core variables, descriptive statistics are used for each variable. OCB has the lowest standard deviation among the three core variables. Descriptive statistics supported the existence of a moderately positive baseline across all three measures, with all three measures exceeding 3.0 on the rating scale (3.0 represents the midpoint of a 5-point Likert-type scale) indicating that the sample respondents reported moderately positive experiences related to all three measures.

Variable	N	mean	SD	Min	Max
Job Satisfaction (JS)	53	3.71	0.81	1.30	5.00
Reverse Mentoring (RM)	53	3.68	0.85	1.42	5.00
Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB)	53	3.63	0.61	1.96	5.00

C. Using Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient, the relationships among the core variables were assessed before testing any hypotheses. The table provides a summary of the correlations among the three variables. There is a statistically significant and strong positive correlation between Job Satisfaction and Reverse Mentoring ($r = .649$; $p < .001$), a statistically significant and strong positive correlation between Reverse Mentoring and OCB ($r = .613$; $p < .001$).

and a statistically significant and strong positive correlation between Job Satisfaction and OCB ($r = .628$; $p < .001$). Based on Cohen's (1988) guidelines, all three relationships represent a large and robust effect size, which supports the theorized relationships in the model.

Variable	1. JS	2. RM	3. OCB
Job Satisfaction (JS)	1.000		
Reverse Mentoring (RM)	0.649**	1.000	
Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB)	0.628**	0.643**	1.000

D. The Pearson correlation analysis provides formal statistical evaluation of the three primary directional hypotheses. Each hypothesis was evaluated with a stringent statistical significance level set at $p < 0.001$. The results of the three directional hypotheses are summarized in Table below.

H1 stated that "Job satisfaction is positively correlated with reverse mentoring engagement among higher education faculty." Results showed a strong statistical correlation ($r = 0.649$, $p < 0.001$); therefore, highly satisfied faculty engage in cross-generational mentoring exchanges at a higher rate. Thus, H1 is fully supported.

H2 stated that "reverse mentoring engagement is positively correlated with organisational citizenship behaviour." A strong, statistically significant correlation between reverse mentoring engagement and organisational citizenship behaviour ($r = 0.613$, $p < 0.001$) suggest that the active participant of reverse mentoring is likely to have higher levels of discretionary (extra-role) behaviour with the organisation. Hence, H2 is supported.

H3 stated that "Job Satisfaction is positively correlated with Organisational Citizenship Behaviour." The statistical evaluation provides strong support for H3, with a statistically strong positive correlation between job satisfaction and organisational citizenship behaviour ($r = 0.628$, $p < 0.001$). This finding is consistent with previous organisational behaviour literature demonstrating that baseline satisfaction is related to citizenship behaviours. H3 is therefore supported.

Hypothesis	Predicted Relationships	Pearson r	Sig. (p)	Decision
H1	Job Satisfaction $\rightarrow$ Reverse Mentoring	+0.649	<.001	Supported
H2	Reverse Mentoring $\rightarrow$ OCB	+0.613	<.001	Supported
H3	Job Satisfaction $\rightarrow$ OCB	+0.628	<.001	Supported

VI. FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

The analysis demonstrated three hypotheses strongly supported the significant relationships among the constructs. Applying Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005) to these results suggest that faculty members who have a positive perception of their work environment want to reciprocate discretionary behaviours. Satisfied faculty show greater propensity to engage in cross-generational knowledge sharing (reverse mentoring) as well as being involved in broader OCBs. The hypothesis regarding the relationship between job satisfaction and OCB replicates the original link documented in the literature (Bateman and Organ, 1983). Continuing to demonstrate the strength of this fundamental relationship within the rapidly changing environment of higher education in India supports the generalizability of the reciprocity construct of SET across cultures.

This also contributes to theoretical understanding of SET by extending it to the unique context of Indian higher education. Prior research about SET has mostly focused on lateral or downward peer exchanges (manager to subordinate). By framing reverse mentoring as a formalized exchange relationship between junior and senior faculty, this study expands the empirical jurisdiction of SET by providing evidence of upward, knowledge-based reciprocity.

These findings provide lots of helpful information for campus administrators dealing with the digital and pedagogical changes made by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. University administrators should establish formal reverse mentoring programs as part of their Continuous Professional Development (CPD). Institutions need to turn the informal transfer of knowledge across generations (cross-generational) into formal strategies. Human resources developers can play a role by creating intentional matches where junior faculty with higher technical ability can work with senior faculty

in an educational way. However, the most important finding is that, cannot mandate these exchanges; first develop and maintain a proper amount of job satisfaction on the campus. This is because reverse mentoring requires continued extra effort from everyone involved, so must provide a positive work environment for the exchanges to happen voluntarily and be successful.

VII. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE SCOPE

The study has a small sample size which limits statistical power; a cross-sectional study limits the ability to make causal inferences; the non-probability sample from Delhi NCR limits generalizability; and there is a risk of common-method bias with self-report measures. Future studies should gather larger samples, employ longitudinal designs, use probability sampling from multiple regions throughout India, collect data from multiple sources (i.e., by having peers and supervisors rate the same subjects), and perform formal mediation on Reverse Mentoring or use more variables that may support the argument.

VIII. CONCLUSION

This study empirically examined three relationships between higher education institution (HEI) faculty members across Delhi NCR and found that all three predicted positive correlations were supported to a high degree. Thus, Social Exchange Theory (SET) appears to be directly applicable to the Indian higher education system. The combination of SET and Generational Cohort Theory (GCT) has developed a more comprehensive theoretical framework to understand voluntary exchanges that cross generational boundaries. The results of this study provide the foundation for reverse mentoring as an effective and low-cost faculty development method that meets the requirements for ongoing professional development as per the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 requirements.

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