



## The Moderating Effect of Transformational Leadership on the Relationship between Employee Happiness and Organizational Citizenship Behavior

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### Abstract

Sometimes, employees in every organization are treated with little empathy, which lowers their motivation to execute their tasks. Organizational citizenship behavior is often related to increased organizational effectiveness. Understanding the moderating role of transformational leadership can help organizations tailor their leadership approaches to maximize the positive outcomes associated with employee happiness, ultimately contributing to the overall success of the organization. As a result, the purpose of this study is to investigate organizational citizenship behavior, transformational leadership, and employee happiness. The study's goals are to: (i) determine the effect of employee happiness on organizational citizenship behavior; and (ii) examine the moderating effect of transformational leadership on the relationship between employee happiness and organizational citizenship behavior. The population of the study consisted of 345 workers from the Lagos State Ministry of Employment. The sample size of 183 was chosen using an online sample size calculator, and the study employed stratified sampling. The study used Social Package for Social Sciences for descriptive statistics and Smart PLS 4 for inferential statistics. According to the findings, transformational leadership moderates the relationship between employee happiness and organizational citizenship behavior. The current study has made an effort to address all of the research questions and aims, despite some of its limitations.

**Keywords:** Employee Happiness, Organizational Citizenship Behavior, Job Performance

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## Introduction

Out of all of the resources available to an organization, it is believed that human resources are the most significant and essential for the continued existence of every organization (Jimoh, 2023). Employers commonly anticipate that their employees will be creative, motivated, and devoted to high-performance standards for a business to prosper through employee efficiency and effectiveness, which can only be reached through employee behavior. OCB illustrates the attitudes and behaviors needed from employees to produce extraordinary results (Akçakanat, 2020). Despite the large number of studies on organizational citizenship behavior, there are still gaps to fill on how employee happiness influences OCB (Alazeezi & Zainol, 2022).

Happiness is seen as a requirement in life, and service industries have begun to pay it greater attention due to the multiple consequences it has for both employee health and organizational effectiveness (Ritchie & Kuna, 2017; Lee et al., 2017; Atkinson & Hall, 2011). On the other hand, happy employees are expected to contribute more to their jobs by putting their skills, knowledge, and abilities to better use (Alparslan, 2016). While it is also seen as a crucial component of the company because it is assumed that workers spend a large portion of their lives at work, for certain people, their job plays a significant role in defining their personalities (Akçakanat, 2020; Jimoh, 2020).

Since the beginning of written history, Alazeezi and Zainol (2022) have been interested in happiness; however, it has only recently become the focus of psychological research, whereas job satisfaction and commitment are of interest to management research (Kolodinsky et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2017). However, it is also a matter of interest for businesses that aim to contribute to the happiness of their workers by fostering pleasant emotions that result in advantageous consequences (Kadiri et al., 2018). This has sparked a body of literature that aims to comprehend the effects of employee happiness at work. However, there has not been agreement on how to improve employee happiness within the company. The majority of the past research also focuses on the impact of employee happiness on organizational outcomes, including organizational commitment (Field & Buitendach, 2011), work engagement (Bakker & Oerlemans, 2016), productivity improvement, employee turnover reduction, and customer satisfaction (de Waal, 2018). There is still very few literature that examined the effect of employee happiness and OCB, and the studies that do exist have conflicting results regarding how employee happiness affects OCB. For instance, Akçakanat (2020) found that in the setting of Turkish 4 and 5-star hotels, employee happiness has a mediated effect on corporate citizenship behavior rather than a direct one.

According to Wimalanaga and Kaluarachchige (2020), when employees are content at their place of employment, they display good

conduct when carrying out organizational tasks. De Waal (2018) demonstrated in reality that raising employee happiness at work increases both employees and the public's perceptions of the organization's attractiveness. However, he pointed out that rather than how devoted employees are to the company, the positive effects of employee satisfaction are mostly tied to work itself. However, it is very important in this field of study to understand the opinions of the staff members of public sector organizations. This is because occasionally public sector workers are treated with little empathy, which lowers their motivation to execute their tasks (Jimoh 2023). This study's background is in the public sector, employees of the Ministry of wealth creation and employment in the state of Lagos which is crucial because of the constant pressure they face to carry out their civic duties.

### **Research Objectives**

- i. To determine the relationship between employee happiness and organizational citizenship behavior.
- ii. To examine the moderating role of transformational leadership on the relationship between employee happiness and organizational citizenship behavior.

### **Employee Happiness & Organizational Citizenship Behavior**

Employee happiness in this context is

defined as a consistent sense of contentment with the company and the job, as well as a regular experience of pleasant emotions and feelings toward the work rather than negative ones (Lee et al., 2017). Additionally, whereas the majority of earlier studies looked at employee happiness as a multidimensional concept and employed employee engagement, job satisfaction, and emotional commitment as their proxies, some studies focused on employee happiness as a single variable. As for this study, employee happiness is perceived as a single concept. Happy workers may be more helpful and supportive to their coworkers and other employees with whom they interact (Joo and Lee, 2017). They are expected to take part in civic activities since they value and respect them more. According to Akçakanat (2020), people who are content may act in ways that produce ongoing happiness and satisfaction, such as by practicing various OCB traits like altruism, empathy, or civility. Akçakanat (2020) asserts that OCBs are more driven by pleasant emotions. Relationship maintenance and the development of flourishing social interactions can both be facilitated by positive and cheerful feelings. According to studies, such positive encounters may increase employees' propensity for altruism (supporting others), courtliness (behaving politely with others), and sportsmanship (ignoring concerns that may endanger relationships).

According to Saxena, Tomar, and Tomar (2019), a key element of an employee's employment experience is job satisfaction since happy

employees are more relaxed and committed to their tasks. The researchers investigate how work satisfaction affects organizational citizenship behavior in light of that assertion. They discovered a straight correlation between corporate citizenship behavior and job happiness. Their findings further demonstrate that there are no disparities between male and female employees' levels of corporate citizenship activity. Tansky (1993) made a similar discovery and discovered a weak correlation between affective commitment and organizational citizenship behavior. Inferred from the literature examined above and the current investigation is that

*H1: Employee happiness has a significant influence on the OCB levels of employees.*

### **Transformational Leadership as Moderator between Employee Happiness and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour**

Transformational leadership is a leadership style that focuses on inspiring and motivating followers to achieve their full potential and exceed their own expectations. Therefore, using charismatic speech, motivation, intellectual stimulation, and taking into account employees' perceptions when making decisions are all examples of transformational leadership (Jimoh, et al., 2017). This managerial approach improves employee satisfaction and organizational citizenship behavior (Chan & Lai, 2017). When their leaders foster a climate of trust, which

results in the employee performing above and beyond expectations, employees have been shown to display OCB (Nohe & Hertel, 2017). Additionally, it was discovered that effective leadership involvement was a substantial predictor of OCB (Diebig, Bormann, & Rowold, 2017); nevertheless, the moderating effect of transformational leadership has been disregarded in the OCB studies.

EH and OCB have been linked directly in a number of studies published in the literature (de Waal, 2018; De Neve et al., 2017; Salas-Vallina et al., 2017). In a similar vein, several studies (Abdullahi et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2019; Choudhary et al., 2017) found a connection between transformational leadership and OCB. The leaders' upbeat and supportive bearing, along with a pleasant atmosphere, will lessen stress and foster contentment. As an employee's degree of enjoyment, such as contentment and commitment, rises, so will their OCB. Additionally, it will improve the effectiveness of the organization.

Their confidence in the leadership is strengthened by the credibility and trust of the leader as well as the frank and open communication with the staff, which raises their feelings of self-worth and emotional support (Rego & Cunha, 2008). It encourages cooperative conduct among employees in addition to developing their experience of affective well-being. Concern for others is one of the key components of transformational leadership; it encourages positive feelings among staff, which shapes and improves their behaviors and

attitudes. Happy OCB is influenced by higher levels of happy feelings at work (Jimoh, 2023). The amount of confidence and excitement that employees feel as they work toward achieving goals increases under transformational leadership, which in turn raises their level of task satisfaction and pleasure (Bass, 1998). Additionally, transformational leadership works well to support and enhance organizational performance over the long term by promoting organizational learning and policy. Because of transformative leadership and increased job satisfaction, employees with high levels of ability, expertise, competence, and commitment may accomplish their jobs more than once and go above and beyond what the organization expects (Bahadori & Dahghan, 2017).

While other researchers (Watts, Steele, & Den Hartog, 2020; Hai, Wu, Park, Chang, & Tang, 2020; Green, Millar, & Aarons, 2013; Vasilaki, Tarba, Ahammad, & Glaister, 2016; Syrek, Apostel, & Antoni, 2013) examined the role of leadership as a moderator, Martin, Epitropaki, Erdogan, and Thoman (2019), on the other hand, emphasized the need to research the impact of transformative leadership on the relationship between employee behavior, namely OCB and its antecedents. According to Ryan and Deci (2000), a job benefit that can help a person's intrinsic motivation, which affects a person's ability to motivate others, is transformational leadership's enabling behavior. According to other researchers' findings (Breevaart et al., 2014; Hoon Song, Kolb, Hee Lee, & Kyoung Kim, 2012), transformational leadership

significantly affects and increases employee engagement. Employees who believed their supervisors and leaders had supportive and successful leadership styles felt more a part of and involved with their organization, according to Albrecht and Andreetta's (2011) research.

Additionally, researchers found that the absence of a moderator—transformational leadership—leads to an inconsistent association between the independent and dependent variables (Salas-Vallina, Alegre, & Fernandez, 2017; Rego et al., 2017; Borman, 2018). The association between the moderator and dependent variables—transformational leadership and employee OCB levels—is also significant at the same time (Yuan & Yue, 2019). It follows that the association between employee happiness and OCB levels is moderated by transformative leadership. The following theory is put forth in light of the literature review that was just mentioned.

*H2. The positive relationship between employee happiness and OCB will be stronger for organizations with high transformational leadership practices.*

## Social Exchange Theory

Employee and employer interactions can be seen as actors who participate in exchange transactions over time to build exchange connections at the organizational level, according to social exchange theory (Settoon et al., 1996). This viewpoint holds that social relationships revolve around the

advantages and disadvantages of commerce. The working relationship can be described as a series of social and economic interactions, according to Aryee, Budhar, and Chen (2002). The social exchange connection, which is often established by a formal contract, refers to the conditions of the transaction that imply certain obligations (Blau, 1964). Social ties can be initiated by an organization's treatment of its employees in the hopes that it will lead to future reciprocation. Socially oriented relationships also have a propensity to last longer. However, short-term economic trade partnerships are becoming more common.

Exchange connections may develop when both the employee and the supervisor make commitments to work hard for each other. According to Shanock and Eisenberger (2006), beneficial relationships between an employee and an organization may result in the proper treatment of superiors, subordinates, and coworkers, depending on the person's position within the business and the nature of his or her job. Some researchers claim that workers at almost any level of the company can return to POS by helping their peers. Coworker exchange connections can also develop (Lynch et al., 1999). Eisenberger et al. (1986; Konovsky & Pugh, 1994) claim that the relationship between the participants in the transaction determines the kind and degree of obligation felt as a result of a social exchange link.

According to Settoon et al. (1996), the social exchange theory has also been used to explain why employees feel

pressured to go above and beyond the terms of their formal employment contracts in order to impress their superiors. According to Konovsky and Pugh (1994), the social exchange relationship is based on trust, which implies that other participants in the trade process will eventually show the same commitment. For an organization to operate effectively, organizational cooperative behavior (OCB), a form of reciprocal connection, is essential. The social exchange theory was used in this study to explain how organizational citizenship is the moderating impact of transformative leadership on employee happiness.

### **Human Capital Theory**

Schultz (1961), who first proposed that human capital is made up of an organization's employees' capacity, knowledge, and skills, coined the term "human capital" in the early 1960s. Human capital was redefined by Schultz (1981) as "all human abilities, natural or acquired." A wise investment can improve human capital, which is a priceless asset (Schultz, 1961). According to an empirical study, having good human resources makes employees happier (Crook, Ketchen, Combs, & Todd, 2008). Human capital is thus a valuable resource (Nahapiet, 2011). Human capital can be divided into general and specific forms, according to Becker and Huselid (2016). General human capital refers to knowledge, skills, and talents that apply to all enterprises, whereas specific human capital is only beneficial in a particular

environment or enterprise (Dokko, 2017). The human capital idea is related to Barney's (1991) resource-based vision of an organization. According to this thesis, a company can only maintain a competitive edge when it has a human resource base that cannot be imitated or replaced by its rivals. According to Boxall (1996), this circumstance grants "human capital advantage" and "human process advantage." A large portion of its approach is built on recent results from hiring individuals with knowledge and talent that is competitively useful. Contrarily, the latter is the outcome of the organization's creation of difficult, extremely sophisticated procedures, such as cross-departmental cooperation and executive development.

According to Overfelt, Deloof, and Vanstraelen (2010), human capital refers to the knowledge, skills, time, and experience that can be applied to the manufacturing process by one family or generation. According to this notion, when employed wisely, people have the same capacity for learning that other natural resources do, and they may be used to an organization's advantage. The inquiry into how talent management could enhance crucial procedures for recruitment, retention, and training and development for job performance was therefore supported by the human capital theory. Since human capital is made up of many different elements, including skills, time, experience, and knowledge, all of which are embedded in specific people, this method is crucial for talent management (Dokko, 2017). In order to use data

from this theory to explain employee satisfaction in terms of skills, knowledge, and capability, it will be crucial to look at how human capital theory defines the collective skills, capabilities, and knowledge of the employees employed by a business. In conclusion, the study's independent and dependent variables, employee happiness and organizational citizenship behavior, are both explained by human capital theory.

## Methods

Research design, according to Mishra and Alok (2017), is a snapshot of the procedures used to perform research. The major objective of this study is to examine how positive and transformational leadership affects the correlation between OCB and employee happiness. The study will use the descriptive research approach in order to accomplish this target as well as all others that have been stated. Because this form of research design goes a little further than theories and makes an effort to explain various facets of a phenomenon, the study is primarily descriptive in nature. The study's construction of a model for a system for measuring employee happiness a mechanism for its operation made up of related objectives, guiding principles, and assessment techniques is of particular significance. Based on underlying theories, the study's research framework and hypotheses were developed. In light of this, it is preferable to perform a study based on hypotheses using the quantitative research approach (Mackenzie &

Knipe, 2006). As a result, a positivist research philosophy will be used in this investigation.

All 345 of the Ministry of wealth creation and employment employees in the state of Lagos make up the study's population due to the homogeneity within the sampled ministry's staff and the heterogeneity amongst staff members who work in other areas. The researcher also has limitations in terms of time and money. So, in this study, stratified sampling was used to select a sample from the population of the study. The technique is more applicable when some strata are expected to exhibit unequal variability, such as when some strata appear to be excessively small or too large (Cavana et al., 2001). The population of the study consisted of 345 workers from the Lagos State Ministry of Employment.

It took three months (July–December 2022) to administer the questionnaire via electronic means, which is recognized as an effective method of data collection (de Waal, 2018; Salas-Vallina et al., 2017). The current COVID-19 pandemic, which has restricted human-to-human connection, was one of the main reasons for using an electronic survey for the gathering of data, in addition to being effective and affordable. The optimal alternative for the data collection process is therefore considered to be an electronic questionnaire.

### **Measurement of the Variables**

The Schriesheim and Tsui (1980) scale, which consists of five items, was modified to serve as the basis for

the employee satisfaction measurement used in this study. A seven-point Likert scale is used to evaluate the scale, with the values ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). Work engagement has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.856. The OCB measurement used in this study was adapted from a Lucey (2017) study. To assess how frequently these behaviors occur, the researcher employed 20 items on a seven-item Likert scale with seven points. The study by Lucey (2017) found that this scale had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.948, indicating a high degree of consistency. The research of Atta (2017) served as the basis for measuring transformational leadership. Nine items were used by the researcher to measure this construct. To assess how frequently these actions occur, the researcher employed a 7-item Likert scale. From never true (point 1) to always true (point 7), the scale has seven points. In the study conducted by Atta (2017), the scale's Cronbach's alpha score was 0.895, indicating a good degree of consistency.

### **Method of Analysis**

In this study, descriptive analysis was carried out using SPSS version 28. Additionally, preliminary analysis and data screening were carried out using SPSS prior to the descriptive analysis to make sure the data were suitable and appropriate for further research. Then, using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), an inferential analysis was carried out to make predictions based on the data. To determine the strength and direction of the association



between or among the study variables, the PLS-SEM is used. Statistical analysis Given that PLS-SEM can distinguish between and measure with accuracy both reflective and formative measures, it is appropriate for this investigation. Hair, Hult, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2017) lack factor indeterminacy or convergence problems, and their distributional assumptions are significantly easier (Reinartz, Haenlein, & Henseler, 2009).

## Results

In order to determine the importance of the route coefficients, the PLS algorithm was used to create the path coefficients and bootstrap with a total of 5000 bootstrap samples and 345 cases (Hair et al., 2014; Hair et al., 2011; Hair et al., 2012; Henseler et al., 2009). The purpose of running the model with all variables was to ascertain the outcomes of the direct and indirect relationships that resulted from the study's research goals.

### Table 1

Based on this result in table 1, hypothesis 1 (H1), which stated that employee happiness has a positive and significant relationship with organizational citizenship behavior, is supported at the 0.05 level of significance ( $\beta = 0.553$ ,  $t = 10.164$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This result revealed a significant positive relationship between employee engagement and organizational citizenship behavior. Therefore, hypothesis one is supported.

### Table 2

According to Table 2 which displayed the result of the moderating effect below, it can be discerned that hypothesis 2 was supported as the positive relationship between employee Happiness and organizational citizenship behavior ( $\beta = 0.092$ ,  $t = 2.757$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) does get stronger when there is high-level practice of transformational leadership in the organization.

## Discussions

Hypothesis one (H1) was found to be supported based on the PLS-SEM output result ( $\beta = 0.553$ ,  $t = 10.164$ ,  $p = 0.005$ ). According to the findings, corporate citizenship behavior is strongly and favorably influenced by employee satisfaction, which measures how enthusiastic and committed an employee is to the company. The results of this study underline the significance of employee satisfaction and assert that businesses that foster an environment that allows for free employee engagement may see an increase in the number of times workers behave responsibly toward one another and the business as a whole. The results validate the applicability of employee happiness and highlight its significance as a valued workplace attitude, building on earlier studies. The results show that improving employee satisfaction has a significant impact on improving corporate citizenship behavior.

This research indicates that corporate citizenship behavior is strongly and

favorably predicted by employee happiness, which is a measure of employee contentment with their employment. This result was consistent with the vast majority of earlier research conducted in both the public and private sectors, which indicated and claimed that employee happiness is a helpful contributor to and enhancer of employee organizational citizenship behavior. Such studies include but are not limited to the studies of Murphy, Athanasou, and King (2002), Weikamp and Göritz (2016), Foote and Li-Ping Tang (2008), Tharikh, Ying, Mohamed Saad, and Sukumaran (2016), Salas-Vallina et al. (2017), Saxena, Tomar, and Tomar (2019), Prasetyo, Yuniarsih, and Ahman (2017), and Gyekye and Haybatollahi (2015). Murphy, Athanasou, and King (2002), who also looked into a similar study in the setting of Australia, found supporting evidence for the findings of the current study by drawing on the findings of the aforementioned investigations. The findings from the current study, which similarly discovered a positive and significant association between employee happiness and corporate citizenship behavior, are also supported by Weikamp and Göritz's (2016) study.

The results of the current study primarily support the encouraging findings from the body of existing research on the influence of employee happiness on improving corporate citizenship behavior. The literature review component of this study provides more evidence in support of some of the prior claims made by other

scholars that employee satisfaction affects corporate citizenship behavior. This suggests that when workers feel satisfied at work, they are more likely to want to go above and beyond what is required of them and to assist other workers in achieving their own goals and objectives as well as the overall organizational aim.

According to the second of this study's research aims, "transformational leadership has a moderating effect on the relationship between employee happiness and organizational citizenship behavior." The research goal was followed by the formulation of the following hypothesis: "Organizations with high levels of transformational leadership will have a stronger positive relationship between employee happiness and organizational citizenship behavior." However, the outcome of hypothesis two (H2) showed the following ( $= 0.092$ ,  $t = 2.757$ ,  $p = 0.05$ ), which meant that hypothesis two (H2) was supported. This was in line with our expectations as stated in the hypothesis. This indicates that transformative leadership moderates the positive and statistically significant impact of employee satisfaction on organizational citizenship behavior. This result is in line with other earlier studies, such as those by Goswami, Nair, Beehr, and Grossenbacher (2016), who discovered that transformational leadership favorably moderated the association between leadership humor and employee job happiness.

The current study, which proved that transformational leadership favorably modifies the link between employee

satisfaction and psychological capital, was in line with Scott's (2020) finding. Corporate factors may be a factor in the lack of a substantial moderating influence of transformational leadership on the connection between employee satisfaction and corporate citizenship activity. According to Podsakoff et al. (2009), organizational characteristics are features that are derived from the management model of the company as stated in its structure or strategy as well as the business culture as reflected in the makeup of its members and interactions. Additionally, Dentnakarin and Rurkkhum (2019) pointed out that organizational traits may affect employees' OCB. In order to impact the relationship between employee satisfaction and organizational citizenship behavior, organizational attributes such as perceived organizational or supervisor support may become more internalized and take precedence over transformational leadership.

### **Theoretical Implications**

The conceptual framework of this study was built on the theoretical gaps revealed in the body of previous research as well as earlier empirical findings. It was also supported by social exchange theory, which was used to explain it. The current study has produced significant theoretical contributions to the study of employee happiness and OCB levels among employees, according to the research findings. Measures of employee satisfaction are crucial in helping us understand corporate citizenship behavior from the employees' point of view, as the analysis in the previous

chapter demonstrated. A similar moderating effect of transformative leadership in the relationship between the aforementioned direct relationships was also found by the study. The study's theoretical contribution in this context has two parts.

### **Practical Implications**

The current study has various practical implications for human resource management techniques in the setting of government institutions based on the research findings. First, the findings imply that perceptions of employee pleasure are a crucial factor in improving employees' OCB levels. The degree of OCB among employees can be significantly increased by government entities by improving their views of satisfaction. Governmental organizations can lessen their staff members' propensity to engage in OCB by fostering a positive work environment. For instance, rewarding staff members who consistently display OCB is one way to promote such behaviors (Organ, 2018).

### **Conclusion**

Overall, the current study has broadened the frontier of knowledge in terms of the moderating effect of transformative leadership on the link between employee happiness and OCB levels. The investigation's results support the basic theoretical presumptions. The current study has made an effort to address all of the research questions and aims, despite some of its limitations. Even though

the root causes of OCB have been the subject of numerous studies, the current study addressed a theoretical gap by taking transformational leadership into account as a crucial moderating factor. Additionally, the moderating role of transformative leadership on the relationship between employee satisfaction and OCB levels is supported by this study's theoretical and empirical findings.

The study was able to pinpoint just how the correlations between exogenous and endogenous factors are theoretically moderated by transformational leadership. In order to further the field of social exchange theory, this study's theoretical framework analyzed employee contentment and OCB levels. The results of this study have important practical ramifications for organizations, particularly public institutions, and managers, in addition to their theoretical contributions. Some suggested directions for future research were also given in light of the limitations of the current study. In conclusion, the current study has significantly advanced both theoretical and applied knowledge in the area of organizational and

industrial psychology, particularly in the context of human resource management.

**Table 1: Direct relationship**

Hyp.	H	Path coefficient	Standard Error	T Stat.	P-value	CI [2.5%;97.5%]	Decision
H1	EH -> OCB	0.553	0.054	10.164	0.000** *	[0.438;0.652]	Supported

Note. \*\*\* P<0.05; BI means Confidence interval; H: Hypothesis; EH means employee Happiness; OCB means organizational citizenship behavior.

**Table 2 : Indirect relationship**

Hyp.	Constructs	Beta	Standard Error	T Stat.	P-value	Decision
H2	LDS* EH -> OCB	0.092	0.033	2.757	0.006***	Supported

Note. \*\*\* P<0.005; EH means Employee Happiness; LDS means transformational leadership; OCB means organizational citizenship behavior.

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