

The relationship between ethnocultural empathy and organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) among public servants in Sabah

ABSTRACT

Organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) throughout literatures provides evidence that benefits for both employees and the organizations in terms of increasing the level of employees' well-being, work satisfaction, customers' satisfaction as well as the quality of work performance. Hence, it is important to understand the possible reasons behind the occurrence of OCB in order to increase the likelihood of employees to engage in OCB. Based on the prosocial motivational concept, empathy is the main motivator to helping behaviours thus open up the possibility of linkage between empathy and extra-role behaviours such as OCB. Moreover, this linkage is important for public employees especially those who are working in the organizations that have multi-ethnic employees as well as providing services to meet vast of societal needs and demands. The present article set out to examine the relationship between ethnocultural empathy and OCB among public employees in Sabah. A cross-sectional survey was used to gather a response of 213 public employees who are working in the Jabatan Pendaftaran Negara Negeri Sabah (JPN) based on the selected districts in Sabah. Results showed positive relationships between organizational citizenship behaviour-individual (OCBI) with empathic feeling and expressions (EFE), empathic perspective taking (EPT), and empathic awareness (EA) dimensions. Results also showed positive relationships between organizational citizenship behaviour-organization (OCBO) with only EFE and EPT dimensions. By focusing the aspect of culture in empathy such as ethnocultural empathy can help researchers to understand how culture influence the cognition and emotions of individuals to understand other people's experiences especially those who have different cultural and ethnic background. Apart from that, the concept itself strengthen the ability to understand the thinking and feeling of others in their cultural context thus increases the likelihood to perform extra-role behaviour such as OCB.