Impact of Organizational Morality on Employee Creativity:Mediating Role of Organizational Pride

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Abstract

Morality shapes the way the employees experience their work and organize their existence or status in society, making people go beyond the usual limits and practice creativity even in the absence of if-then rewards. This research study is a small contribution to the vast literature on the organizational factors and their effects on employee work outcomes. It is a relatively new perspective in terms of Pakistan's advertising industry but not anonymous. The study has explored how organizational morality enhances employee creativity when mediated by emotions of organizational pride in context of employees of advertising agencies. The explanatory study has used simple random sampling to collect data from employees of 17 confirmed advertising agencies in Lahore. Multiple regression analysis was used by applying Baron & Kenny (1986) steps to test mediation. All of the results were significant; organizational pride partially mediated the relationship between organizational morality and creativity of employees.

Key Words: Organizational Morality, Organizational Pride, Employee Creativity.

Introduction

Everyone knows that the world has revolutionized into a global village and market competition has turned fierce, now companies' stock prices are rated by their social campaigns, customers decide to choose their products on the basis of social conduct or values of the producers and employees decide which organization to join on the basis of the organizations' morality (Bauman & Skitka, 2012). Businesses today have to understand that today's generation is plagued with the aura of terms like: ethics, values, morals, fairness, trust and the CSR. The financial benefits and monetary rewards are important but they no longer attract the talent pool of employees as they used to attract in the past. Now, the values of the organization matter more to the employees than any of the if/but punishments or rewards offered by the organization.

Organizational morality instills organizational pride and motivates employees affecting their job attitudes and work behaviors positively. Organizational pride is the most valuable factor in motivating employees' sense of commitment and making them stay with the organization for long term. Organizational morality and pride affect employee job attitudes positively thus ensuring a high level of service orientation through

their sense of commitment, satisfaction, creativity, engagement, etc towards their organization and customers (Katzenbach, 2003).

Creativity may exist not only in jobs requiring creativity like R&D jobs, rather it may exist in any job and at every organization level (Madjar, Oldham & Pratt, 2002). Creativity arises from an individual's personal motivations but one may not deny the role of organizational factors in realizing the creative ideas (Shalley, Zhou & Oldham, 2004). Employees' who feel proud of being part of an organization, feel more committed and show consistency in their work may experience creativity. Studies indicate the need to add creativity in the list of HR related variables like work satisfaction, performance, commitment, learning and effectiveness, etc (Joo, McLean & Yang, 2013).

Significance of Study

Most of earlier studies on organizational morality have been carried out in European context or in the context of developed nations. Research studies have already indicated that organization's sense of morality affects employees' sense of pride and in turn affecting job attitudes concerned with intrinsic motivation and cooperative behaviors (Ellemers, Kingma, van de Burgt & Barreto, 2011). The above study indicated a call for expanding the array of employee job attitudes other than affective organizational commitment and job satisfaction, especially focusing on behaviors that get developed on the basis of cooperative work environment.

Research Purpose

The current research is of course not the pioneer study on organizational morality and its effects on employees in Pakistan, as a recent study has been conducted in this regard concerning the relationship between corporate ethical values and group creativity affecting organizational performance and employees' job commitment in service sector of Pakistan (Iqbal, Bhatti & Zaheer, 2013; Khalid & Zubair, 2014). The study tends to explore the role of employee creativity in this regard and how it is affected by organizational morality and pride, especially in Asian context or more specifically in context of Pakistan.

After reviewing the research studies on morality, it has been known that morality has been regarded as a major source of value creation for groups, but how it behaves in organizational setting and how it affects employees work attitudes is still not fully clear (Leach, Ellemers & Barreto, 2007). Organizational values have mostly been discussed in context of ethics; moral values should also be considered vital to organizational values (Skitka, Bauman & Sargis, 2005). The impact of morality on job attitudes should be given considerable importance and literature should explain relationships with more work context variables apart from commitment and satisfaction (Ellemers, Kingma, van de Burgt & Barreto, 2011). Moreover, HRDI also emphasized that creativity should be explored as a job attitude & not solely as an inborn trait (Joo, Yang & McLean, 2014). Not so many studies have investigated creativity as an outcome of organizational characteristics, to the best of the knowledge.

Theoretical Framework

Social identity paradigm illuminates the way through which membership of a certain social group helps individuals define their personality, their sense of belonging and their attitudes and behaviors (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). So it can be said that, not only the interdependence of individuals within the social groups but also the need for social distinctiveness in relation to the social groups affects behaviors of individuals (Turner, 1991).

The theory of self-categorization and theory of social identity, both assume that individuals start owning the values of the group they belong and start thinking with the same approach as used by their social group (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987). This self-categorization or identification in relation to

the social group results in an increased sense of emotional and psychological attachment of individuals towards the groups or organizations they belong, and motivates them intrinsically to contribute positively (Ellemers, 2001; Ellemers, De Gilder & Haslam, 2004).

Pride in relation to the organization strengthens the belief that the organization is valued positively in society and in order to gain respect individuals must contribute positively in the organization's success (Tyler & Blader, 2002). Pride has direct and positive relationship with building of psychological attachment towards the organization or work group (Tyler, 1999; Branscombe, Spears, Ellemers & Doosje, 2002; Sleebos, Ellemers, De Gilder, 2006).

Studies suggest that any kind of organizational practices that relate to the moral values of the organization stimulate positive work behaviors within employees and they cooperate with other members to achieve organizational goals (Ellemers, van Nunspeet & Scheeper, 2013). SIT proposes that social identification of organization or work group with respect to its moral values increases the attractiveness of the organization to attract potentially skilled and talented employees, in turn fostering creativity and innovation (Riordan, Gatewood & Barnes, 1997).

Hypothesis Development

In the light of Social Identity based model of group cooperation (Tyler, 1999; Tyler & Blader, 2000), the willingness of employees to engage with the organization because of its valued characteristics induces positive job attitudes among employees that indicate their sense of intrinsic work motivation (Deci, 1975; Locke, 1976) and also helps in predicting cooperative behaviors at work (Ellemers, De Gilder & Haslam, 2004). Literature has established that intrinsic motivation is conducive to creativity, whereas extrinsic motivation is detrimental to creativity (Amabile, 1996; Hennessey & Amabile, 2010). In some recent studies, employee creativity was measured by using the intrinsic motivation scale (Gouthier & Rhein, 2011). Organizational morality has been proved as a valuable source that increases work motivation of individuals and thus can be related to creative work behaviors of employees. So on the basis of the literature studies; it can be proposed that positive values of organization intrinsically motivate employees to show creative work behavior.

H1: Perceived Organizational Morality positively affects employee creativity.

The Social Identity model of group cooperation (Smith & Tyler, 1997), when people get psychologically attached with an organization on the basis of its valued characteristics, they contribute to the organization's success. This contribution is only possible if they feel pride in their membership with the organization and gives boost to cooperative work behaviors among the employees (Tyler & Blader, 2002). According to the studies, organizational pride is also an important factor in motivating employees like any financial incentive or pay rise (Thaler, 2000). The relationship between organizational morality and organizational pride has already been tested and positive results were found in European context (Ellemers, Kingma, van de Burgt & Barreto, 2011).

H2: Perceived Organizational Morality positively affects Organizational pride.

Organizational pride is particularly related to creativity because of its centrality to achievement processes as it motivates individuals intrinsically to try out some new ideas and unique solutions to develop new products and services. It also helps them to cooperate with others and foster pro-social behaviors within the organization; making the employees work hard and accomplish something of societal value (Tracy, Shariff & Cheng, 2010). As literature has already established that creativity flourishes when individuals are intrinsically motivated and (Amabile, 1996; Hennessey & Amabile, 2010). Individuals experiencing a series of positive emotions have the ability to easily integrate varied information sources and develop an array of valued and calculated alternatives. Creativity may be stimulated by emotional organizational pride

(Fredrickson, 2001). The interaction with customers stimulates the problem-solving attitude and gives way to new ideas and innovations, especially creative thinking involving novelty and effectiveness (Sternberg, 1999). Individuals recognizing their membership important and feel proud of it, get motivated easily and practice creativity (Tracy, Shariff & Cheng, 2010).

H3: Organizational pride positively affects employee creativity.

Pride as a mediator. Pride has been used as a mediator in a number of studies. A recent study utilized pride as a mediator between passion and moral behavior in context of achievement settings (Bureau, Vallerand, Ntoumanis & Lafrenière, 2013). It indicated that pride contributes to adaptive forms of behavior in social interactions and enhances cooperative behaviors that motivate individuals to work hard within the moral conduct or behavioral setting to achieve recognition or feel pride for the organization. It also considered mal-adaptive or negative behaviors of pride and supported the earlier studies by giving rise to aggression and anti-social behavior (Tracy, Cheng, Robins & Trzesniewski, 2009).

Studies suggested that people consider moral value like honesty, sincerity and trust as an important attribute of the group they belong (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Ellemers, Pagliaro, Barreto, & Leach, 2008). Morality impacts organizational pride and employee commitment more with motivations and intentions (Leach, Ellemers & Barreto, 2007). Organizations usually perform as social actors with their own set of values, traits, intentions and aims (King, Felin & Whetten, 2010); so people evaluate their competency and morality in the same manner as they appraise individuals (Davies, Chun, Da Silva & Roper, 2003).

Pride in one's organization stimulates and motivates employees intrinsically and stirs creativity in them to come up with unique solutions to gain competitive edge in the market and achieve organizational goals (Epley, Waytz & Cacioppo, 2007). So in order to add some value to the literature, the study hypothesized that:-

H4: Organizational pride mediates the relationship between perceived organizational morality and employee creativity.

The overall conceptual model has been presented in Figure 1.
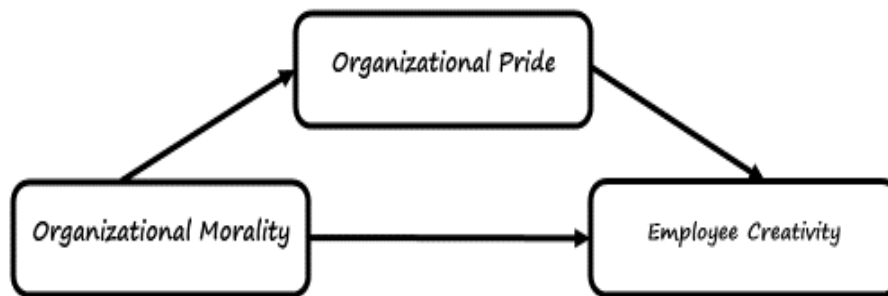
Method

Participants

The target population consisted of employees of 105 confirmed advertising agencies of Pakistan registered under All Pakistan Newspaper Society (APNS) (Apns.com.pk, 2015). But accessing all these agencies was not possible due to time constraints and lack of resources. So the research population and sampling frame

considered only the advertising industry of Lahore; including all the employees of 25 confirmed and provisional accredited advertising agencies in Lahore, registered under the APNS. Out of the 25 agencies; only 17 agencies responded positively to the request, the rest either refused to cooperate or had suspended their operations due to certain circumstances.

The unit of analysis for the study consisted of the all the 300 employees of the 17 advertising agencies working in different departments at all levels i.e. managerial, administrative, creative and non-creative like HR and accounts executives, etc. The initial consent was taken from the advertising agency, and then the employees were informed of the aims and objectives of the study. They were assured of the confidentiality of their personal information by not disclosing it to anyone and using it only for research purpose.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

From a total of 300 randomly distributed questionnaires, 250 questionnaires were returned back by the employees of the advertising agencies, with a response rate of almost 83%. Out of these 250 questionnaires, 226 questionnaires were screened out as the usable sample due to incomplete questionnaires. More than 70% respondents were male, with an average age of 30.7 years and average job tenure of 8.2 years.

Research Instruments

All the items of main study variables like organizational morality and organizational pride were measured on a five point likert scale with '1= not at all' and '5= very much'. While employee creativity was measured by using '1=not at all characteristic' and '5=extremely characteristic'. This likert scaling of the responses allowed the respondents to make slight distinctions in their perceptions as felt.

Perceived organizational morality. Perceived organizational moralitywas measured with a 3-item scale adapted from the measures of morality developed by Leach, Ellemers & Barreto (2007). These items asked the employees of the organization to indicate the extent to which they considered their organizations to be 'honest', 'sincere' and 'trustworthy'. Cronbach alpha value of scale in the study was 0.924.

Organizational pride. It was measured from a 3-item derived autonomous scale of pride developed by Tyler & Blader (2002). These items asked participants to indicate the extent to which they felt proud to work at their respective organizations. It was positively phrased scale. Cronbach alpha value of scale in the study was 0.841.

Employee creativity. It was measured from a 13-item scale developed by Zhou & George (2001); it has been used widely not only for supervisor ratings of employees' creativity but also as self-reported measure of creativity. The scale measured the extent to which participants feel creative at work. It contained no negatively phrased item. Cronbach alpha value of scale in the study was 0.903.

Analysis

In order to investigate the direct relationships between the variables, linear regression analysis was performed (Cohen & Cohen, 1983; Stone & Hollenbeck, 1989). In order to investigate mediating relationship between the variables, a series of linear regression analysis were performed in context of steps laid out by Baron & Kenny (1986) were as follows:- (a)Existence of a significant relationship between independent variable (IV) and the mediating variable (MV); (b) Existence of a significant relationship between mediating variable (MV) and the dependent variable (DV); (c) Existence of a significant relationship between IV and the DV; (ç) Reduction in the significant relationship between IV and DV, in presence of a mediator for partial mediation; or becoming completely insignificant for full mediation. The results were further validated for values of significance, with the help of Sobel's test (Sobel, 1990).

Correlation Analysis

Table 1 contains the mean, standard deviation and correlation values of the variables of the study. Organizational morality (OM) showed a high correlation with organizational pride (OP) ($r = .625$, $p< .01$) and a moderate correlation with employee creativity (EC) ($r = .563$, $p< .01$). Organizational pride (OP) showed a high correlation with employee creativity (EC) ($r = .657$, $p< .01$).

<div align="center">Mean, Standard Deviation & Correlation Analysis (N=226)</div>

Measures	Mean	S.D	OM	OP	EC
OM	3.8746	0.88639	1		
OP	3.5944	0.84514	0.625**	1	
EC	3.6198	0.62185	0.563**	0.657**	1

Note: * $p<.05$, **$p<.01$ (2-tailed), Standard Deviation (S.D.), Organizational Morality (OM), Organizational Pride (OP), Employee Creativity (EC)

Regression Analysis

Hypothesis 1 suggested that organizational morality is positively related to employee creativity. The results in Table 2 show a positive significant and direct relationship between organizational morality and creativity of employees ($\beta = 0.563$, $p<.001$). The value of adjusted R^2 is 0.317 which shows that about 31.7% variance in creativity of employees is inspired by organization's moral values.

Hypothesis 2 proposed that organizational morality is positively related to organizational pride. The results in Table 2 show that a significant and positive relationship exists between the two variables of the study ($\beta = 0.625$, $p<.001$). While the value of adjusted R^2 of 0.523, shows that organizational morality affected more than 50% of variance in organizational pride, a very high value. The results are fully consistent with the previous studies done by Ellemers, Kingma, van de Burgt & Barreto (2011).

Hypothesis 3 suggested that there is a positive relationship between organizational pride and employee creativity. The results in Table 2 show a positive and significant relationship between organizational pride and creativity of employees ($\beta = 0.657$, $p<.001$). The value of adjusted R^2 of 0.429 showed that organizational pride explained 42.9% of variance in the employee creativity. The results were fully consistent with the previous research study done by Gouthier & Rhein (2011).

<div align="center">Regression Analysis (N=226)</div>

	Paths	B
H1	OM → EC	.395
H2	OM → OP	.691
H3	OP → EC	.483

Note: * $p<.05$, **$p<.01$ (2-tailed),), Unstandardized co-efficient (B), Unstandardized co-efficient (Beta), Significance (Sig.), Organizational Morality (OM), Organizational Pride (OP), Employee Creativity (EC)

Mediation Analysis

Hypothesis 4 proposed that organizational pride positively mediates the relationship between organizational morality and employee creativity. The results of step-wise regression analysis have been presented in Table 3. The initial path 'a' was to regress organizational pride (the mediator) on organizational morality (the

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predictor), which turned out to be fully significant (B = .675, $p<$ .001). The second path 'b' regressed employee creativity (the outcome variable) on organizational pride (the mediator), which also turned out to be fully significant (B = .583, $p<$ .001). The third path 'c' regressed employee creativity (the outcome variable) on organizational morality (the predictor), it also turned out significant (B = .395, $p<$ .001). With the significant values of paths 'a', 'b' and 'c' the presence of mediation was confirmed; the last path 'c'' was carried out to check the presence of a partial or full mediation. The last path 'c'' used organizational morality (the predictor) and organizational pride (the mediator) as independent variables and utilized employee creativity (the outcome variable) as the dependent variable and found that 'c'' was also significant (B = .129, $p<$ .05). The p-value in the final path has increased a little but still significantly below 0.05, so it showed that organizational pride (OP) partially mediated the relationship between organizational morality (OM) and employee creativity (EC).

In order to further validate the findings of mediation test, Sobel's test (Sobel, 1990; MacKinnon, Warsi, & Dwyer, 1995) has been utilized. The test statistic (Z) was found to be well over 1.96 with a significant p-value, which means that the results presented above were significant and organizational pride mediated the relationship between organizational morality and employee creativity.

Mediation of Organizational Pride B/W Organizational Morality & Employee Creativity (N=226)

Paths	B	S.E.	T	Beta	Sig.
OM→OP	0.691	0.044	15.747	.525	.000
OP→EC	0.483	0.037	13.027	.657	.000
OM→EC	0.395	0.039	10.194	.563	.000
OM→OP→EC	0.129	0.051	2.538	.183	.012

Note: * $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$ (2-tailed), Unstandardized co-efficient (B), Standard Error (S.E.), Unstandardized co-efficient (Beta), Significance (Sig.), Organizational Morality (OM), Organizational Pride (OP), Employee Creativity (EC)

Discussion

Organization morality has been explored vastly in terms of group morality but very few studies exist on the role of organizational morality. Moreover, the recent study done by Ellemers, Kingma, van de Burgt & Barreto (2011) established that organizational morality enhances organizational pride and affects employee job attitudes. The current study was designed to explore the relationship between organizational morality and employee creativity in context of advertising industry of Pakistan. Literature on the role of organizational morality as a source of organizational attractiveness is not very vast and generalized. Meta analytic reviews indicate that most research studies on the impact of group and organizational factors on employees have focused mainly on group characteristics like competence and warmth (Bettencourt,Dorr, Charlton& Hume, 2001; Mullen, Brown& Smith, 1992). Previous researches have clearly described morality as a major source of value creation for groups (Leach, Ellemers & Barreto, 2007); but how morality behaves in organizational setting and how it affects employees work attitudes is still not fully clear (Ellemers, Kingma, van de Burgt & Barreto, 2011).

Employee creativity is part of employees' work behavior affected by organizational morality. Employee creativity was added to the model as one of the intrinsically motivated work behaviors (Gouthier & Rhein, 2011). As already discussed in literature studies, many researchers believed that creativity is inspired when individuals are motivated intrinsically (Damian & Robins, 2011; George & Zhou, 2001). The literature has already presented organizational morality as a positive source of organizational value (Ellemers, De Gilder & Haslam, 2004) and social identity model of group cooperation (Tyler, 1999; Tyler & Blader, 2000) elicits that anything that is of value to the group or organization, makes employees or members show

positive job attitudes and behaviors; and creativity is one of those work behaviors induced by organizational values as proved by significant results of the study. The creativity of employees was also closely related in context of the advertising industry where most of the employees had job responsibilities that required approaching the problem at hand from a unique perspective, so they also expressed that organizational values affect their work behaviors and attitudes in many different ways.

Employees feel proud of the organization they work for and find untraditional ways to solve the issues related to job, as part of positive job attitudes resulting from the psychological attachment of the employees with the organization (Tyler, 1999). Organizational pride motivates employees intrinsically and makes them achieve creative work behaviors (Tracy, Shariff & Cheng, 2010). According to Social Identity model of group cooperation, in order to achieve social identity employees feel emotionally attached to the organizations they work for and motivate themselves intrinsically expressing positive work behaviors and attitudes (Tyler & Blader, 2000; Tyler, 2001).

The presence of organizational morality produces value for the organization and a sense of identification for the employees who work in moral organizations (Haslam & Ellemers, 2005; Turner, 1987). While organizational pride elicits and motivates employees intrinsically and making them show positive, cooperative work behaviors that allow them to try unique and novel ways to produce products and services (Deci, 1975; Ellemers, De Gilder & Haslam, 2004).

Conclusion

Advertising industry in Pakistan has not been explored widely in research studies but still a few studies exist on the emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and creativity of employees working in advertising agencies in creative and non-creative jobs (Khalid & Zubair, 2014). Scarcity of studies on organizational characteristics of creative industries like advertising industry present researchers with a number of research avenues to explore their culture, values and organizational setting in relation to behavior of their employees. The current study has tried to cover the recognized gaps by studying the role of organizational morality in context of advertising agencies in Pakistan, and how these moral values instill pride in their employees by intrinsically motivating them to nurture creativity of the employees.

Creative industries have a lot to do with morals, and the constant job switching phenomena of their employees may have some connections with the values of the advertising agencies. In today's world with people becoming more aware of the importance of moral values, ethics and judgmental behaviors, employees give more value to organizations which act morally, and teach their employees to practices the same values. It has been suggested that the young graduates rate organizational morality higher than competence (Prooijen, & Ellemers, 2014). Thus, the current study will be significant for advertising agencies not only to seek out the young talented employees who have high aspirations and values but also retain them in the long run to become an asset for the company. The high aspirations and values of these employees will help the organizations to service their customers by improving their products and services. These moral values will also help in shaping employees' attitudes by instilling a sense of pride in them by building the social identity not only of the organization but also of the employees.

The study was limited with a single resource bias as the perceptions do differ from the employers and employees' point of view. Future research studies may look to incorporate some control variables related to age and job tenure of respondents as they also contribute to the creativity of the employees and their understanding of the moral values of the organization. Moreover, organizational morality was related to socially acceptable and responsible behavior of the respondents' organizations, it may have made employees to think more closely at their organizations' values. The responses may turn out to be biased as employees feel shy of announcing their organization as immoral, but this is unavoidable. The study has made every attempt to get anonymous responses from the employees as to reduce biasness, but still the effects of the biasness are unclear either positive or negative. But for future research, may be a different

instrument or qualitative research design should be adopted to study about moral values of organizations in more embedded view than the explicit terms like the scale used here.

In order to strengthen the validity of the model a further research into the role of organizational morality in defining and motivating employee job attitudes and behaviors should be carried out. Especially, the creativity of employees should be analyzed further as a behavioral outcome of organizational morality in order to further validate the findings of the current study.

Organizational morality acts as a significant source and contributor to the organizational success, as the presence of positive moral values like honesty, sincerity and trustworthiness makes employees feel positive about their job and organization as a whole. This may help them to stay with the organization for longer time, exert extra efforts and contribute positively towards the success of the organization.

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