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Organizational citizenship behaviour

An empirical investigation of the impact of age and job satisfaction on Ghanaian industrial workers

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Abstract

Purpose – The study aims to examine the extent to which age and job satisfaction levels were predictive of organizational citizenship behaviours (OCB). From a practical perspective, understanding age- and job satisfaction-related participation in OCB would benefit management's decisions regarding workers' adaptability, general work effectiveness and the effective handling of demographic-dependant organizational characteristics. Members of the sample were 320 Ghanaian industrial workers.

Design/methodology/approach – Data were collected by cross-sectional self-reports. The internal consistency reliability was tested with Cronbach's alpha. A one-way ANOVA and post-hoc analyses were used to compare the mean scores of the four age-cohorts. Hierarchical multiple regression was used to test the main and interaction effects of age and job satisfaction on OCB. A two-way interaction effect of age and job satisfaction on OCB was produced and illustrated graphically.

Findings – Both independent variables were predictive of OCB. Age was a significant predictor of OCB in this sample. In contrast to Western studies, older workers were more active in citizenship behaviours than their younger counterparts. The data also indicated job satisfaction to be a significant predictor of citizenship behaviours. Compared to older workers, younger workers' citizenship behaviours were significantly influenced by job satisfaction. Results were interpreted in the context of East/West cultural values, with special emphasis on Ghanaian cultural influences on OCB. Implications of the findings are discussed.

Originality/value – The study explored for the first time, the joint impact of age and job satisfaction on citizenship behaviours.

Keywords Age, Job satisfaction, Organizational citizenship behaviour, Demographical variables, Socio-cultural values, Ghana

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Organizational citizenship behaviours (hereafter OCB) are one of the most deeply researched variables in the organizational behaviour literature. It has been presented in the organizational literature as discretionary behaviours that go beyond those formally prescribed by the organization and for which there are no direct rewards (Organ, 1988). In the words of Organ (1988, p. 4), the architect of the OCB theory, citizenship behaviour

is individual behaviour that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly, recognized by the formal reward system and, in the aggregate, promotes the efficient and effective functioning of the organization. In effect, they are often regarded as behaviours that go beyond the call of duty and include volunteering for tasks that are not assigned, providing innovative ideas to improve operations and assisting co-workers and or supervisors with job-related assignments. Such altruism is neither prescribed nor required; however, they contribute to the smooth functioning of the organization. Workers who engage in such unprompted productive activities for the advancement of their organizations have been designated as good citizens or good soldiers (Kidder and Parks, 2001; Turnipseed, 2002). OCB performance is theorized to originate from a social exchange relationship between the employee and the organization. In contrast to an economic exchange where behaviour is dictated by a specific contract between employee and the organization, social exchange consists of diffused, non-specific and informal agreements that are based on trust between two parties.

Citizenship behaviours contribute to organizational effectiveness but are important primarily because they shape the organizational, social and psychological context that serves as the catalyst for task activities and processes (Borman and Motowidlo, 1997, p. 100). Because of the importance of good citizenship for organizations, understanding the nature and sources of OCB has long been a high priority for organizational scholars and, understandably, continues to remain so. Empirical research on the nature and antecedents of citizenship behaviours suggest that OCBs are context-related phenomenon that are influenced by both personal characteristics and work environmental factors (Somech and Drach-Zahavy, 2004). Employees' active participation in citizenship behaviours has been noted to be dependent on their appraisals and evaluations of workplace conditions. Workers have actively engaged in citizenship behaviours when they have perceived their organizations to be supportive (Eisenberger et al., 2001; Gyekye and Salminen, 2007), loyal (Setton et al., 1996) and fair with formal procedures and interpersonal treatment (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002).

Considerable research, including several meta-analytic studies, has also explored relationships among personality and contextual variables and OCB (Dalal, 2005). Some of these have examined the extent to which OCB is related to personal ethics (Turnipseed, 2002), pro-social moral orientation (Wagner and Rush, 2000), job satisfaction (Organ, 1988; Ilies et al., 2009), workers' religiosity (Gyekye and Salminen, 2008), workplace safety behaviour and accident frequency (Gyekye and Salminen, 2005a) and counterproductive work behaviour (Dalal, 2005). Meta-analysis on antecedents of OCB (Organ and Ryan, 1995) and critical review of the literature by Podsakoff et al. (2000) point out that personal variables have little or no impact on OCB.

The general lack of attention to antecedents of OCB outside the Western society is surprising, given that Podsakoff et al. (2000, p. 556) suggested more than ten years ago that cultural factors may affect the form of citizenship behaviours observed in organizations. Therefore, the possibility exists that important dimensions of OCB could vary by culture. There is gradually accumulating evidence that the very nature and substance of OCB as it is perceived in non-Western cultures takes somewhat different forms, as some findings have indicated different patterns of correlations from those seen in Western samples (Farh et al., 2004; Kuehn and Al-Busaidi, 2002; Blakely et al., 2005).

In this regard, a significant portion of what is characterized as extra-role commitments and citizenship behaviours in the West has been considered to be in-role activities in the East. Recent formulation of citizenship behaviours in organizations in China differs from that of the West and has been noted to be embedded in Chinese unique social and cultural context (Farh *et al.*, 2004). The current study was designed to address the paucity of research in non-Western societies as well as the inconsistencies in the literature. We empirically investigated the relationship between workers' age, their level of job satisfaction and participation in citizenship behaviours among Ghanaian industrial workers.

Age and job satisfaction in the organizational literature
The impact of age and job satisfaction on organizational behaviours, particularly job performance, has intrigued researchers for the past five decades and could remain a relevant subject of debate for years to come. Industrial gerontologists who have examined this relationship have found them to be among the most important antecedents and essential correlates of organizational performance (Siu *et al.*, 2001; Davis, 2004). Some studies have reported linear effects with job satisfaction increasing with age (Davis, 2004; White and Spector, 1987), whereas others have indicated a curvilinear pattern, with job satisfaction at first declining and then increasing with age (Clark *et al.*, 1996). Generally, older workers have indicated relatively more job satisfaction. Studies by Brief (2002) and Weaver (1978) found no significant relationship between age and job satisfaction. These inconsistencies and contradictions have been confirmed and highlighted in reviews by Oshagbemi (2003).

Age and OCB
Work on the link between age and participation in citizenship behaviours is still in the embryonic stages. Thus far, research on this relationship with Western samples has found little or no effect (Organ and Konovsky, 1989; Smith *et al.*, 1983; Podsakoff *et al.*, 2000). Rather than expecting a main effect for age, Wagner and Rush (2000) have suggested treating age as a moderator of the relationship between altruistic citizenship behaviour and its antecedents. In contrast, recent investigations have indicated a positive association in non-Western studies (Kuehn and Al-Busaidi, 2002; Wanxian and Wenu, 2007). Chinese studies have shown cultural factors as shapers of OCB (Farh *et al.*, 2004; Wanxian and Wenu, 2007), and age to be an important determinant (Wanxian and Wenu, 2007). Data results from Wanxian and Wenu's (2007) survey of 349 Chinese participants suggest that people from collectivistic and high-power-distance cultures, because of their need for group acceptance and subordination to hierarchy (Hofstede, 1984), are more likely to perform OCB even without the presence of other OCB predictors. Additionally, they noted that older employees, in contrast to their younger counterparts, perceived OCB as in-role activities, and indicated relatively more active participation.

Similarly, Kuehn and Al-Busaidi (2002) have reported in their study in Oman (a collectivistic and high-power-distance culture) that participants over 40 years of age indicated significantly higher OCB participation than their counterparts under 30 years. They also noted that the younger Omanis were less satisfied with their jobs. As the current study was undertaken in a nation with identical socio-cultural values to those of China and Oman (Hofstede, 1984), we anticipate that an important component

of citizenship behaviours among Ghanaian industrial workers would involve discretionary pro-social behaviours based on cultural values. Thus:

H1. Despite the contradictions and inconsistencies in the literature, it is predicted that OCB will be positively associated with workers' age: older employees would demonstrate more active participation in citizenship behaviours than their younger counterparts.

Job satisfaction and OCB

Job satisfaction is defined as the positive emotional reactions and attitudes a worker has towards their job assignment (Locke, 1970; Oshagbemi, 2003). It is considered as *one of the most researched concepts in work* and has been recorded to mediate the relationships between workers with work conditions, and organizational and individual outcomes (Dormann and Zapf, 2001). Recent theorizing on job satisfaction describes it as a multifaceted construct and a function of two major factors: dispositional (worker personality traits) and situational factors (workplace factors) (Locke, 1970; Dormann and Zapf, 2001). Other theorists have considered it as a bi-dimensional construct, consisting of *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* satisfaction dimensions (Warr *et al.*, 1979) and *satisfaction* and *dissatisfaction* dimensions (Winifred *et al.*, 1988). The general indication, however, is that job satisfaction is more of an affective reaction to one's job, an evaluative measure and, consequently, an indicator of working conditions (Judge *et al.*, 2000). According to this view, expressions of satisfaction reflect cognitive appraisals of the fairness or equity of the social exchange that employees enjoy with their organizations.

Research data seem to suggest a consistent positive relationship between employee satisfaction and citizenship behaviours. Organ and Lingl's (1995) review of 25 studies found a reliable statistical relationship between OCB and job satisfaction. Organ and Ryan's (1995) meta-analytic review confirms job satisfaction as one of the robust predictors of OCB. Hypothetically, the relationship between job satisfaction and OCB has been long standing and straightforward. This relationship has been explained by the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and the norm of reciprocity[1] (Gouldner, 1960). To the extent that employees view their work contributions as part of an exchange, those who benefit from satisfying work conditions will be more likely to reciprocate by engaging in citizenship behaviours. Thus, a substantial body of research indicates a positive correlation between job satisfaction and OCB: workers with higher levels of job satisfaction have actively engaged in citizenship behaviours more than their colleagues with lower expressions (Ilies *et al.*, 2009; Gyekye and Salminen, 2005a; Shokrkon and Naami, 2009). Similarly, stressful work environment and job dissatisfaction have negatively affected citizenship behaviours (Cropanzano *et al.*, 2003; Chiu, 2006). In reviewing the literature for this study, no study was found on the joint impact of age and job satisfaction on citizenship behaviour:

H2. In line with previous observations, we expect job satisfaction to be a significant predictor of OCB.

RQ1. Because of the absence of ample evidence that bears directly on the joint impact of age and job satisfaction, this relationship is tested, but no hypothesis is offered with regards to its direction.

Current study
The current study attempts to explore the relationships between workers' age, job satisfaction and participation in OCBs. These relationships have been extensively researched and documented among Western samples and have indicated a robust connection between job satisfaction and OCB but not with age and OCB. The current study takes a different approach from previous ones. It was carried out in a non-Western work environment where recent investigations have indicated a positive association between age and OCB (Kuehn and Al-Busaidi, 2002; Wanxian and Wenu, 2007). It investigated the influence of age and job satisfaction on citizenship behaviours by comparing four age-categorized groups. Finally, we make a novel contribution to the literature on OCB by investigating the interaction effect of age and job satisfaction on citizenship behaviours.

The major instrument was Van Dyne *et al.*'s (1994) OCB scale. Proliferation of research on OCB has led to debate over its precise dimensions and operationalization. Smith *et al.* (1983) have recorded two dimensions; Organ (1988), three dimensions; Mackenzie *et al.* (1991), four; and Moorman (1991), five dimensions. These different measurement instruments indicate that there is no definitive structure to measure OCB. We used Van Dyne *et al.*'s (1994) scale because it contains a greater number of items and, accordingly, affords a more comprehensive range of behaviours to assess for citizenship behaviours. Past research has shown this scale to have good psychometric properties, and it has been used extensively in research on citizenship behaviours (Gyekye and Salminen, 2005a, 2008; Turnipseed and Murkison, 2000).

Methodology
Participants were 320 Ghanaian industrial workers. Age was measured by participants' responses to the question, *how old are you?* For age-related comparisons, the sample was divided into four age groups/cohorts from this information. These were: 19-29 years (young workers, $n = 70$, 22 per cent); 30-39 years (middle-aged, $n = 80$, 25 per cent); 40-50 years (old workers, $n = 135$, 43 per cent); and 51 years and above (older adults, $n = 35$, 10 per cent). For the posterior comparison, workers between 19-39 years were classified as young, and those above 40, adult workers. Sixty-five per cent of the participants were male, and 35 per cent, female. Thirteen per cent had 1 year of work experience; 22 per cent, 1-4 years; 21 per cent, 5-10 years; 25 per cent, 11-14 years; and 19 per cent, 15 years and above. Thirty-two per cent ($n = 102$) of the participants were miners, whereas 68 per cent ($n = 218$) were from textiles, timber and saw-mill plants, breweries and food-processing plants.

During lunch break, participants responded to a structured questionnaire in English language, which took 15-20 minutes to complete. Supervisors completed the questionnaire unaided, whereas for illiterate or semi-literature respondents who had difficulty understanding written English, the local language was used via an interpreter. Respondents were assured that their responses would remain anonymous and confidential and without disclosure even to their line managers.

Measures, questionnaire scoring and reliability
OCB were measured with an adapted version of the scale by Van Dyne *et al.* (1994). A total of 20 items with respectable loadings out of their 54-item scale were used. They consisted of six, seven and seven items each on *obedience*, *loyalty* and *participation*,

respectively. Each of these three categories included items that describe specific behaviour relevant to each category: *obedience* denotes behaviours that focus on dutiful performance of the job (sample item: "Always on time at work, regardless of circumstances": $\alpha = 0.76$); *loyalty* denotes allegiance to the organization and promotion of its interests: (sample item: "Volunteering for special assignments": $\alpha = 0.92$); and *participation*, extra participatory contributions to the organization (sample item: "Performing additional work activities": $\alpha = 0.92$). The total coefficient alpha score was 0.92. Participants responded on a 5-point scale, ranging from $1 =$ not at all to $5 =$ very much.

Measures of job satisfaction tend to fall into two broad types: single item global measures and composite measures of satisfaction with various job components. Job satisfaction in the current study was measured with Porter and Lawler's (1968) one-item global measure of job satisfaction. This measure was chosen because single-item measures of overall job satisfaction have been considered to be as robust as scale measures (Dolbier *et al.*, 2005; Wanous *et al.*, 1997) and has been used extensively in the organizational behaviour literature (Nagy, 2002; Edwards *et al.*, 2008; Gyekye, 2005; Gyekye and Salminen, 2006). The measure has five response categories ranging from extremely dissatisfied to extremely satisfied, corresponding to the 5-point response format $1 =$ not at all to $5 =$ very much in use.

Organizational tenure represents the number of months/years that workers have held their current job. It was measured by participants' responses to the question: "How long have you worked in this company?" Response options were: 1-12 months, 1-4 years, 5-10 years, 11-14 years and 15+ years.

Education was measured by participants' markings on the option that corresponded to their educational backgrounds. Response options were: basic education, secondary/technical school, professional/vocational and university.

Results

Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlations for the study variables are presented in Table I. A higher coefficient indicates a stronger correlation between variables.

Results from the correlation analyses indicated strong and positive relationships between age and *job satisfaction* ($r = 0.60$, $p < 0.001$), tenure ($r = 0.75$, $p < 0.001$) and *OCB* ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.001$). All three OCB dimensions inter-correlate positively and highly with alpha coefficients as follows: *obedience* ($r = 0.77$, $p < 0.001$); *loyalty* ($r = 0.92$,

Scales	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Age	38.43	12.17	–						
2. Obedience	19.67	4.57	0.64***	–					
3. Loyalty	24.60	7.19	0.67***	0.88***	–				
4. Participation	25.86	7.28	0.64***	0.83***	0.90***	–			
5. OCB total	70.10	18.23	0.68***	0.93***	0.97***	0.96***	–		
6. Job satisfaction	3.29	1.42	0.60***	0.78***	0.84***	0.84***	0.86***	–	
7. Gender	1.35	0.03	0.12*	0.18***	0.24***	0.19***	0.22***	0.12*	–
8. Tenure	8.58	3.63	0.75***	0.71***	0.74***	0.71***	0.75***	0.69***	0.12*

Table I.
Correlations and descriptive statistics of study variables

Notes: $N = 320$; Level of significance: $*p < 0.05$; $***p < 0.001$

$p < 0.001$); *participation* ($r = 0.92$, $p < 0.001$); and *OCB total* ($r = 0.96$, $p < 0.001$). Older workers had linearly higher OCB values and were more satisfied with their jobs. Thus, the current observation supports *H1*.

To test the group differences, a one-way ANOVA was conducted on the five dependent variables with the between-subject factor age-group. The results revealed significant differences for all dependent variables: *obedience* ($F(3,300) = 76.27$, $p < 0.001$), *loyalty* ($F(3,301) = 100.29$, $p < 0.0001$), *participation* ($F(3,301) = 81.18$, $p < 0.001$), *OCB sum* ($F(3,300) = 105.66$, $p < 0.001$) and *job satisfaction* ($F(3,301) = 46.58$, $p < 0.001$). Posteriori comparison with *t*-tests consistently revealed significant differences between the two younger cohorts (19-39 years), compared to their two older counterparts (40 years and above). The older workers, more than their younger work colleagues, indicated more obedience to their organizations (16.81, $t = 1,497$, df $= 302$, $p < 0.001$), displayed more loyalty (19.62, $t = 14.81$, df $= 303$, $p < 0.001$), participated more actively in the organization's interests (21.04, $t = 13.71$, df $= 303$, $p < 0.001$), recorded higher total OCB scores (57.32, $t = 14.97$, df $= 302$, $p < 0.001$) and expressed greater satisfaction with their jobs (4.01, $t = 11.30$, df $= 303$, $p < 0.001$). These scores indicate OCB and job satisfaction to be considerably higher for older workers than for their younger counterparts (Table II).

Hierarchical multiple regression was used to test the main and interaction effects of age and job satisfaction on OCB. Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure no violation of the necessary assumptions. All independent variables were centred to their mean values prior to the regression analysis to avoid violating the multicollinearity assumption. Workers' demographic characteristics (e.g. marital status, education and religiosity) were eliminated because of their non-significant effect. For the sake of clarity and precision, they were also left out of the table. To eliminate the possible confounding effect of gender, tenure and education on age (Breslin and Smith, 2005; Vecchio, 1993), these three variables were treated as control variables and entered in Step 1. The covariation of the control variables explained 58 per cent ($p < 0.001$) of the variance of total OCB.

In Step 2, the main effects were tested by regressing OCB and its components on age and job satisfaction. The main effect of age ($\beta = 0.16$, $p < 0.001$) and job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.63$, $p < 0.01$) on OCB and its components indicated significant results. The two-way interactions between age and job satisfaction were assessed in Step 3. The results indicated significant two-way interaction effects ($\beta = -0.11$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting a statistically significant moderation effect of age on the relationship

OCB	19-39 years (n = 150)		40 years and above (n = 170)		Statistics significance t-test
	M	SD	M	SD	
Obedience	16.81$_a$	4.56	22.14$_b$	2.79	$t(302) = -14.97$
Loyalty	19.61$_a$	6.95	28.94$_b$	3.77	$t(303) = -14.81$
Participation	21.04$_a$	7.28	30.06$_b$	3.01	$t(303) = -13.71$
OCB total	57.46$_a$	17.71	81.15$_b$	9.27	$t(302) = -14.97$
Job satisfaction	2.47$_a$	1.38	4.01$_b$	0.99	$t(303) = -11.30$

Note: Means with different subscripts in the same row are significantly different at $p < 0.001$

Table II.
OCB: age and job satisfaction: post-hoc analysis

between job satisfaction and OCB. The two-way interactions indicated a significant variance ($\Delta R^2 = 0.01$, $p < 0.001$) for OCB, beyond the control variables, and the main effects of age and job satisfaction. Table III displays the results of the hierarchical regression analysis.

A simple slope analysis was constructed to probe as well as illustrate the nature of the significant interactions (Figure 1). In line with Aiken and West's (1991) recommendation, the regression lines were constructed using cut points of one standard deviation above and below the mean values of job satisfaction and age. As reflected on Table IV, both slopes were significant and in line with the results obtained for the two-way interaction effect (younger workers: $\beta = -0.18$, $p < 0.001$; older workers: $\beta = -0.21$, $p < 0.001$).

The interaction effect indicated that the association between OCB and job satisfaction was dependent on workers' age. The negative standardized coefficients inform that workers' age negatively altered this positive association. In other words, the link between OCB and job satisfaction was inverted by the effects of the different age cohorts. As depicted by Figure 1, younger workers' OCB activities were significantly affected by job satisfaction. However, for older workers, that effect was much less than that found for their younger colleagues. This finding addresses *RQ1*.

Discussion

The current study empirically investigated the relationship between age, job satisfaction and OCB. The major finding was an association between age and participation in citizenship behaviours. As anticipated in *H1*, older workers – defined as workers older than 40 years – participated more actively in citizenship behaviours than their younger counterparts. This observation is in contrast to studies among Western samples (Organ and Konovsky, 1989; Smith *et al.*, 1983) but fairly consistent with non-Western reports (Kuehn and Al-Busaidi, 2002; Wanxian and Wenu, 2007) that have found employees' age to be an important antecedent of citizenship behaviours. Ostensibly, a worker's cultural orientation seems to be a vital determinant factor in their involvement in citizenship behaviours. The social-cultural values which account for the above observation is explained below.

In Ghana's collectivistic culture, organizational members relate more readily to communal, cooperative and collective value system, with emphasis on interpersonal harmony, which sharply contrasts with the Western individualism, competitiveness and independence (Hofstede, 1984). Paramount among the socio-cultural values of the traditional Ghanaian good neighbourliness are a sense of belonging to a larger community; importance on status, prestige and position; and respect for hierarchy, authority and seniority, particularly, the elderly (Gyekye, 2001; Gyekye and Salminen, 2005b). In both domestic and organizational settings, people are obliged to be obedient and loyal to their respective superiors and management. Therefore, the work environment is characterized by a hierarchical system based on inequality, paternalism and submission to authority.

Older persons are often revered and tend to command a lot of respect both within the domestic and work environment. As custodians of traditional values, they are regarded as role models, who have to maintain and enhance this reputation by their visible involvement in both domestic and workplace activities. Maintaining this respect and socially sanctioned responsibility involves not only good interpersonal relations within

Predictors	Obedience			Loyalty			Participation			OCB total		
	Step 1 (β)	Step 2 (β)	Step 3 (β)	Step 1 (β)	Step 2 (β)	Step 3 (β)	Step 1 (β)	Step 2 (β)	Step 3 (β)	Step 1 (β)	Step 2 (β)	Step 3 (β)
Step 1												
Gender	0.10*	0.08*	0.05	0.16***	0.13***	0.12***	0.11**	0.08**	0.07*	0.13***	0.10***	0.09***
Tenure	0.69***	0.22***	0.22***	0.72***	0.19***	0.19***	0.69***	0.14**	0.14**	0.73***	0.18***	0.19***
Education	0.06	0.02	0.01	0.04	0.00	−0.01	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.05	0.01	0.00
Step 2												
Age		0.15**	0.13***		0.16***	0.14***		0.14***	0.32***		0.16***	0.14***
Job satisfaction		0.52***	0.52***		0.59***	0.59***		0.65***	0.87***		0.63***	0.63***
Step 3												
Age × job satisfaction			−0.14***			−0.11***			−0.08**			−0.11***
R^2	0.51	0.67	0.69	0.57	0.78	0.79	0.51	0.76	0.76	0.58	0.81	0.82
ΔR^2	0.51***	0.17***	0.02***	0.57***	0.21***	0.01***	0.51***	0.25***	0.01***	0.58***	0.23***	0.01***
ΔF	107.06***	77.66***	17.36***	135.30***	144.35***	17.16***	107.01***	155.37***	6.73***	141.93***	187.71***	18.86***

Notes: Level of significance: $*p < 0.05$; $**p < 0.01$; $***p < 0.001$

Table III.
Hierarchical
regression analysis
predicting
organizational
citizenship behaviour
by age and job
satisfaction

Figure 1.
Two-way interaction
effect of job
satisfaction and age
on OCB
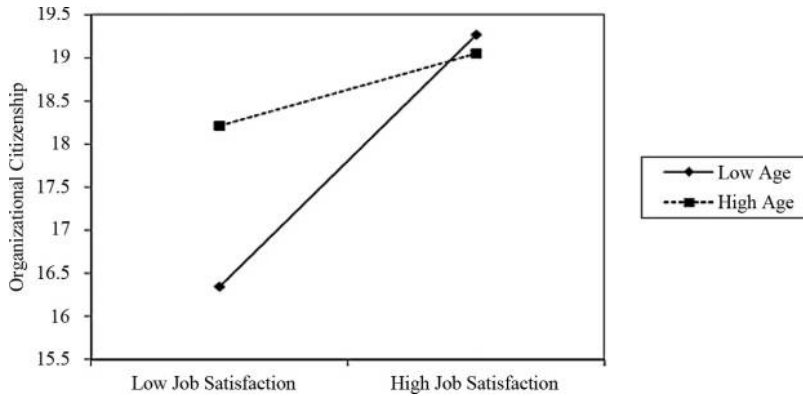
Table IV.
Results of the simple
slope analysis and
t-test for the
interaction effect of
job satisfaction and
age

Combinations	Simple slope	Standard error	β	*t*-test
Younger workers	−1.97	0.39	−0.18***	−5.01
Older workers	−1.97	0.39	−0.21***	−5.01

Note: ***$p < 0.001$, two-tailed

the community but also a generalized sense in the workplace that they are positive contributors to the welfare of the organization. Accordingly, it is not uncommon to find older individuals to be less self-centred and to act more altruistically, promote and nurture personal ties between co-workers, help resolve instances of petty disagreements and even help co-workers with family problems.

In the current study, the older employees might have internalized the intrinsic value of altruistic behaviours to their organizations and demonstrated citizenship behaviours instinctively whenever the need arose to behave in an altruistic manner. Thus, for Ghanaian older employees, decisions to actively participate in citizenship behaviours originate from a socially responsible norm predicated on cultural values and a belief in the moral imperative of helping others and their organizations without regard to future personal gains. Unlike their younger counterparts, their citizenship behaviours are less likely to be influenced and determined solely by work environmental factors and job satisfaction. They were doing what they considered to be part of their societal and collective responsibilities. These conclusions are validated by research in the literature on altruistic and pro-social behaviours that has documented that increases in altruistic and pro-social behaviours respond to age with a corresponding decline in hedonistic attitude (Baruch *et al.*, 2004; Brief, 2002). Empirical evidence from these sources suggest that in contrast to young workers who tend to coordinate their needs with those of others in a more transactional manner, older workers tend to operate in terms of internal standards that meet mutual and moral obligations.

Gallie *et al.* (2001) have documented from their large-scale UK survey that organizational commitment tends to be relatively lower among workers under 35 years of age but peaks among older workers (aged 55 years and above). Peeters and Van Emmerik (2008) have observed that relative to younger workers, older workers have a

propensity to engage in development activities and display higher commitment to their organizations. Additional empirical evidence also suggest that older workers have higher needs of affiliation and a strong sense of *belongingness* with their organizations (Armstrong-Stassen and Schlosser, 2011) and exhibit better emotion regulation (Lockenhoff and Carstensen, 2004) than their younger counterparts. Wagner and Rush (2000) have found antecedents of altruistic organizational behaviour among young employees to be different from antecedents among their older counterparts. Unlike their older counterparts, altruistic behaviour among young employees was significantly related to commitment, trust in management and job satisfaction. The collective implication of these findings is that relative to older workers, younger workers are more influenced by the norm of reciprocity and tend to have paramount concern about fairness, job satisfaction and equity in the workplace. This line of augmentation ostensibly provides an explanation for our findings regarding *RQ1*. Data results displayed in Table IV and Figure 1 indicate that the young workers' OCB was significantly influenced by job satisfaction than their older counterparts. Plausibly, young Ghanaian workers' participation in citizenship behaviours is governed by a norm of reciprocity predicated on issues of fair treatment and job satisfaction.

Our data also indicated a significant positive association between age and job satisfaction. Older workers expressed greater job satisfaction than their younger counterparts. *H2* was thus supported. The impact of job satisfaction was as robust as those recorded in Western studies (Smith *et al.*, 1983; Smith and Hoy, 1992; Grace, 2004). According to extant organizational literature, OCB–job satisfaction relationship is based on the norm of reciprocity (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960): the greater the derived satisfaction, the greater the motivation to actively participate in citizenship behaviours (Gyekye and Salminen, 2005a; Konovsky and Pugh, 1994; Podsakoff *et al.*, 2000). The traditional respect for age and seniority means that older workers are treated with dignity and deference, considered structurally superior to their younger counterparts and, quite frequently, accorded some rights and privileges. On most occasions, they deputize for supervisors, are given greater autonomy and discretion and have their mishaps overlooked. Additionally, they tend to have flexible work options and are assigned (or assign to themselves) less demanding jobs with little or no exposure to hazards and risks (Gyekye, 2001; Gyekye and Salminen, 2009a).

In effect, older workers have been provided with a level of influence over organizational processes and have, therefore, perceived that they matter and are valued members of their organizations. With such complimentary experience, they had perceived a sense of inclusiveness, more organizational support (Gyekye and Salminen, 2009b) and expressed greater job satisfaction than their younger counterparts. Consequently, they had felt a sense of indebtedness and a need to reciprocate in terms that benefit their organizations and did so with their commitments to citizenship behaviours. On the other hand, younger workers who do not have the benefits and favourable work conditions that their older counterparts do, indicated lower job satisfaction and had lacked the motivation to actively participate in citizenship behaviours.

Practical implications
The current findings have two important implications. First, to encourage citizenship behaviours and reap the benefits that come with it, Ghanaian organizations could

consider adjusting their human resource policies and practices to fit the needs of workers of different ages. As OCB seems to increase with age, the visible involvement of older workers in both the organizations' formal and informal activities would be beneficial. In this direction, job assignments of older workers could be redesigned to offer them more mentoring roles. This would give them the opportunity to not only pass on their skills and expertise, but more importantly, to be effective role models for the subordinate workforce. Second, as young Ghanaian workers' participation in citizenship behaviours seems to be governed by a norm of reciprocity predicated on issues of fair treatment and job satisfaction, organizational management in Ghana could identify those aspects of work that are causing job dissatisfaction and implement the required changes aimed at improving job satisfaction levels. Organizational structures could be put in place to provide young workers with challenging work assignments, implement fairness polices, recognize and openly reward subordinate workers who actively participate in OCB activities.

Ensuring a satisfying and supportive work environment would have wide-ranging benefits for the organizations. As espoused by the social exchange (Blau, 1964) and the reciprocity theories (Gouldner, 1960), there will be perceived obligation on the part of young workers to reciprocate these gestures in the form of citizenship behaviours and other pro-organizational behaviours. In due course, organizational management would see a return on their investment in terms of lower accident frequencies (Gyekye and Salminen, 2005a, 2009a), less absenteeism and lower organizational tenure (Richardson and Vandenberg, 2005; Chen *et al.*, 1998), decline in counterproductive work behaviours (Dalal, 2005; Williams *et al.*, 2002) and increase in efficiency and productivity (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2000; Sun *et al.*, 2007).

Limitations

The primary strength of this study is its empirical disposition. Participants were authentic workplace workers. Although these results are encouraging, it is also important to consider that the study is reliant on self-reported instruments. Therefore, there is the possibility for common method variance among some of the scales. Reviews by Podsakoff *et al.* (2003), Spector (2006) and meta-analytic research by Crampton and Wagner (1994) indicate that, although this problem continues to be cited regularly, the magnitude of distortions is rather minimal. It is also expected that the assurance of anonymity and confidentiality lowered this distortion. Besides, OCB ratings by supervisors have been found to be less accurate and more range-restricted than self-ratings (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). Self-reported measures have been successfully used in OCB studies (Gyekye and Salminen, 2005a, 2008; Turnipseed and Murkison, 2000). The cross-sectional and correlational design of the study precludes causal inferences.

Notwithstanding, our findings are informative with respect to the importance of culture on citizenship behaviours. They complement previous propositions on OCB as a context-related phenomenon influenced by a variety of situational factors, in this case, one's cultural orientation. On the whole, they contribute to the growing body of research which has identified culture as an important variable for consideration in organizational behaviour. They provide credence to Farh *et al.*'s (2004) and Kuehn and Al-Busaidi's (2002) findings among Chinese and Omani samples, respectively. The current results may, thus, apply to substantial numbers of African, Latin American and South East Asian countries with cultural characteristics similar to those of Ghana. Therefore,

generalizability of the findings is limited and should be done with caution. As this study is among the initial steps in research on OCB in non-Western nations, additional investigations in this direction are in order. Thus, a culture-comparative analysis is advocated.

Note

1. Basically, what these theories espouse is that expression of positive effect and concern to others create a feeling of indebtedness and a corresponding sense of obligation to respond positively in return. Workers who perceive a high level of organizational concern and support have felt a sense of indebtedness and a need to reciprocate in terms that benefit their organizations. Such reciprocals include personal sacrifices which usually translate into active engagement in citizenship behaviours as part of their job requirements.

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