The Moderating Role of Work Locus of Control in Relationship between Interpersonal Communication and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

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Abstract: The current research aims at investigating the relationships between locus of control, interpersonal communication and organizational citizenship behaviour. We focused on the variables which are due to the direct impact on the behaviour of an employee and on the orientation thereof towards organizational outcomes being concentrated on interpersonal relationships. Data were collected using an online survey method of 223 employees from various organizations coming from both public and private sectors organizations from Romania. The findings of this study revealed the role of WLOC on the relationship between IC and OCB. Both the analysis of the correlation data between the WLOC and the independent variable (IC), respectively the dependent variable (OCB), as well as the moderation analysis of WLOC was tested in its role of intervention on the relations between dependent and independent variables, shows us its important role in the behaviour of individuals at work. The results of this research are discussed in the light of the internal WLOC's role in the relationship between attitudes and behaviours and reveal that individuals with a higher I-WLOC show higher availability and skill in communication process, with positive results to OCB. The implications with regard to theoretical research and organizational practice are also discussed. Organizations should therefore adapt the assessment and development programs to pay particular attention to the individual particularities and context of the work groups and to enhance the degree of employee participation in the organizational processes and their level of identification with the organization.

Keywords: *Work locus of control; interpersonal communication; organizational citizenship behaviour, internal work locus of control.*

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1. Introduction

The current economic context, characterised by an acute shortage of skilled personnel and fewer manpower opportunities, imposes a significant reconfiguration of the employers' manner of understanding the needs of members and labour groups, as well as the intervention instruments – in the sense of strengthening organisational relationships.

The main purpose of this study is to identify the mediator role of the locus of control mechanisms in interpersonal communication and in organisational citizenship behaviour.

Communication is the operative factor with respect to operations, processes and systems that bring together both the constituent units of organisation, and the organisation itself, within the economic and social framework. Communication within a work group enables the coordination of efforts for the purpose of fulfilling the organisational objectives and targets; employees have a better understanding of their role within the group and respond more promptly to its requirements.

1.1. Interpersonal communication

According to Campbell & Öznur (2016) interpersonal communication is characterised by two factors: external perception and internal disavowance. External perception defines an individual's ability to interact with the others, and it was ascertained to be closely related to his/her perception ability, and also to his/her interpersonal communication skills. A high level of internal disavowance refers to an individual's desire to remove the affective-communicational distance between individuals, and represents a manifest factor in the individual's desire to communicate, his/her flexibility and skill with respect to interpersonal communication.

Sypniewska (2014) classified the factors below as being associated with interpersonal relationships: good relations with colleagues, good relations with superiors, communication management, communication with other groups and the recognition of superiors. The economic aspects of work are indicated as having a lower impact on job satisfaction than the stability of employment, and positive emotions that accompany interpersonal relationships play greater significance in the context of activity.

A climate of supportiveness confers many benefits to an organisation. This communication dimension will enhance the degree of employees' participation in decision making, as well as their level of identification with respect to the organisation. In a democratic workplace,

there is a communicative link between participative decision making, openness, trust and supportiveness (Cheney, 1995).

1.2. Locus of control and its role in communication

According to Spector (1988), the personal behavioural tendency or the locus of control represents the direction towards which individuals tend to attribute what happens to them to certain internal factors (e.g. skills, efforts, perseverance) or to certain external factors (e.g. chance, other people, divine intervention).

In terms of the relationship between the locus of control and the organisational communication strategies, research shows that, if the locus of control entails preference of internality or externality, the interpersonal communication strategies will be adopted in a differentiated manner.

For example, individuals who focus on the internal plan will assign more value to communication within organisations which undertake responsibilities for their own actions (strategies of internal development), while employees oriented towards the exterior will manifest higher interest for organisations which reduce the assessment of responsibility for internal actions (strategies of rejection) and consider the obtained results as the effects of the environment on them.

Findings have indicated that individuals with a high level of internal locus of control also reported higher levels of interest in communication with peers and with the management, while employees with an external locus of control indicate significantly lower levels of interest in communication (Avtgis & Brogan, 1999).

A study focused on the professional performance and on the locus of control concluded that the locus of control is related to several important variables, including interpersonal communication and perceptions regarding the work environment (Wang, Bowling, & Eschleman, 2010).

Chen & Silverthorne (2008) ascertained the connection between the locus of control and the behavioural variables associated with work place as regards professional satisfaction in the case of Taiwanese accountants, the authors considering that employees with an internal locus of control have a better employment rate, *reported higher levels of job satisfaction and job performance*. (Chen & Silverthorne, 2008: 579).

Turnipseed (2018) examined whether the locus of control mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and organisational citizenship behaviour; in the case of individuals with a strong internal locus of control, the relation between emotional intelligence and organisational citizenship behaviour is stronger. The findings have shown that the locus of

control strengthened the relation between emotional intelligence and organisational citizenship behaviour addressed to the individual, but did not have any effect on the relation with the organisational citizenship behaviour addressed to the organisation.

Turnipseed & Bacon (2009) found the positive relations between the work locus of control and the total score of organisational citizenship behaviour, as well as each all citizenship subscales. The individuals with a high score of the internal locus of control consider that they can control the difficult situations occurring at their workplace. *They likely react proactively showing sportsmanship behavior, while formulating action plans to reduce such inconveniences. Externally oriented scorers who believe that they have little control over their fates may react passively with complaints (lack of sportsmanship) rather than working to change the situation* (Turnipseed & Bacon, 2009: 862).

In accordance with the above mentioned study, Turgut and Tokmak (2014) noted that the locus of control has a positive and significant effect on organisational citizenship behaviour, and that the result of such study confirms the theory whereby the more encouraging an organisational environment is for employees, the more will they tend to show the components of the internal locus of control, as well as the organisational citizenship behaviours.

1.3. Organisational citizenship behaviour

The concept of organisational citizenship behaviour was first raised by Organ and his partners in the '80s (Yao & Mingchuan, 2011). Organ believes that organisational citizenship behaviour is a personal and official nature, not being directly mentioned in the organisational reward systems, but improving the organisation's effectiveness and efficiency (Appelbaum et al., 2004; Hall, Zinko, Perryman, & Ferris, 2009).

According to Kondalkar (2007: 93), the concept of organisational citizenship behaviour *indicates a sense of belonging to a particular organization as if you were citizen of that organization, but it depends as to the contribution made by organization to have developed such feelings.*

Organisational citizenship behaviour refers to everything that employees choose to do, in a spontaneous and willing manner, such actions often falling outside the scope of official requirements, and it represents a component of the general organisational behaviour.

Currently, the study of the concept of organisational citizenship behaviour has drawn the attention of managers and researchers. This type of behaviour is considered to represent one of the main means of increasing the efficiency of an organisation (Jaw, et al, 2003). Findings have indicated a

significant positive correlation between labour satisfaction and organisational citizenship behaviour (Shokrkon & Naami, 2009), as well as a high level of work satisfaction, which leads to an individual intention to cooperate, determinant for the organisational citizenship behaviour (Intaraprasong, Warunee, Krugkrunit, & Subhadrabandhu, 2012).

It was ascertained, with respect to the relation between locus of control and job satisfaction, that the individuals who indicate an internal locus of control are more satisfied with their job than those who indicate an external locus of control (Ng, Sorensen, & Eby, 2006; Wang et al., 2010).

It was also proven that organisational citizenship behaviour has a positive impact on the employees' performance and wellbeing, this having in its turn visible indirect effects on the organisation. Moreover, the management should also be trained with regard to organisational citizenship behaviour, and organisational citizenship behaviour should be included in the performance assessments, for the purpose of actively encouraging it among employees.

The constructs we upraised in our research represent essential aspects in terms of the socio-emotional adaptation of individuals to the organisational environment, therefore we have chosen to investigate such individual variables in the context of work groups, also monitoring the role of work locus of control has in moderating the relations between interpersonal communication and organisational citizenship behaviour.

2. Objective and hypothesis

The current study aims at investigating the relations between interpersonal communication, work locus of control and organizational citizenship behaviour. Specifically, we suggest the following research questions:

- What is the relation between Interpersonal Communication ICS and Locus of control WLOC and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour OCB?
- What is the relation between Interpersonal Communication ICS and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour OCB?
- What is the relation between Interpersonal Communication ICS and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour OCB?
- Is Locus of control WLOC a moderating factor for the relation between Interpersonal Communication ICS and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour OCB?

3. Variables and Research Methods

In order to get the relevant data, we have used the following instruments:

Interpersonal Communication Scale (Campbell & Öznur, 2016) – questionnaire assessing the interpersonal communication skills, designed on two dimensions: External perception, defined as the individual's ability to interact with the others, and Internal disseverance, defined as the individual's desire to remove the distance between individuals in the process of communication, to assess an individual's desire to communicate, flexibility and communication skills. The questionnaire consists of 7 items, using the Likert scale.

For the “external perception” dimension, the minimum score is 4, and the maximum score is 20; for the “internal disseverance” dimension, the minimum score is 3, and the maximum score is 15; the total score ranges between 7 and 35.

The internal consistency Cronbach's Alpha tests showed values of 0.75 for the total scale, 0.74 for external perception, and 0.51 for internal disseverance (Campbell & Öznur, 2016).

The Work of Locus of Control Scale (Spector, 1988) – a 16-item scale, which assesses an employee's generalised perception concerning his control at the workplace, along two directions: internal locus (the concerns around can be influenced by personal behaviour) and external locus (the external events cannot be influenced). The dimensions will be measured by a 6-level Likert scale, comprising categories of response ranging from 1 (disagree very much), to 6 (agree very much). A higher score on this instrument indicates an external locus of control, while a lower score indicates an internal locus of control (Spector, 1988).

According to the previous findings, the estimated average WLCS in Romania (Spector, 2006) is of 46.5. Scores higher than this level indicate an external locus of control, while scores lower than 46.5 indicate an internal locus of control. The internal consistency Cronbach's Alpha tests showed values of 0.75 (Chen & Wang, 2007).

Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (Spector & Fox, 2009) – represents a 20-item instrument designed to assess the frequency of organisational citizenship behaviours performed by employees, reflecting both the actions directed towards the organisation, and towards the persons from within the organisation, like co-workers. Distinct scores can be calculated both for subscales that reflect acts directed towards the organisation (OCBO), and acts directed towards co-workers (OCBP). The

two dimensions are measured using a 5-level Likert scale which comprises categories of response ranging from 1 (never), to 5 (every day).

All the instruments were “self-reported” applied online, the research being transversal and correlative.

All participants belonged to an organisational group, working in privately - in publicly- owned institutions.

The data was derived from a convenience sample consisting of 223 participants, of which 161 were females and 62 were males. They were all employees coming both from public and private sector organisations in Romania, ages were between 26 and 61 in three clusters ($M=38,88$; $SD=6,28$) and work experience structured in three clusters (under 6 years, between 7 and 15 years, over 15 years).

4. Results

The descriptive statistics method was applied for gathering, sorting, organising and summarising the data collected (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2005). Hence, this was analysed in terms of the existence of any possible relationships which can assess and test the research questions (Elmes, Kantowitz, & Roediger, 2012).

As shown in Table 01, the highest scores for interpersonal communication factors were obtained for external perception ($M=13.58$, $SD=2.87$). Regarding the work of locus of control scale values, the results shows an internal tendency ($M=42.96$, $SD=11.46$), while the total scores for the organisational citizenship behaviour ($M=74.13$, $SD=15.87$) indicate a high value in the scale range. Also, the analysis of Skeweness and Kurtoisis showed that data distribution is normal.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics (IC, WLOC, OCB, N = 223)

	Mean Statistics	Std. Deviation Statistics
IC - External Perception	13.58	2.87
IC - Internal Disseverance	11.39	2.24
IC - Total_Scores	24.97	4.45
WLOC - Total_Scores	42.96	11.46
OCB - Total_Scores	74.13	15.87

This research contains a relational approach, used for establishing the possible relationships between variables.

The relationships between variables were analysed through a determination of the Pearson correlation coefficient. The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) is described as a measure of the linear correlation between two quantitative variables, being able to indicate direction (positive and negative) and correlation strength (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2005). The stronger the correlation is, the more reliable the estimation will be (Elmes et al., 2012). Table 2 reports the inter-correlations between the studied variables.

Table 2. Correlations between IC, WLOC, OCB (N = 223)

		IC Total Scores	WLOC Total Scores	OCB Total Scores
IC – Total Scores	Pearson Correlation	1	-.317**	.167*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0	0.012
WLOC – Total Scores	Pearson Correlation	-.317**	1	-.278**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0		0
OCB – Total Scores	Pearson Correlation	.167*	-.278**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.012	0	

It can be ascertained that all the three variables are correlated; hence, a moderate positive correlation can be identified between IC and OCB ($r=.167$, $p<0.05$), as well as strong negative correlations between IC and WLOC ($r=-.317$, $p<0.01$) and between WLOC and OCB ($r=-.278$, $p<0.01$).

The negative correlations between WLOC and the other variables express a connection between the internal component of the locus of control and interpersonal communication, respectively organisational citizenship behaviour.

The present research was conducted on the basis of two statistical analysis protocols, in order to determine both the relationship between variables, and the relationships of causality. According to the correlation studies, one cannot conclude that a factor generates or causes another factor, because it is possible for many other factors to vary simultaneously with the measured factors.

A useful research protocol for this study is represented by the moderation analysis. The moderation of a relationship entails the increase or the decrease in the intensity with which two variables are associated.

Within the moderation analysis (Baron & Kenny, 1986), the moderator is a qualitative or a quantitative variable that affects the direction or the intensity of the relationship between independent variable (VI - x) and effect (VD - y). Sometimes, the moderator variables can even block the causal relationship between X and Y.

The effect of the moderator variable manifests itself on the sign and intensity of the relationship between VI and VD, symbolised in figure 2 by coefficient "c". This is higher or lower, positive or negative, function of the role played by the moderator variable.

Figure 1. Model 1 of the moderation relationship (Baron & Kenny, 1986)

In order to have a complex image of the obtained results, it is important to conduct research on the moderator role of the WLOC with respect to the relationship between the independent variable – Interpersonal communication and the dependent variable - Organisational citizenship behaviour.

Thus, the moderation analysis was performed in the following configuration:

Table 5. Moderation analysis between the research variables

Independent variable VI (X)	Moderator variable Mo (M)	Dependent variable VD (Y)
Interpersonal communication	Locus of control	Organisational citizenship behaviour

Role played by the WLOC (M) in moderating the relationship between IC (X) and OCB (Y)

General model: $F(3, 219) = 7.82, p < .001, R^2 = .1$

Predictors:

Interpersonal communication $b = 1.85$, $t(219) = 2.01$, $p = .08$ – significant, for each increase in Interpersonal communication with one unit, it results an increase in Labour satisfaction with 1.85 units.

Locus of control $b = .54$, $t(219) = 1.04$, $p = 0.08$ – significant, for each increase in Locus of control with one unit, it results an increase in Labour satisfaction with 1.04 units.

Interaction $b = -.03$, $t(219) = -1.73$, $p = .08$

For an average level of the Locus of control, Interpersonal communication $b = .32$, $t(219) = 1.31$, $p = .19$ – for an average Locus of control, upon each increase in Interpersonal communication with one point, the effect is represented by an increase in Organisational citizenship behaviour with 0.2 points.

For a low level of (internal) Locus of control, Interpersonal communication $b = 0.78$, $t(219) = 2.16$, $p = .03$ – for an internal Locus of control, upon each increase in Interpersonal communication with one point, the effect is represented by an increase in Organisational citizenship behaviour with .78 points.

For a high level of the Locus of control, Interpersonal communication $b = -.15$, $t(219) = -.42$, $p = .68$ – for an external Locus of control, upon each increase in Interpersonal communication with one point, the effect is represented by a decrease in Organisational citizenship behaviour with .15 points.

When the Locus of control value is under 36.69, Interpersonal communication and Organisational citizenship behaviour have a significant relationship, $t(219) = 1.97$, $p = .05$, $b = .54$. The higher the (external) Locus of control value, the lower the relationship between Emotional intelligence and Labour satisfaction, $b = -.58$, $t(219) = -1.02$, $p < .05$.

5. Discussions

This chapter will discuss these findings in the light of the previous research, as well as the practical implications of such findings, for the purpose of creating an interventional starting point with respect to future research.

In accordance with the previous research (Ahmad & Bakar, 2003; Coleman, Irving, & Cooper 1999; Knudsen, Johnson, Martin, & Roman, 2003; Wang et al., 2010), this study identified the relationship between IC, WLOC and OCB, highlighting the moderator role of WLOC with regard to the relationship between IC and OCB.

Positive interpersonal communication plays an important part in organisational efficiency. It may have a significant impact on factors like organisational performance and behaviour, and lastly, growth of the organisation's success.

Generally, the processing of information and quality relationships are perceived as a source of power which allows employees to gain a wider perspective of the organisation. The fulfilment of the employees' needs and desires represents the communication function for the job duties, and, consequently, a behaviour open for communication allows managers to generate behaviours adequate for the organisational purposes, with support from the working group. Both employers and employees want a climate which encourages communication, due to its benefits.

The consequences of a favourable organisational communication have an impact on the growth of the personnel's citizenship behaviour.

In other words, the more frequent an internal locus of control among individuals, and the more encouraging the environment for communication, the more the employees will participate in the decision-making process, will have confidence in their superiors, subordinates and co-workers, will be opened and will understand the objectives of the organisation, manifesting a positive attitude towards the organisation, with effects on the citizenship behaviours within the working group.

Locus of Control refers to the extent to which individuals believe that they or external factors control the events that influence their lives (Firth, Mellor, Moore, & Loquet, 2004).

Both the analysis of correlational data between the WLOC and the IC, respectively the OCB, and of the moderation relationships wherein the WLOC was tested in terms of its interventional role with respect to the relationships between the independent variable and the dependant variable, indicate an important role that the locus of control plays with regard to the behaviour of individuals at the workplace.

In line with the previous research, studies have shown that the WLOC plays an important part with regard to the behaviour of individuals at the workplace (Spector, 2002; Strauser & Lustig, 2003). Strauser and Lustig (2003) suggested that the WLOC belongs to a complex component of individual assessment, through which individuals manifest specific skills and behaviours.

The presented findings significantly indicate the role of the WLOC within the attitudinal – behavioural constellation of an individual. The significantly negative relationship between all the dimensions subject to research, both in dyad with the WLOC, and with the direction and intensity

within the moderation analysis shows that individuals with an internal WLOC manifest higher availability and skill as regards communication with the other members of the group, with positive results for the OCB.

Moreover, according to the research, individuals with an internal WLOC display a more emphasised intrinsic motivation, will be more oriented towards success and will manifest lower turnover intentions. Individuals with an internal WLOC, who think about leaving the organisation, will most likely act in the sense of such intention, because they consider themselves to be in charge of their own destiny (Allen, Weeks, & Moffitt, 2005).

Organisational citizenship behaviour has been a research objective for a short period of time, hence we consider that this research can stand as a landmark in relation to the positive impact on employees further to an increase in the internal WLOC and in the components of individual and group communication, with visible indirect effects on the organisation. Also, a development is necessary as regards the understanding of OCB, and the consideration of this behavioural component within the performance assessments, for the purpose of actively encouraging it among the employees.

The findings are supported by conclusions derived from other studies in this field. Four factors of influence were identified in the area of the OCB (Organ, Podsakoff, & MacKenzie, 2006) – group cohesion (degree of interaction inside the group), exchange among team members (communication within the group), group power (generates synergy and allows cooperation) and perceived support from the team (concern for the wellbeing of others). The development of any of these four areas will lead to an increase in the OCB (directed towards co-workers), especially if the organisation is oriented towards team- or group-work.

Citizenship behaviours can take many different forms. The employee who takes initiative and always lends a hand is traditionally considered as a worker who “goes beyond” the minimum requirements; the well informed, helpful and cooperative co-worker; the member of the senior personnel who can adapt to any situation; or the friendly, approachable manager, who presents the office to the new employees, and who introduces them to the other employees. All these types of OCB should be actively encouraged – the employees support the organisation through improved performance and through the wellbeing of others, this being reflected by the decrease in costs and by the increase in profitability at organisation level.

Employees have the tendency to adopt behaviours that exceed the area of the official requirements associated with their position, this being

known as one of the main elements of OCB. Consequently, this can be the driver that puts the organisation in motion.

The importance of OCB on an organisation's productivity and efficiency, the fact that workers do not expect to be remunerated for their efforts, impose the consideration of OCB as an effective means of improving organisational profitability and of reducing costs, for example through a decrease in the personnel absenteeism and turnover rates. Concurrently, it increases the performance and wellbeing of employees, so that cooperative employees are more productive, OCB enhancing social emulation at the workplace.

6. Conclusions

Managers whose perspective is anchored in the current organisational requirements need to be aware of the necessities of employees, to be heard and to generate behaviours that strengthen their perception of being heard. To this end, managers should focus on the development of individual initiatives, of communicative behaviour.

Nowadays, employers search for the development of key organisational citizenship behaviour skills, not just the ability to fulfil job duties (Duffy, Geoffrey, Gerald, & Frankel, 2004).

Our findings can be of real help for the creation of individual and group development programmes, thus bringing benefits both with respect to an understanding of work relationships, of organisational purposes, and to obtaining positive results in terms of work performance.

The conclusions that we have drawn supports our assertion whereby the connotations of the WLOC and its moderator role in the relationships between IC and OCB impose new exploration in the form of ulterior research, with a view to developing a system of growth of the internal WLOC, necessary for the development of behaviours in the direction of relationship development and group performance.

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