



Research Article

**The Impact of “Temporal Personality” on Individuals’ Organizational
Citizenship Behaviors**

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Abstract- The contemporary work settings increasingly encourage polychronicity, which requires employees to deal with two or more activities simultaneously. Integrating research on polychronicity and organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs), it was hypothesized that polychronicity would be significantly and positively related to OCBs in a polychronic work context and perceived time pressure would moderate this relationship. Results from an academic context indicated that polychronicity was related to OCBs. However, perceived time pressure was not found to moderate this relationship. The findings indicate that polychronicity as a temporal personality is an important construct that deserves attention in organizational settings. With this study, the nomological net surrounding the construct of polychronicity was further developed by examining previously unresearched relationships.

Keywords- Polychronicity, organizational citizenship behaviours, time pressure.

1. Introduction

Organizational researchers have not paid much attention to the temporal issues in their studies for years (Ancona, Goodman, Lawrence, & Tushman, 2001). However, changing characteristics of the contemporary work context underscore the importance of time for both personal and organizational efficiency. Due to this fact, perhaps, literature on individual preference for time orientation has flourished in the past decade.

Organizational researchers have mostly examined the temporal issues through the study of polychronicity at especially individual level. In his cultural studies, Hall (1983) developed the monochronicity–polychronicity concept that describes the “temporal personality” of individuals. Polychronicity is defined as “*the extent to*

which people: prefer to be engaged in two or more tasks or events simultaneously; and believe that their preference is the best way to do things” (Bluedorn, Kalliath, Strube, & Martin, 1999, p. 206). Monochronic individuals prefer to complete one task before taking on another task, whereas polychronic individuals prefer to be involved with several tasks at the same time (Slocombe & Bluedorn, 1999).

Indeed, increasing competition, globalization, rapidly changing technology, and knowledge-oriented work promote an organizational culture characterized by speed at both individual and organizational levels (Kantrowitz, Grelle, Beaty, & Wolf, 2012). As a matter of fact, engaging on multiple tasks simultaneously has become a common practice in the present work

environment. Furthermore, not only at work contexts but also in daily life as well do most people, deliberately or not, engage in multitasking. The latest technological advances facilitate this; for instance; cell phones, specifically smart phones, let people talk on the phone while doing something else. Though a bad example, it has been a very common practice to see drivers talking on the phone while driving.

Given that research on temporal issues in organizational contexts is an emerging area in management and psychology, many potentially interesting relationships await study.

1.1 Polychronicity and Extra-Role Performance

Understanding the variables that influence job performance is an obvious and understandable endeavor for both organizations and organizational researchers. Thus, it would not be wrong to assert that the construct of polychronicity, like other work related variables, is valuable to the researchers to the extent that it predicts performance.

However, like the Holy Grail of the Industrial and Organizational Psychology (Landy, 1989), namely job satisfaction-performance relationship; the research regarding the relationship between polychronicity and performance is not conclusive. Some studies show that polychronic orientation is positively related to performance (Conte & Gintoft, 2005; Taylor, Locke, Lee, & Gist, 1984), whereas other research has not supported this relationship (Conte, Rizzuto, & Steiner, 1999; Frei, Racicot, & Travagline, 1999).

Despite this inconclusiveness, there is a compromise among researchers that this relationship (i.e performance - polychronicity) is contingent on the nature of the job (Kantrowitz et al., 2012; König & Waller, 2010). In explaining this, König and Waller (2010) suggested that polychronicity increases job performance only if the work context requires multitasking. They proposed that understanding person

– environment fit is the key factor to understand how polychronicity relates to job performance, and underlined that polychronicity can only be expected to relate to job performance when an employee's traits and job demands are well matched. In this vein, Schein (1992) suggested that temporal orientations might be better matched with different situational demands. Similarly, Bluedorn (2002) suggested that some jobs demand a monochronic approach, whereas other jobs demand a polychronic approach. Due to aforementioned inconclusive results, researchers have called for more researches examining the links between performance and polychronicity in different work contexts (Conte & Jacobs, 2003; Conte & Gintoft, 2005).

While the researchers have shown eager interest, albeit inconclusive, in searching the relationship between polychronicity and performance, there has yet to be research that examines its relationship with other critical form of performance, namely extra-role performance or organizational citizenship behavior. Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), voluntarily making extra-role contributions to the organization that are above and beyond job duties (Organ, 1990), is deemed an important factor impacting the effectiveness of an organization. Organ (1988) conceptualized OCB with five sub-dimensions: altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, and civic virtue. Up to now, many researchers have adopted this five-dimension taxonomy of OCB. With its discretionary and optional nature, OCB is a critical aspect of job performance that produces beneficial outcomes for both employees and organizations. As such, researchers and organizational leaders are interested in understanding factors associated with individual willingness to exhibit OCB.

Although aspects of work settings and experiences such as organizational fairness (Tepper & Taylor, 2003) and support (Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997) contribute to the performance of OCB, individual variables such as personality and affect are also

important. In that sense, time orientations of individuals, like polychronicity, can also be expected to play a role in facilitating OCB of the employees at different work contexts.

In view of the literature, the findings of the previous research indicate that higher levels of polychronicity are related to better job performance and greater job satisfaction in polychronic job contexts (Conte & Gintoft, 2005; Arndt, Arnold, and Landry, 2006). Following the same logic, it could be expected that that higher levels of polychronicity might be related to higher extra-role performance in polychronic job contexts.

To the best of our knowledge, no studies have examined OCBs and polychronicity together, however, it should be underlined that there has been some empirical support for similar relationships. For instance, Slocombe and Bluedorn (1999) found that polychronicity are positively related to organizational commitment and perceived fairness. Likewise, Arndt et al. (2006) found that polychronic individuals are more satisfied in a polychronic work context (front-line retail job). In similar vein, Hecht and Allen (2005) found that person-job fit on the dimension of polychronicity was significantly associated with job satisfaction. As attitudes like job satisfaction and commitment have been very often found to be related to OCBs, we could expect that there might be a similar relationship between polychronicity and OCBs with the same logic. Furthermore, as will be detailed later, the context under investigation has substantial time management demands. Thus, we could propose that polychronic individuals are more likely to perform higher OCBs in such contexts.

1.2 Time Pressure as Moderator

As the polychronicity has not yet been studied through an interactionist lens (Hecht & Allen, 2005), time pressure, an increasingly prominent feature of 21st

century work context, seems a good candidate in that sense (Kayaalp, 2014). Pressure is often associated with feelings of time scarcity in relation to the tasks at hand (Robinson, 1990). The previous literature indicates that time pressure increases performance (Kelly & Karau, 1999). However, results have been mostly inconsistent (Kelly & Karau, 1999; Kelly & McGrath, 1985; Bassett, 1979). Moreover, to the best of our knowledge, there is not much direct study on time pressure and extra-role performance. However, there are studies that examine the role of role stressors on OCB. We could categorize time pressure as a role stressor (Eatough, Chang, Miloslavac, & Johnson, 2011). In view of the literature, several reasons have been put forward as to why role stressors relate negatively to OCB. Because they are perceived as a hindrance to work achievement, role stressors elicit negative emotions, which reduce the likelihood that OCB will be performed. Whereas positive emotions are linked to action tendencies to perform prosocial and cooperative behaviors (Carlson, Charlin, & Miller, 1988), negative emotions are related to lower likelihood of cooperation (De Cremer & Van Hiel, 2006).

In terms of the relationship between time pressure and polychronicity, although we can logically argue that polychrons are more comfortable with time pressure than monochrons, we expected that time pressure would have an attenuating influence on the effects of polychronicity on OCBs of individuals. Because, time pressure, in any case, has a potential to create stress and negative emotions even for polychrons, which also hinders discretionary acts.

To sum up, in line with this theoretical framework, we expect that the positive relationship between polychronicity and OCBs in a polychronic environment would be stronger when the polychrons perceive lower time pressure. In other words, individual OCBs would be higher when employees with polychronic orientation perceive lower degrees of time pressure.

From this point of view, it could be asserted that perceived time pressure of employees can attenuate or enhance the effects of polychronicity on OCBs of individuals.

Based on the literature and above arguments, the following hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 1: Polychronicity will be significantly and positively related to OCBs in a polychronic context.

Hypothesis 2: Perceived time pressure would moderate the relationship between polychronicity and OCBs such that the positive relationship will be stronger when time pressure is low.

2. Method

2.1 Participants

In Study 1, a pool of subject matter experts were asked to fill a job analysis questionnaire to define the job-relatedness of polychronicity in a military academic context. The analysis indicated that polychronicity was a key competency for high job performance ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 0.50$) on a scale from 1 to 5.

Based on this, in Study 2, the relationships among variables were examined with a sample of 124 military postgraduate students. Participation in the study was voluntary. The participants were provided general information about the purpose of the study and confidentiality of the responses were assured. Employment length for the participants ranged from 7 to 14 years ($M=10.5$ years, $SD=1.6$ years). The participants' age ranged from 29 to 37 years ($M=32.86$ years, $SD=1.67$ years). Data were collected by self-report questionnaires.

2.2 Measures

Given the aims of the research, we thought it best to use previously published and validated measures. All the items were rated on a scale that ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Polychronicity was

assessed with 10-item Inventory of Polychronic Value (IPV) developed by Bluedorn et al. (1999). This scale was long-established as a valid and reliable measure of polychronicity. Sample items include: "When I work by myself, I usually work on one project at a time" (reverse-scored); and "I believe people should try to do many things at once." The scores were averaged to form a polychronicity score ($\alpha = .89$).

Perceived time pressure was assessed using an adapted four-item version of the scale developed by Madjar and Oldham (2006). Sample items include "I have plenty of time to perform my tasks" (reverse-scored) and "I am constantly running out of time in my job." ($\alpha = .73$).

OCBs were measured with 16-item OCB scale developed by Smith, Organ and Near (1983). Although the scale consists of a seven-item altruism component and a nine-item conscientiousness component, a total OCB score was used in view of the aims of our research. Higher scores reflect higher levels of OCB. Sample items include "Helps others who have heavy workloads" and "Does not take extra breaks" ($\alpha = .91$).

Participants' age and tenure were included in the analysis as control variables. Turkish language versions of all measures were used after translation and back translation procedures were performed.

Correlational analysis and moderated hierarchical multiple regressions were performed to test the Hypotheses.

3. Results

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, and correlations for the variables (see appendix). The results indicated that polychronicity correlated positively and significantly with OCBs ($r = .24$, $p < .001$). Hence, the Hypothesis 1 was supported.

Moderated hierarchical multiple regressions were used to test the Hypothesis 2, asking for the moderation of perceived time pressure on the relationship between polychronicity and OCBs. To test the hypothesis, OCB was first regressed on control variables (age and tenure; Step 1), then polychronicity and perceived time pressure (Step 2), and finally the interaction of these

two variables (polychronicity and perceived time pressure; Step 3). Table 2 (see appendix) shows that after main effects of polychronicity and perceived time pressure were controlled, the moderated interaction term accounted for an 0.5 % of the variance in OCB, which was not significant ($\beta = -.25, p >.05$). Thus, Hypothesis 2 was not supported.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

Many empirical studies have documented the relationship between polychronicity and task performance, albeit inconclusively. However, organizational researchers, surprisingly, have not showed much interest to the influence of polychronicity on organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs), other critical aspect of work performance for organizations. The aim of the present study was therefore to examine the relationship among polychronicity, time pressure, and OCBs in an academic context in Turkey.

In today's work environment, both polychronicity and OCBs are becoming more and more important in organizational life. The individuals have begun to prefer to engage in more tasks at the same time. Although such a tendency is encouraged, its relationship with performance is not much known. Thus, the current study intends to fill this gap in that sense.

The findings of the present study indicated that polychronicity is positively related to OCBs. However, perceived time pressure has not been found to moderate this relationship. Specifically, the results imply that, to the extent that polychronicity is a critical job competency, polychronic individuals tend to exhibit more OCBs regardless of their perception of time pressure.

This finding could be explained with person-job fit. Person-job fit refers to the level of compatibility that an employee has with his/her job (Kristof, 1996). As noted before, polychronicity has the potential to increase job performance only if the work context requires multitasking. As the job analysis indicated, the

environment of the current study demands and favors polychronicity. Thus, in such a context that employee's traits and job demands are well matched, the relationship between polychronicity and performance, and extra-role performance as well is quite expected. As multitasking is a must in an academic context, it is understandable that individuals who have high level of polychronicity are more likely to go beyond their job limit and exhibit beneficial work behaviors.

These findings are important from a theoretical perspective in that it is the first study that examines the relationship between the polychronicity and OCB with the moderation effect of time pressure. The results contribute to the growing polychronicity and OCB literature.

Despite its contributions, the present study has several limitations. First, it is quite difficult to draw generalizations from these findings as the sample is derived from only a specific academic context. Second, use of self-reports as the only data collection method exposes the findings to common method variance. Third, the cross-sectional design of the study makes it hard to make assumptions about the causality of the relationships studied. Thus, a longitudinal design at different times would yield more robust results.

Despite these limitations, this study might have some important practical implications. The findings imply polychronic individuals in a polychronic work environment are likely to engage in more OCBs. However, this, of course, does not necessarily mean that monochronic individuals are less effective in organizations. It is of utmost importance for organizations to know the time use orientation of their employees. In this way, organizations could assign the individuals with appropriate time orientation to the appropriate positions (Kayaalp, 2014).

To conclude, polychronicity construct has seen a recent increase in empirical support. However, much is still unknown about this construct. The current study helps to further refine the nomological net and examine its

role with other important workplace variables such as extra-role performance and time pressure. Even in the unique environment of an academic institution, it has been found to be an important construct when considering extra role behaviors.

Acknowledgements

An earlier version of this article was presented at the 17th Congress of the European Association of Work and Organizational Psychology in May 2015, Oslo, Norway.

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APPENDIX

Table 1 Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations, and Cronbach’s a for the Study Variables

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Age	32.86	1.6					
2. Tenure	10.47	1.6	.85**				
3. Polychronicity	2.58	.83	-.10	-.03	(.89)		
4. Perceived Time Pressure	2.83	.74	.07	.08	.13	(.73)	
5. OCB	4.07	.53	-.01	.05	.24**	.16	(.91)

* p < .05. ** p < .01.

Table 2 Multiple Regression Tests of Moderation

Variable	OCB		
	Step-1	Step-2	Step-3
Age	-.198	-.146	-.143
Tenure	.219	.179	.189
Polychronicity (Poly)	-	.227*	-.020
Perceived time pressure (Ptp)	-	.095	.086
Poly X Ptp	-	-	-.259
F	0,919	2,547*	5,159
R ²	.015	.079	.084
ΔR ²	.015	.064	.005

Note. Standardized beta coefficients are reported. * p < .05. ** p < .01.