



## INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE AND MANAGEMENT

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## INNOVATIVE HR PRACTICES

MEGHANA J

RESEARCH SCHOLAR RAYALSEEMA UNIVERSITY KURNOOL ANDHRAPRADESH

LECTURER

DC SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

IDUKKI

### ABSTRACT

*In spite of the recognised importance of superior-subordinate construct as a mediator of employee innovativeness and organisational citizenship behaviour relationship, seldom has it been reported in the literature that this paradigm has been rigorously examined. This paper reports the results of evaluating this conceptual framework with a sample of 385 non managerial employees of Malaysian commercial banks. The results demonstrate the relationship between supervisor and subordinate is crucial for facilitating work performance in excess of job scope. The implications and consequences of the study findings for human resource management policies and practices for not only Malaysian financial institutions, but also for institutions in the wider domain of the Asia Pacific, are discussed.*

### KEYWORDS

HR Practices, Banks, HRM.

### INTRODUCTION

Employees who go the extra mile by performing spontaneous behaviours that go beyond their role prescriptions are especially valued by the management. This phenomenon is critical for organisational effectiveness because managers cannot see all contingencies or fully anticipate the activities that they may desire or need employees to perform (Katz & Kahn 1978, Organ 1988). Work behaviour that goes beyond the reach of organisational measures of job performance holds promise for long term organisational success (Van Dyne, Graham & Dienesch 1994) because these types of action are purported to improve organisational efficiency, effectiveness and adaptability (Organ 1988). Doing jobs beyond what is required without expecting to be rewarded is what is referred to in this study as Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB).

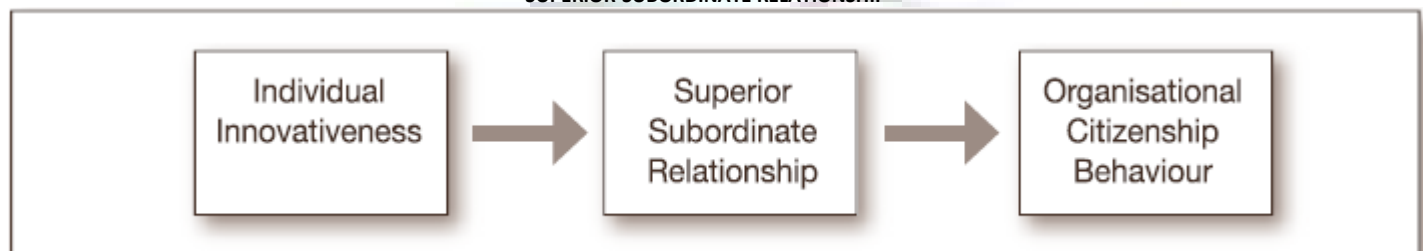
Scholars and practitioners have shown an increasing interest in the concept of OCB (Change & Chelladurai 2003). OCB has been said to enhance organisational performance because these activities lubricate the social machinery of the organisation, reduce friction, and increase efficiency (Bateman & Organ 1983, Smith, Organ & Near 1983). Enhancing an organisation's competitive ability is

enhancing an organisation's competitive ability is increasingly critical and behaviors, which may improve individual and organisational efficiency, become more valuable. Although there have been many studies of OCB in organisations, no known studies have examined the linkage of individual innovativeness with OCB where the effect of superior-subordinate as a mediator, is included. Given this lack of information, attempts are made to answer two questions. Does individual innovativeness influence subordinates' OCB? Does superior subordinate relationship mediate the relationship between individual innovativeness and OCB?

### A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study examines the relationship between individual innovativeness and OCB. These relationships are expressed as Figure 1, which shows the taxonomy of OCB includes altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy and civic virtue. Altruism refers to behaviours that are voluntary. For example, being cooperative, helpful and other instances of extra-role behaviour, which helps a specific individual with a given work related problem (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman & Fetter 1990). The construct of conscientiousness refers to the extent of behaviours to which someone is punctual, high in attendance and goes beyond normal requirements or expectations (Podsakoff, et al. 1990). In addition, courtesy refers to behaviours that are directed to the prevention of future problems, which is different from altruism because altruism is helping someone who has a problem, while courtesy is helping to prevent problems, performing thoughtful or considerate gestures towards others (Podsakoff, et al. 1990). Moreover, sportsmanship describes those individuals who tolerate the annoyances that are inevitable in the workplace a set of behaviours that demonstrate tolerance of less than ideal conditions at work without complaining (Podsakoff, et al. 1990). Finally, civic virtue consists of those behaviours that are concerned with the political life of the organisation (e.g., attend meetings, engage in policy debates, and express one's opinions in implementing a new policy).

**FIGURE 1: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL INNOVATIVENESS AND ORGANISATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR AND THE MEDIATING INFLUENCE OF SUPERIOR-SUBORDINATE RELATIONSHIP**



### INDIVIDUAL INNOVATIVENESS AND ORGANISATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR

The inconsistency with which innovativeness is defined in the literature makes it difficult to grasp the essential attributes (Hurt, Joseph & Cook 1977). According to Midgley and Dowling (1978), individual innovativeness refers to the individual's openness to new ideas and decision making to adopt an innovation free from the influence of the experiences of other employees. This definition is referred to throughout this study because it intuitively gives a more accurate interpretation of innovativeness, which is well supported, both directly and indirectly, in the literature.

Organisational change, creativity, and innovation schemes have been installed with individual 'champions'. The vision is that these changes to the organisational culture will lead to greater organisational effectiveness and consequently, change agents are used to guide and facilitate the change process (McDermott & Sexton 1998, Mallon & Kearney 2001.) That is, employees who are innovative in their work place are, in essence, satisfied with their jobs and this triggers them to come up with new ways to improve current conditions. One of the ways of how innovative employees express themselves is through performance of OCB. Individual innovativeness contributes to an organisation's renewal, survival and growth in today's turbulent and competitive business environment through the

performance of OCB (Amabile 1988). Despite the limited relevant research that has been undertaken in Asian contexts, these imperatives provide foundation for the following hypothesis.

**Hypothesis 1:** *Individual innovativeness is positively related to the various OCB dimensions: altruism, conscientiousness, courtesy, sportsmanship and civic virtue.*

#### **Superior-Subordinate Relationship as a Mediator**

The relationship between superior and the subordinates develops certain exchanges that benefit organisations. Many studies relating to the relationship between superior-subordinate are found to contribute to greater job responsibilities, influence levels of delegation, responsibility and autonomy and in turn, subordinates perceive greater latitude, decision influence and feelings of contribution (Gomez & Rosen 2001). It is thus expected that the higher the superior-subordinate relationship, the more the subordinates will perform OCB.

Little effort has been made to study the mediating influence of the superior-subordinate relationship relating to individual innovativeness and OCB. The social exchange theory is employed to investigate the relationship between superior-subordinate relationship and OCB. People always seek to reciprocate those who benefit them (Blau 1964, Adams 1965). In order to reciprocate, employees may do so through their job performance, however, such performance may be limited when the organisation has strict contracts. From a social exchange theory perspective, OCB becomes an outlet for these positive feelings. Social exchange relationships have an implicit understanding that a history of extra role efforts will over time be recognised, appreciated and rewarded. From this theoretical underpinning, the following hypothesis is conjectured.

**Hypothesis 2:** *Superior-subordinate relationship mediates the relationship between individual innovativeness and organisational citizenship behaviour.*

Through the theoretical framework, within the structure of social exchange theory, it is hypothesised that individual innovativeness will be related to various dimensions of OCB and this relationship will be mediated by superior-subordinate relationship. To better understand these relationships, a study was conducted with a representative sample of non supervisory employees employed in commercial banks.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **SAMPLE**

Most of the data was based on primary data which was collected with the help of friends from Malaysia. The assumption is that the job descriptions for non supervisory employees in all commercial banks are similar, have minimal variation in formal responsibility, have no supervisory duties, thus can be considered as a homogeneous group. The sample consisted of 400 non supervisory employees from commercial banks. A total of 390 distributed questionnaires were returned, of which 385 were determined to be usable for purposes of the study. The usable response rate was 99 per cent.

### **PROCEDURE**

A cross sectional research design was used to examine the relationships between individual innovativeness, superior-subordinate relationship and OCB. Data were collected through questionnaires, personally administered at various commercial banks. The design partly avoids common method variance bias because measurements of individual innovativeness and quality of superior-subordinate relationship were obtained from subordinates and measurement of OCB was taken from the superiors of these subordinates.

Appointments were made to visit the banks to personally deliver the set of printed questionnaires to the managers. A package with two sets of survey questionnaires: one questionnaire (Set A) was to be answered by the subordinate; and another one (Set B) to be answered by the superior in charge of the subordinate. The manager in charge in each bank was requested to distribute four questionnaires at random to their subordinates and four questionnaires to the superiors supervising these subordinates. An envelope was also attached to each questionnaire. Instructions were written on the envelope for the respondents to place the questionnaire into the envelope and to seal it before returning to the manager in charge. The subordinates were not made aware that their respective superiors were evaluating them. Superior's evaluations on their subordinates here are presumed to be reasonably good measures of objective performance.

### **MEASURES**

**Organisational Citizenship Behaviour.** The 24 item OCB scale developed by Podsakoff, et al. (1990) was utilised to assess five dimensions of OCB proposed by Organ (1988). These dimensions were altruism, conscientiousness, courtesy, sportsmanship and civic virtue. The item ratings were obtained from a seven point Likert scale that had responsiveness ranging from 1= 'Strongly Disagree' to 7= 'Strongly Agree'. The ratings indicated the extent that each of the behaviours was a characteristic of the employee's behaviour. The role behaviour scale was included in the questionnaire as a control variable so as to isolate variance in OCB measures that was not associated with performance of in role behaviours (Moorman, Niehoff & Organ 1993). The in role items were adapted from Williams and Anderson (1991).

**Individual Innovativeness.** Measurement items for innovative behaviour were adapted from the work of George and Zhou (2001). This variable was assessed with 13 items. An arithmetic mean was obtained for individual innovativeness. Higher scores indicated a higher degree of innovativeness. The responses ranged from 1 = 'To the lowest degree' to 7 = 'To the highest degree'.

**Superior-Subordinate Relationship.** Superior-subordinate relationship was measured using the 12 item questionnaire that was adapted from Liden and Maslyn (1998). The responses ranged from 1 = 'Strongly Disagree' to 7 = 'Strongly Agree'. An arithmetic mean was obtained.

### **ANALYSIS**

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 11) was used to analyse the data. The analyses were conducted in five stages. Stage 1 was to examine the overall profile of the respondents. Descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviations and reliabilities (Cronbach's alphas) for all the variables used in the study were used to describe the demographic profile. In stage 2, prior to testing the relationships between the variables measured in the study, factor analyses were conducted on these variable items. This was to determine whether the respondents dimensionalised the items of the variables in the same manner as previous studies (Podsakoff, et al. 1990, Williams & Anderson 1991, George & Zhou 2001) and to identify the structure of interrelationship (correlation) among a large number of variables by defining underlying factors.

Zero order correlations among all the variables were then examined in stage 3. The correlation matrix showed how each of the items was associated with all the other items. Multiple regressions were used to test the hypothesised relationships between the predictors and the criterion (OCB) in stage 4. For example, in the first step in assessing the impact of individual innovativeness on OCB, the control variable (i.e., in role behaviour) was entered. Previous studies have identified in role behaviour (Williams & Anderson 1991, Moorman, et al. 1993) as influencing OCB. In the second step, the main effect (individual innovativeness) was entered.

Stage 5 was to test whether the relationships between individual innovativeness and OCB were mediated by superior-subordinate relationship, and the procedure described by Baron and Kenny (1986) was used. A variable functions as a mediator when the following conditions are met (Baron & Kenny 1986): (a) variations in the levels of the independent variable significantly account for the variations in the presumed mediator (i.e., Path a), (b) variations in the mediator (Path b) significantly account for variations in the dependent variable (OCB), and (c) when Paths a and b are controlled, a previously significant relation between independent and dependent variables is no longer significant, with the strongest demonstration of mediation occurring when path c is zero (full mediation) or when relation between independent and dependent variables is significant with the demonstration of mediation occurring when path c is reduced (partial mediation).

The first step in establishing mediation is thus to show that independent variables are related to the mediator (Equation 1). In the second step, the independent variables are related to the dependent variable (Equation 2). Lastly, in order to test whether the mediator has full mediation in the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable, the effect of independent variable on the dependent variable (Equation 3) should be zero, when the mediator is controlled (full mediation). Partial mediation exists when the path from the independent variables to the dependent variable is reduced, but still different from zero when the mediator is controlled.

**RESULTS**

The respondents comprised of 64 per cent females and 36 per cent males. The sample was diverse in terms of ethnicity. The highest number of respondents were Malays (75 per cent), followed by Chinese (11 per cent), Indians (10 per cent) and the remainder (3 per cent) was classified as ‘others’. ‘Others’ here included Eurasians and Singhalese. Most of the employees were married (54 per cent), with 44 per cent still single and one per cent separated or divorced. Most employees were relatively young. Most of them were below 30 years old (80 per cent). In terms of educational attainment, 65 per cent held the Malaysian Certificate of Education (MCE), 15 per cent achieved their Higher Certificate of Education (HSC), 17 per cent held Diploma certificates, and a very small percentage of them received Bachelor’s degree (3 per cent) and Master’s degree (0.3 per cent). For the most part, the employees had relatively low formal education. This was not surprising because the positions they held were non supervisory positions. They did not supervise any employee at their workplace.

Each subordinate was rated by a superior. Superiors have been the source of choice in the OCB literature (Bateman & Organ 1983, Smith, et al. 1983, Organ & Konovsky 1989, Podsakoff, et al. 1990). Thus, if superiors see early attendance as extra-role behaviour, a subordinate who comes to work earlier than usual is said to engage in OCB regardless of how the subordinate sees his/her behaviour (Morrison 1994). The total number of superiors who answered questionnaires on their subordinates was 258. These happened because the subordinates chosen to answer the questionnaires were under the current supervision of these same superiors. There were 29 per cent male superiors and 38 per cent female superiors. Also, 42 per cent of the superiors were Malays, followed by Chinese (21 per cent) and Indians (4 per cent). Most of the superiors were married (54 per cent) and 13 per cent were still single. Most of them were between 31 years to 40 years old (33 per cent), 16 per cent less than 30 years old and 17 per cent between 41years old to 50 years old. In terms of educational attainment, a majority had at least a Bachelor’s degree (18 per cent), whilst the rest had Diploma (15 per cent), or a Higher Certificate of Education (HSC) (11 per cent), and other held the Malaysian Certificate of Education (MCE) (21 per cent).

Previous research suggested that OCB measures may assess in role behaviour (Schnake 1991). In role behaviour was thus included as a control variable. This approach was used instead of including in role behaviour in the criterion set because the theory supporting the OCB predictor relationships was not applicable to in role behaviours; thus in role behaviours were not expected to be related to the predictors (Williams & Anderson 1991). The seven item in role scale and 24 item OCB scale were together submitted to a principal components analysis with varimax rotation (N = 385). Factors with eigenvalues greater than or equal to 1.00 were selected. Referring to Hair, Anderson, Tatham and Black (1998), the cut off point for crossloadings of 0.35 is acceptable for a sample size of 250 and above. Most of the items loaded cleanly into the six factors explaining a total of 68.16 per cent of the variance. All extracted items had factor loadings greater than 0.30. Six items were deleted from the measure due to cross factor loadings. Factor 1 made up of five of the original sportsmanship items. The name ‘Sportsmanship’ was thus retained. Factor 2 also contained all the five original items of altruism. The name for this factor was thus maintained as ‘Altruism’. Factor 3 comprised of four items reflecting in role behaviour. This factor was named ‘In role’. Factor 4 had three items reflecting courtesy and one item reflecting civic virtue. The common thread across the items was to always consider others and not to create problems with them. Hence, this factor was named ‘Courtesy’. Factor 5 had three items reflecting civic virtue and one item on conscientiousness. The name ‘Civic Virtue’ was retained. Finally, Factor 6 comprised of items of conscientiousness. The name referred to was ‘Conscientiousness’. These data are presented in Appendix A.

The coefficient alphas for the OCB dimensions were: sportsmanship 0.89, altruism 0.92, in role behaviour 0.90, courtesy 0.82, civic virtue 0.71 and conscientiousness 0.62. One item from courtesy was deleted so as to improve the coefficient alpha from 0.79 to 0.82. The item was ‘He/she takes steps to avoid problems with other workers’. Similarly, one item from civic virtue was also omitted to improve the coefficient alpha from 0.63 to 0.71. The item deleted was ‘He/she attends meetings that are not compulsory, but are considered important’.

Factor analysis conducted on items of individual innovativeness yielded one factor with an eigenvalue greater than 1 (eigenvalues = 9.44). Principal components analysis conducted on the 13 item scale revealed a total of 72.64 per cent of the variance. The name ‘Individual Innovativeness’ was retained. These data are presented in appendix B. The single scale used has a coefficient alpha of 0.97.

Factor analysis was also conducted on the superior–subordinate relationship items and one factor emerged with eigenvalues greater than 1.00, explaining a total variance of 54.00 per cent. All of the items were retained. This factor was named ‘Superior–subordinate Relationship’. The factor analysis results are shown in Appendix C. The coefficient alpha of the scale was 0.93. This is comparable to those reported by Liden and Maslyn (1988) who reported reliability coefficients ranging from 0.80 to 0.92.

Overall, the means, standard deviations, and correlations among variables are displayed in Table 1. The means range from a maximum value of 5.46 (in role behaviour) to a minimum value of 4.10 (individual innovativeness). Correlations between the five dimensions of OCB suggest that statistical independence existed between these variables in that they could be evaluated on separate grounds. Individual innovativeness was found to have a positive significant influence with all the five dimensions of OCB. Superior-subordinate relationship was also found to have positive significant influence on OCB.

**TABLE 1: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS, CRONBACH’S COEFFICIENT ALPHA AND ZERO-ORDER CORRELATIONS (N=385)**

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Individual	4.10	1.05	<b>.97</b>							
2. Altruism	5.25	1.04	.46**	<b>.92</b>						
3. Courtesy	5.28	0.95	.30**	.54**	<b>.82</b>					
4. Civic virtue	5.16	0.89	.38**	.52**	.59**	<b>.71</b>				
5. Conscientiousness	5.0	1.11	.41**	.53**	.47**	.48**	<b>.62</b>			
6. Sportsmanship	5.30	1.17	.21**	.37**	.50**	.40**	.37**	<b>.89</b>		
7. In role	5.46	0.85	.44**	.59**	.57**	.58**	.54**	.42**	<b>.90</b>	
8 Superior	4.92	0.91	.58**	.74**	.60**	.61**	.60**	.42**	.66**	<b>.93</b>

Notes:

- a. Individual = individual innovativeness, In role = in role behaviour, and Superior = superiorsubordinate relationship.
- b. M = Mean, and SD = standard deviation of the mean.
- c. The bold values on the diagonal are the coefficient alphas.
- d. \*p<0.05, and \*\*p<0.01.

Table 2 presents the results of the analyses among variables. Using the multiple regression procedure, five regressions were conducted on each of the five dimensions of OCB: altruism, sportsmanship, courtesy, civic virtue and conscientiousness. The model explained individual innovativeness as having 17 per cent of the variance in sportsmanship; 45 per cent of the variance in altruism; 34 per cent of the variance in courtesy; 38 per cent of the variance in civic virtue, and 33 per cent of the variance in conscientiousness. Since the sample was sufficiently large, the assumptions of normal distributions were met. The homogeneity and linearity assumptions were met by visually examining the scatterplots of the residuals (Pallant 2001). The variance inflation factor (VIF) and tolerance value were examined to detect multicollinearity. Tolerance values that are greater than 0.10 and VIF values not exceeding 10 indicate that problem of high



multicollinearity are not present (Tabachnick & Fidell 1996). In Step 2, over and above in role variable which was included as a control variable in Step 1 of the regression, the predictor for altruism was individual innovativeness. Civic virtue and conscientiousness were also predicted by individual innovativeness. These results are presented in Table 2. Individual innovativeness was, however, seen to be the stronger predictor to altruism than civic virtue and conscientiousness. Individual innovativeness did not predict sportsmanship and courtesy.

**TABLE 2: STANDARDISED MULTIPLE REGRESSION BETA WEIGHTS FOR OCB DIMENSIONS ON INDIVIDUAL INNOVATIVENESS (N=385)**

Variables	Altruism	Courtesy	Civic	Conscient	Sportsman
<b>Control Variable</b>					
In-role Behaviour	.53**	.55**	.53**	.45**	.07**
<b>Predictor</b>					
Individual Innovativeness	<b>.25**</b>	.08	<b>.17**</b>	<b>.20**</b>	.06
R <sup>2</sup>	.45**	.34**	.38**	.33**	.17**
F	153.27	98.63	115.79	91.48	39.81

Notes:  
 a. Civic = civic virtue, Conscient = conscientiousness, and Sportsman = sportsmanship.  
 b. \*p<.05; and \*\*p<.01.  
 From the results evidenced in Table 2, hypothesis 1 – ‘Individual innovativeness is positively related to the various OCB dimensions: altruism, conscientiousness, courtesy, sportsmanship and civic virtue’ was partially supported. Individual innovativeness predicted altruism, civic virtue, and conscientiousness. Contrary to prediction, individual innovativeness failed to significantly relate to sportsmanship and courtesy.

**TESTING FOR MEDIATION**

Table 3 presents the results of the analyses between individual innovativeness and OCB with the inclusion of superior-subordinate relationship as the mediator. Individual innovativeness was found to be significantly related to superior-subordinate relationship. Tests required for mediated regression analyses were conducted. Three conditions for mediation were examined (Baron & Kenny 1986). The first condition is that the predictors must be significantly related to the mediating element. The second condition is that the predictors must relate to the criterion in the absence of the mediator. The final condition is that, when both the predictors and mediator element are included, the direct relationship between predictors and criterion should become significantly smaller (partial mediation) or non significant (full mediation).

**TABLE 3: STANDARDISED MULTIPLE REGRESSION BETA WEIGHTS FOR OCB DIMENSIONS ON INDIVIDUAL INNOVATIVENESS AND SUPERIOR-SUBORDINATE RELATIONSHIP**

Variables	SSR	Altruism			Courtesy		Civic		Conscient		Sports	
	Eqn 1	Eqn 2	Eqn 3	Eqn 2	Eqn 3	Eqn 2	Eqn 3	Eqn 2	Eqn 3	Eqn 2	Eqn 3	
R <sup>2</sup>	<b>.33**</b>	<b>.37**</b>	<b>.55**</b>	<b>.31**</b>		<b>.33**</b>	<b>.41**</b>	<b>.31**</b>	<b>.38**</b>	<b>.16**</b>		
F	<b>192.27</b>	<b>113.42</b>	<b>155.18</b>	<b>87.17</b>		<b>94.68</b>	<b>86.29</b>	<b>85.00</b>	<b>77.03</b>	<b>35.68</b>		
<b>Control Variable</b>												
In role Behaviour	—	.45**	.14**	.54**	—	.49**	.29**	.43**	.24**	.37**	—	
<b>Predictor</b>												
Individual Innovativeness	.58*	<b>.27**</b>	<b>.04</b>	.05	—	<b>.16**</b>	<b>.02</b>	<b>.21**</b>	<b>.07</b>	.06	—	
<b>Mediator</b>												
Superior-subordinate Relationship	—	—	<b>.62**</b>	—	—	—	<b>.40**</b>	—	<b>.39**</b>	—	—	

Notes:  
 a. SSR = Superior-Subordinate Relationship, and Conscient = conscientiousness; Eqn = Equation. Eqn1 = Direct relationship between SSR and Individual Innovativeness; Eqn2 = Direct relationship between criterion and Individual Innovativeness; Eqn3 = Relationship between criterion and predictor mediated by SSR.  
 b. \*p<0.05, and \*\*p<0.01.  
 As evidenced from Table 3, individual innovativeness fulfilled the requirements for mediated regression (Baron & Kenny 1986) on altruism, civic virtue and conscientiousness. These results are bold in Table 3. Hypothesis 2, which states that: ‘Superior-subordinate relationship mediates the relationship between individual innovativeness and organisational citizenship behaviour’, was thus partially supported. It was found that superior-subordinate relationship fully mediated the relationships between individual innovativeness and altruism; individual innovativeness and civic virtue, and individual innovativeness and conscientiousness in such a way that the direct effects of individual innovativeness on OCB decrease and become insignificant after superior-subordinate relationship is considered. Since the second condition as per Baron and Kenny (1986) that the predictor (individual innovativeness) must relate to the criterion (courtesy and sportsmanship) in the absence of the mediator was not met, the mediating test of superior-subordinate relationship (third condition) on individual innovativeness and two dimensions of OCB (courtesy and sportsmanship) need not be examined.

**DISCUSSION**

The findings showed that employees who are high on openness to new ideas have an appreciation of the merits of new ways of doing things and the potential for improving and changing the status quo (George & Zhou 2001). The willingness for employees to change leads them to want to perform OCB. They feel open towards wanting to help people around them – their colleagues, subordinates and superiors. They try to prevent work related interpersonal problems and they do things that benefit the organisation (e.g., being punctual, obeying rules). Being innovative makes the individual have the effect of helping a specific other person (altruism), carry out roles well beyond the minimum required levels such as not taking long breaks than necessary (conscientiousness), and participates in the political life of the organisation such as attending meetings, voting, speaking up, and discussing issues on personal time (civic virtue). Individual innovativeness does not, however, predict sportsmanship and courtesy. From the results of the findings, being innovative does not make an individual ‘touching base’ with others whose work would be affected by one’s decisions or commitments (Organ 1988). Innovativeness does not relate to the OCB dimension of courtesy such as giving advance notices, reminders, passing along information, consultation and briefings to others. Innovativeness also does not relate to sportsmanship such as avoid complaining and petty grievances. People are seen as innovative to the extent that they demonstrate certain abilities, achievements and/or personality traits (King & Anderson 2002). To encourage employees to be innovative, managers can boost the employees’ confidence through idea elicitation. This technique seeks to enable individuals in organisations to generate more and better new ideas to tackle problems or meet particular challenges. Getting useful feedback from them and giving feedback to them can be helpful to help them make improvements on their jobs. If the employee receives useful feedback from the managers, his or her attention is likely to be directed toward learning and making improvements on the job, in the process of which he or she may be stimulated to see things from different perspectives and come up with new and useful ways of doing things (Scott & Bruce 1994). Such innovativeness may not only result in the willingness to change, but may also result in enhanced organisational effectiveness. Employees who are discontented with the status quo may be a valuable resource in instigating change. Through idea elicitation can be seen as a form of training. One of the best known idea elicitation techniques is through brainstorming. In brainstorming,

good ideas are encouraged, and the greater the total number of ideas produced, the more likely it is that some of these ideas are at least good. The second approach to enhance individual innovativeness of employees is to train organisational members in the skills associated with innovative performance. The programme can take in the form of problem solving and emphasise the need to use a combination of divergent and convergent thinking skills at each stage of the process – problem finding, problem solving and solution implementation. The third approach that managers can take to promote individual innovativeness is to use selection and assessment to try to ensure that new members of the organisations are high in innovativeness, ability and that existing members are placed in jobs which enable them to fulfil their innovative potential.

The results of the study also implied that superior–subordinate relationship mediates the relationships between individual innovativeness and altruism, civic virtue and conscientiousness. Having good superior–subordinate relationship at the workplace leads to employees gaining more confidence in terms of their appearance, ability and power (Buss 2001). When employees are satisfied and happy with their interactions with their supervisors, they feel self worthy of themselves which may be described as the issue of character (Buss 2001). Practitioners thus can benefit from the study through the understanding of how relationships portrayed by the superiors can play a major part in influencing subordinates to perform work that goes beyond their job scope without expecting to be rewarded.

The finding that superior-subordinate relationship influences the relationship between individual innovativeness and OCB is particularly of interest to the banking industry in Malaysia and also to Asian banks that operate in tight labour markets. Human resource practitioners need to focus in promoting good relationships of those innovative employees in their organisations in order to lead to an increase of performance of OCB. These results are intriguing from a number of perspectives. The findings can form the basis for useful recommendations for Malaysian managers and employees who are concerned with the high economic costs of obtaining and retaining their workforce, in encouraging the practice of OCB for long term organisational success. The results from the study will help employers capitalise on the social exchange dynamics, by concentrating on employees' perceptions of innovativeness. Such understanding concerning the employees will provide clues to employers on what they need to do to promote different types of OCB. Managers will also be able to better manage and promote the relationships between meaningful organisational attitudes and beneficial organisational behaviour of their employees.

There are several implications for supervisors and organisations. From a theoretical perspective, the study looked at the impact of individual innovativeness and OCB coming from the perspective of the subordinates. Superior–subordinate relationship was also included to see how this construct influenced the relationships between individual innovativeness and OCB. Results from this study supported the hypotheses that individual innovativeness was associated with OCB through the mediation of superior–subordinate relationship.

The main weakness of the study is that the results pertaining to individual innovativeness and OCB may be susceptible to common method variance. Another weakness of the study was the cross sectional design, which does not allow for an assessment of causality. As a consequence, the results are mute where issues of causality are concerned.

## CONCLUSION

Evidence showed that individual innovativeness has a direct effect on employee's performance beyond their job scope. This is especially true when the subordinates see their superiors giving them support and encouragement to them at work. In an environment in which relationships are important, the superior's emotional support and guidance appeared to assist subordinates in attaining higher levels of performance. Interestingly, when there is presence of good superior–subordinate relationship, this somehow has increased bearing towards making the subordinates perform better OCB. The results of this study highlight the important and complex role of understanding individual innovativeness and OCB. Several other avenues can be envisioned for future research. The most obvious avenue is to explore the relationship between individual innovativeness and OCB, and also the relationships between superior–subordinate relationship and other organisational variables. Arguably, the pursuit of this line of research will greatly benefit the understanding of the reciprocity that functions in relationships.

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