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Employees' response to code of ethics and corporate philanthropic social responsibility: Evidence from Pakistan

Abstract

Although the importance of codes of ethics is essential in today's service industry, however, its effect on the employee is scant. Therefore, this study aims at investigating the effects of codes of ethics and philanthropic related activities on employees' job engagement, work engagement, and turnover intention. The study collected data from 286 employees working in the hotel industry of Pakistan. Structural equation modeling has confirmed an association of codes of ethics with job engagement, work engagement, turnover intention, and corporate philanthropy. In addition, job engagement and organizational engagement were found to explain the association between corporate philanthropy and turnover intention. The study contributes to the limited literature on codes of ethics and has implications for the service organizations.

Keywords: Ethical Climate, Corporate Social Responsibility, Job Engagement, Work Engagement, Hospitality Sector.

Introduction

The importance of ethics is essential to smoothly run a business. The actions of socially responsible marketing firms affect their employee, society, and customers. Almost all organizations face ethical evaluations, even when situations are not under their control. For example, The Exxon Valdez oil spill disaster, Bhopal gas

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tragedy, and Enron scandal are the lessons of potential ethical environmental related outcomes (Y.-K. Lee, Lee, & Li, 2012).

The report of the worldwide corruption perceptions indices (CPI) suggests that countries with the weak economy are largely involved in corruption comparing countries with strong economies (www.transparency.org). Pakistan, being a developing economy, for the first time since CPI published in 1996, moved from the last one-third to the middle of the countries. However, the Pakistani steady corruption rate (i.e. 116th among 176 countries) and government scandals destroyed some of the industries.

Considering the harmful consequences, most of the firms attempted to establish good ethics by establishing ethical values statement, credos, codes of ethics (COE) and code of conduct. Establishing COE can be key featuring towards transmitting ethical values among a firm's employee, bespeaking the firm's moral concern, and influencing the employees' ethical behavior. Effective COE can not only improve an ethical work climate of an organization but also can respond better to stakeholders' pressures and external demands (Wotruba, Chonko, & Loe, 2001). Furthermore, the organization's involvement in social causes increases its public image, and this positively consequent increased market share and sales. Therefore, doing something for the betterment of society (i.e. corporate social responsibility, CSR), can be a source of capabilities and resources for the firm. According to Chonko, Wotruba, and Loe (2003), establishing COE have become essential for today's businesses, though, its effectiveness is reported as controversial or mixed (Ki et al., 2012). This study argues that COE would be helpful for Pakistani firms as its nation displays strongly shape image.

According to Sharma, Sharma, and Devi (2009), ethical codes results in corporate philanthropy (CP), that is one of the dimensions of corporate social responsibility (CSR). An organization's participation in philanthropy may result in increased commitment (Islam, Ahmed, Ali, & Sadiq, 2016) and morale values, which becomes a source of competitive advantage for the organizations. Further, this helps organizations to implement cause-related marketing strategies (Liu, Liston-Heyes, & Ko, 2010). Such actions of an organization not only retain its employees, but this also enhances employees' level of the job as well as organizational engagement (Lim, 2010) and they represent their organizations as socially responsible among suppliers, customers, and various community groups.

In particular, service organizations are more concerned with creating a strong ethical image among its customers. Specifically, front line employees of the hotel industry are manifestly related to ethics. This is because, front line employees have to deal with the conflicting demands, thus, and are more susceptible to ethical dilemmas. According to Levy and Dubinsky (1983), front line employees who

work in a non-ethical environment have more conflicts, which lead towards turnover. Ethical work environment may be promoted by the adoption of policies and COE as these creases a sense of responsibility among employees.

In short, ethical code and governance in developing economies like Pakistan has not been studied much as the majority of organizations of these economies rely on a formalized whistleblower system (Y.-K. Lee et al., 2012). In the case of hospitality, rare studies have been conducted focusing on COE. Therefore, this study aims at investigating the role of COE and CP in changing Pakistani firm's work environment. More specifically, this study focuses on the service employees' response to COE such as organizational engagement, turnover intention, and job engagement. This study contributes to the existing voids in the field of CP and COE through empirical supports.

Literature review

Outcomes of codes of ethics (COE)

Moral developments through ethical awareness help corporations to meet society's ethical obligations at a greater level (Valentine & Fleischman, 2008). COE and CP are key factors to promote a sense of social responsibility and accelerate moral developments (Virakul, Koonmee, & McLean, 2009). Previous research suggested that organizational performance can gain the benefits of competitive advantage through CP and integrity (Turban & Greening, 1997). Further, organizations having fundamentally strong in COE contribute at large in CP activities (Sharma et al., 2009). Literature is rich explaining the role of COE in developing a healthy work environment (Valentine & Barnett, 2003). However, its empirical investigation in service organizations is limited, despite the fact that it improves the quality of work performed for them. Unhappy employees, due to poor ethical work environments, feel uncomfortable to continue their services with the same organizations, thereby increase their intention to switch jobs (Babin, Boles, & Robin, 2000). Over time, organizations get satisfactory feedback from customers about their services; the employees in the organization feel the pride to continue their work in that respectable organization. In return, they show a strong commitment to that organization and put their all efforts for the success of the organization. Based on the above theoretical framework, this study has developed the following three hypotheses:

H1: There is a positive association of COE with CP.

H2: There is a positive association of COE with job engagement.

H3: There is a positive association of COE with organizational engagement.

CP, turnover intention and engagement

CP also passes through a similar vein and influences employees' engagement positively. According to Sirota Survey Intelligence (2007), 75% of employees of seventy companies found to be committed with the organization because of their involvement in social responsibilities. They are likely to engage in their jobs since they believe that their organizations are active in CSR activities. Reputation Institute (2008) reported that seventy-five percent of workers (respondents more than 20 countries) prefer to work in such organizations that are socially responsible. Employees responsible for organization identification are enriched by corporate prosocial behavior (Googins, Mirvis, & Rochlin, 2007). Since, philanthropy is a notable activity that engages employees at their job (Brammer, Millington, & Rayton, 2007). In this manner, CP is a source of inspiration for employees. Their morale and sympathy are heightened and the firm enables to hire talented staffs (Porter & Kramer, 2002). A survey of six countries report that employees feel proud to work with socially responsible organizations. Such activities reduce turnover intention among employees and they entrust all their efforts towards their firm (Y.-K. Lee et al., 2012). However, the study has developed the following hypotheses:

H4: There is a positive association of CP with job engagement.

H5: There is a positive association of CP with organizational engagement.

H6: There is a negative association of CP with turnover intention.

Organizational and Job engagement

Job engagement imparts positive results at personal as well as organizational level. At a personal level, quality of work is improved and at the organizational level, the productivity of the organization is improved (Kahn, 1990). Positive reactions in shape of joy, happiness, passion, and satisfaction are resulted by engaged employees and consequently, positive outcomes at the workplace are delivered by such positive reactions (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). It is suggested by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) that engaged employees are willing to serve their organization at the desired level and willing to retain their services for a longer period of time. Such employees are highly energetic in work performance and these energies motivate them for strong engagement with the organization (Sonnentag, 2003). The organization should provide comfort to the employee by providing an abundant resource for job performance (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008). Employees' perception about organization influenced positively when extra benefits are provided since they feel that they are obliged from the organization and in return, they put more efforts and perform the extra role for the goodwill of organization (Saks, 2006). The theoretical support for the exchange of value is

explained in Social exchange theory. This theory suggests that obliged employees are more engaged with their job and organization. The exchange strategies build mutual trust and confidence between employees and their organizations (Ahmad, Islam, & Saleem, 2017; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Since engaged employees provide full cooperation to their organizations due to this favorable tradeoff between employees and organization. This concept is in accordance with Transformation theory. Weitz and Jap (1995) proposed that behaviors and attitudes transferred among individuals by daily interactions within an organization. This suggestion is reported by Bakker and Demerouti (2008) sentiments of engaged employees are shared with coworkers. Therefore, the commitment of engaged employees to their job performance is transmitted to a greater extent in all organs of the organization. Since the following hypothesis is developed in light of the above literary discussion:

H7: There is a positive association of job engagement with organizational engagement.

Organizational engagement, Job engagement and turnover intention

When employees are profoundly engaged in their work, it becomes very difficult for them to detach themselves from the organization owing to a strong identification with organization and work (Hobfoll, 2001). As they assume that work is a fundamental source of their identity, they are attached to work with dedication. Reciprocally, their work and organization provide them a bundle of resources in tangible and intangible form. Consequently, engaged employees hesitate to change the organization and they avert to leave their job (De Lange, De Witte, & Notelaers, 2008). Hence, the relationship between job resources and turnover intention is supposed to be mediated through job engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Since the following hypotheses are developed in light of the above literary discussion:

H8: There is a negative association of job engagement with turnover intention.

H9: There is a negative association of organizational engagement with turnover intention.

Methods

Participants and procedure

This study focused on the front line employees of the hotel industry. The study focused on the employees working in four and five-star hotels as they have enough resources to participate in CSR related activities. The study first confirmed the hotel's participation in CSR and then was selected to include in the study. The

rationale for selecting front line employees was there dealing with the conflicting demands of the customers and manifestly related to ethics (Dubinsky, Howell, Ingram, & Bellenger, 1986). The study distributed four hundred questionnaires, of which, two hundred and eighty-six were used for the hypothesis testing.

Respondents were also examined regarding their personal traits. The values of Table 1 show that majority of the respondents were belonged to food & beverage departments (N=207, 72.37%), male (N=198, 69.23%), with the age between 26-35 years (N=119, 41.60). Based on qualification, 43.36% (N=124) respondents were holding a master's degree, interestingly, only 22.72% (N=65) of the participants were having a relevant diploma in hotel management. Most of the respondents were found to continue with their hotels for more than five years (N=109, 38.11%) and 55.24% (N=158) of them were married. The table also shows that the divorce ration in Pakistan is very low (N=18, 6.29%).

Table 1: Respondent's profile

	Frequency	%		Frequency	%
Age			Marital Status		
< 25 years	83	29.02	Married	158	55.24
26-35 Years	119	41.60	Unmarried	110	38.46
36-45 years	46	16.08	Divorced	18	6.29
> 46 years	38	13.29	Work Experience		
Gender			< 2 years	59	20.62
Male	198	69.23	3-5 years	97	33.91
Female	88	30.77	5-10 years	109	38.11
Qualification			> 10 years	21	7.34
Graduate	97	33.91	Department		
Masters	124	43.36	Room	79	27.62
Diploma	65	22.72	Food & beverages	207	72.37

Measures

All the scales used in this study were adapted from the previous studies and respondents were requested to respond on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree".

Codes of ethics (COE) were measured using a 9-item scale of Singhapakdi and Vitell (2007). Corporate Philanthropy was examined through the 5-items scale of H. Lee, Park, Moon, Yang, and Kim (2009). Organizational engagement and job engagement of the employees were measured using six and eight items respectively, from the study of Saks (2006). The turnover intention was measured using a three-item scale of Cammann (1983). In addition, the study treated all the demographical factors as control variables because age, gender, work experience, and marital status can influence on the observed variables of this study (Islam et al., 2016).

Table 2: CFA Results

Variables	Loading	AVE	CR
<i>Codes of Ethics</i>			
"My organization does not have an ethics committee or team that deals with ethical issues in the organization."	.89		
"My organization does not have training programs that effectively communicate ethical standards and policies."	.90		
"In order to prevent misconduct within my organization, there are training programs to create an effective ethical culture."	.85	.65	.89
"Top management in my organization has a mechanism for detecting ethical issues relating to the local community."	.87		
"My organization has a formal ethics training program focusing on ethics."	.79		
<i>Job Engagement</i>			
"Sometimes, I am so into the job that I lose track of time."	.81		
"I am highly engaged in this job."	.85	.60	.84
"I am enthusiastic about the job I do."	.83		
"The job I have makes me enthusiastic."	.84		
<i>Corporate Philanthropy</i>			
"Our hotel contributes toward bettering the local community."	.90	.62	.90
"Our hotel tries to help the poor."	.92		

"Our hotel tries to fulfill its social responsibility."	.85		
"Our hotel tries to accommodate a request from NGOs."	.86		
"Our hotel tries to accommodate the governmental request."	.87		
Organizational Engagement			
"Being a member of this organization is very captivating."	.83		
"Being a member of this organization makes me come "alive"."	.90		
"I am really into the "goings-on" in this organization."	.84	.64	.87
"Being a member of this organization is exhilarating for me."	.89		
Turnover Intention			
"There is a good chance that I will leave this organization in the next year."	.90		
"I frequently think of leaving this organization."	.84	.55	.71
"I will probably look for a new organization in the next year."	.86		

Note: CR=composite reliability, AVE=average variance extracted, CFA=confirmatory factor analysis

Results

This study, first examined the data regarding missing values, normality, multicollinearity and outliers as these may affect the results (Hair et al. 2006; Byrne, 2010; Holms-Smith, 2010). The study excludes ten questionnaires regarding missing values and fourteen questionnaires regarding outliers. Furthermore, descriptive statistics of the study identify (see table. 3) the mean values of the variables ranges between 3.98 to 4.15; except for turnover intention (Mean=2.79). In addition, the values of Cronbach alpha were noted well above the standard value of 0.70 (Hair, 2006).

The values of the table 3 show COE positively associated with CP ($\beta=.63$, $P<0.01$), OE ($\beta=.49$, $P<0.01$), JE ($\beta=.42$, $P<0.01$), but negatively associated with TI ($\beta=-.39$, $P<0.01$). In addition, CP was found to have a positive association with OE ($\beta=.44$, $P<0.01$) and JE ($\beta=.47$, $P<0.01$), but negatively with TI ($\beta=-.37$, $P<0.01$).

Table 3. Correlation Analysis

Variables	COE	CP	OE	JE	TI
1.COE	1				
2.CP	.63**	1			
3.OE	.49**	.44**	1		
4.JE	.42**	.47**	.64	1	
5.TI	-.39**	-.37**	-.41**	-.47**	1
Mean	4.15	4.08	4.21	3.98	2.79
SD	.62	.78	.67	.58	.81
∞	.77	.82	.83	.79	.84

Note: COE=codes of ethics, CP=corporate philanthropy, OE=organizational engagement, JE=job engagement, TI=turnover intention, SD=standard deviation, **P<0.01

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Uni-dimensionality of the items used to measure a variable was examined through CFA (Hair, Anderson, Babin, & Black, 2010). The study used 0.50 as the standard value of standardized loading (Byrne, 2010) and some of the items were deleted. For example, four items from COE, two items from organizational engagement and four items from job engagement were deleted on the basis of high residuals as well as low loading (see table 2). The values of the model fit were found as good i.e. $\chi^2=382$, $df=138$, $\chi^2 /df= 2.76$, RMSEA=0.061, SRMR=0.07, CFI=0.96, TLI=0.94. The study also examined the composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) to ensure validity and the values were found to be well above the standard criteria of 0.60 and 0.50 respectively (Hair, 2006).

Measurement Model

The values of the model fit regarding structural model were found to be good i.e. $\chi^2=349$, $df=145$, $\chi^2/df= 2.41$, RMSEA=0.053, SRMR=0.08, CFI=0.97, TLI=0.95. The study hypothesized that awareness regarding ethical codes of an organization (COE) positively influence employees' level of job engagement (JE), corporate philanthropy (CP) and organizational engagement (OE). The results in table 4 identify a positive and significant impact of COE on JE ($\beta=.12$, $P>0.05$, $t=.92$), OE ($\beta=.32$, $P<0.01$, $t=4.58$), and CP ($\beta=.61$, $P<0.01$, $t=6.78$). These results support suggested hypotheses H1 and H3 and rejected H2.

The study also hypothesized that CP influence on JE, OE, and TI. The results confirm a positive impact of CP on JE ($\beta=.51$, $P<0.01$, $t=5.23$) and OE ($\beta=.29$, $P<0.01$, $t=4.69$) and negative impact on TI ($\beta=-.19$, $P<0.05$, $t=2.04$), which

supports suggested hypotheses H4, H5 and H6 of the study. The study also noted that JE positively affects OE ($\beta=.57, P<0.01, t=4.37$) and negatively to TI ($\beta=-.24, P<0.05, t=1.98$) supporting suggested hypotheses H7 and H8. Finally, OE was found negatively affecting TI ($\beta=-.31, P<0.01, t=5.68$), which support H9.

Table 4. Structural model estimates

Hypotheses	β	t	C.R	P	R ² SMC	Model Fit
COE ---> CP	0.61	6.78	5.69	0.00**		
COE ---> JE	0.12	0.92	7.35	0.12		
COE ---> OE	0.32	4.58	10.79	0.00**		$\chi^2=349,$ $df=145,$
CP ---> JE	0.51	5.23	9.64	0.00**	JE=45.3%	$\chi^2 /df= 2.41,$
CP ---> OE	0.29	4.69	8.56	0.00**	OE=59.1%	RMSEA=0.
CP ---> TI	-0.19	2.04	-3.47	0.03*	CP=61.5%	053,
JE ---> OE	0.57	4.37	7.88	0.00*	TI=41.7%	SRMR=0.08
JE ---> TI	-0.24	1.98	-2.87	0.01*		, CFI=0.97,
OE ---> TI	-0.31	5.68	-2.45	0.00**		TLI=0.95
COE ---> TI	-0.10	0.87	-3.48	0.17		

Note: COE=codes of ethics, CP=corporate philanthropy, OE=organizational engagement, JE=job engagement, TI=turnover intention, SD=standard deviation, ** $P<0.01$, * $P<0.05$

The mediating effects of the study were examined using path analysis, the indirect effect of COE on JE through the mediation of CP was found to be significant ($\beta=.311^{**}$) whereas, the direct effect of COE and JE was insignificant ($\beta=.12, n.s$), therefore CP was found to fully mediate COE-JE association. The indirect effect of COE on TI via OE was found to be significant ($\beta=.10^*$), whereas the direct effect was non-significant, suggested full mediation. However, JE and OE were noted to perform the role of partial mediation between CP-OE ($\beta=.29^{**}$) and JE-TI ($\beta=.18^{**}$) associations respectively.

Discussion

Organizations should establish and implement codes of ethics, which they want their employees to be followed at the workplace. These COE develop organizational values among employees and create awareness about corporate philanthropy. Furthermore, engagement should be considered as a long run strategy to retain employees and to get a competitive advantage.

The study also suggested the meaningful difference between organizational and job engagement based on conservation of the resource, social exchange and

transfer theories (Hobfoll, 2001; Saks, 2006). The study noted that employees who perceive the availability of resources reciprocate through engagement in their organization as well as job. In addition, such employees are more likely to be with their current organization and engaged employees tend to show positive attitudes and behaviors at their workplace. Moreover, the study suggests that organizational and job engagement together with philanthropy can further explain the COE-TI association (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). These results are in accordance with the arguments of Valentine and Fleischman (2008) that CSR intervenes between organization ethics and employees job satisfaction.

This study is not free from limitations. First, the data for this study was collected from the single service sector (i.e. hotel) and the responses were received from the employees of only ten hotels. In addition, the results of this study are based on the responses of only front line employees as such employees can better perceive the ethical codes of their organization (Viswesvaran & Deshpande, 1996). Second, this study collected data on independent and dependent variables at one point from the same source. Such issues, in primary data collection methods, may raise a question on common method variance (CMV). Although, the study examined and treated for CMV through procedural as well as statistical method, however it is suggested to the future researchers to collect data from two sources i.e. from managers and employees.

Third, most of the respondents of this study were male and the results may be of gender biased. The main reason for male respondents is Pakistani culture, where societies are male dominant and women take care of their homes. Future researchers are suggested to take an equal number of male and female respondents to further generalize the findings. Finally, the study considers only a single dimension of CSR (i.e. Philanthropy) as this is the most common activity of Pakistani hotels, whereas, other dimensions of CSR may also effect on employees turnover intention (Islam et al., 2016).

Practical Implications

The study suggests to the managers as well as policymakers of the service-based organizations that service firms should leverage social responsibility, legal compliance, and moral values to create philanthropic culture. Employees perception of their firm's involvement in philanthropic related responsibility makes them feel connected with their organization and job, in turn, the organization may enjoy employee retention (Sharma et al., 2009).

According to the Gallup survey of 2016 about employees' engagement, only 13% of the employees are deliberately involved in their jobs and this figure is even worse in service organizations. Therefore, their managers of the service

organizations (i.e. hotels in this study) should make proper codes of ethics for their employee's engagement. This suggestion is not unique as some of the Korean, as well as Malaysian hotels, (i.e. hotels of non-western countries), such as Continental Hotels Groups and Westin Chosan Hotel, has developed ethical codes. In Pakistan, Pearl Continental Hotel and Sareena Hotels, etc. have also established ethical codes and are involved in philanthropy related activities such as matching gifts, tree planting, food banks, etc. Such actions by the organizations promote employee engagement (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008).

Considering the potential benefits of the codes of ethics, the study, therefore suggested to the managers to design ethical training programs. The training programs should be arranged on a regular as well as occasional basis. The regular ethical training programs should cover ethical issues required for data to day operations in the organizations and can be conducted using newsletters, networking sites, meetings, or take help from mentoring. While non-regular ethical training programs should be arranged in the form of seminars and workshops such as campaigns regarding customers care or anticorruption (Y.-K. Lee et al., 2012). Such programs develop the element of organizational support and employees perform their job diligently (i.e. job engagement).

In simple words, management should embed philanthropy in organizational culture as it can improve the engagement as well as awareness among employees about their firm's involvement in philanthropy (Sims & Kroeck, 1994). Engaged employees prefer to be with their current organization. Doing so, services organizations can capture and retain their customers.

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