

Flexibility Idiosyncratic Deals and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour: A Moderated Model of Perceived Organizational Justice

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the moderating effect of perceived organizational justice on the relationship between flexibility idiosyncratic deals (I-DEALS) and organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) among tied life insurance agents in Kenya. The specific objectives included finding out the relationship between flexibility i-deals and OCB, and to examine the moderating effect of perceived organizational justice (POJ) on the relationship between i-deals and OCB. The study used explanatory research design with survey data. It was guided by idiosyncratic, equity and social exchange theories. The standard multiple regression and the moderated regression analysis were used to test the hypotheses from data collected from a field study from 498 employees and 48 managers from a total population of 1954 tied life insurance agents in Kenya. The data was collected using questionnaires. The study findings showed a positive relationship between flexibility I-deals and OCB ($\beta = 0.426$, $p < .05$) and a moderating effect of perceived organizational justice ($\beta = 0.223$, $p < .05$). One of the major research limitations for the study is its cross-sectional nature of collection of data that weakens the author's claim of causality between the variables in focus. However, the study extends the understanding of OCB and idiosyncratic deals through the moderating effects of perceived organizational justice. Organizations should grant their employees with flexibility I-deals fairly for their display of OCB. These I-deals provided intrinsic motivation to the employees in displaying OCB in their organizations. The exchange relationship between employees and their employers get enhanced through their granting hence motivating reciprocation through OCB. The study established the moderating effect of interactional perceived organizational justice on the relationship between flexibility idiosyncratic deals and OCB. It recommends that insurance managers be focused on the granting of fair i-deals so as to evoke innovative work behaviour from their employees.

Keywords: Organizational citizenship behaviour, idiosyncratic deals, perceived organizational justice, life insurance

INTRODUCTION

Research on OCB continues to increase in different organizations and contexts. The continued upsurge in this line of research is due to the importance that OCB has on organizational effectiveness and overall performance though it is not rewarded. It's defined as a discretionary behaviour that helps the organizations achieve their goals (Sing, 2014). Organ (1988) defined it as "an individual behaviour that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by formal reward system, and that in aggregate

promotes the effective functioning of the organization". Scooter *et al.*, (2000) opines that OCB is based on discretionary behaviours that include helping others, voluntary offer of extra work and socializing new employees in their jobs. Elvind *et al.*, (2011) in a study on adult educators in Norway describes the antecedents of OCB as comprising of perceived recognition from leaders, clear leadership style and a good leader employee relationship. This stand is supported by Bahrani *et al.*, (2013) who adds that both transactional and transformational leadership styles significantly predicted OCB.

The outcomes of OCB have taken dichotomous stands from the views of some scholars. Some have advanced positive while others negative outcomes. The positive outcomes associated with OCB include increased performance and makes the work environment attractive. From the organizational level there is a high relationship between collective OCB and firm performance. The negative employee outcomes emanating from OCB have been cited to include increased job stress, work-family conflict, leisure conflict and high intentions to quit. According to Bergeron *et al.*, (2013), the time spent on task performance is considered more vital than on OCB as it determines important career outcomes such as performance evaluation, salary increment, job advancement and employee promotions.

Flexibility idiosyncratic deals refer to employment arrangement negotiated by an individual employee for flexible nature of work that range from working outside office to completing work somewhere apart from the main office (Rousseau, 2006). Some of the positive outcomes of these I-deals include reduced turnover intention, increased job satisfaction, increased work engagement, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behaviour and innovative work behaviour. Although i-deals have previously used to predict a number of employee outcomes inclusive of OCB, few studies have attempted to include intermediate processes that bring about these outcomes. Some of the intermediate variables previously used include perceived organizational support, employee engagement, leader member exchange and social exchange relationships. This study attempts to extend this stream of research by introducing perceived organizational justice as an intermediate mechanism for the relationship between flexibility i-deals and OCB using cross-sectional data from life insurance firms in Kenya, an African context with few known studies on i-deals-OCB research.

Organizational justice refers to people's perceptions of fairness in all the organizational procedures, processes and practices along with their associated behavioral, cognitive and emotional reactions (Colquit *et al.*, 2001). The antecedents of this variable include increased employee participation, precise, helpful, skillful and timely communication and a justice climate with shared justice at the group level related to individual outcomes (Yadar, 2016). Organizational justice is considered to involve three different elements: distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice (McDowall & Fletcher, 2004; Forret and Love, 2008; Li and Cropanzano, 2009).

THEORY AND HYPOTHESIS

Flexibility Idiosyncratic deals and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

Organizational citizenship behaviour is a construct that takes different components according to the different contexts. Different conceptualizations of OCB have been advanced by past researches, most of which are context and industry specific. According to Noranee *et al.*, (2017) OCB is vital for an organization particularly with a trust and empowerment on the part of the employer and / or supervisor. Hence

employers as well as their supervisors should grant I-deals to the employees with the trust that there would be meaningful reciprocation from them for the effective achievement of the organizational goals through motivational impetus induced by the i-deals granted.

Many previous studies agree that though OCB is not rewarded in the customary remuneration structure in an organization, it is so vital for the organizational performance. The various dimensions explored for this construct are therefore very necessary for the organization. Mehran (2017) in a study found out that organizational commitment is related to OCB. Since OCB is not remunerated in the traditional ways, the commitment of employees must be achieved through both extrinsic and intrinsic I-deals. One of the intrinsically motivating I-deals is of flexibility nature (Kimwolo & Cheruiyot, 2019). In the same line of argument Vidyarathi *et al.*, (2014) found out that idiosyncratic deals have a positive and significant relationship with OCB albeit as an index. Therefore, based on the above arguments the following hypothesis is posited:

Hypothesis 1: *Flexibility idiosyncratic deals is positively related to organizational citizenship behaviour*

The Moderating Role of Perceived Organizational Justice

Organizational justice has in the recent past been a concern for many organization behaviour researches due its influence on employee outcomes and workers attitude and behaviours towards organizational concerns on their inputs in comparison to outcomes. Perceived Organizational justice has been found to have affect turnover intention and OCB. This has the implication that co-workers with high perceived organizational justice in terms of distribution and the procedures involved in the distribution of employee outcomes are likely to display more OCB and a reduced turnover intention amongst them. According to Rosen *et al.*, (2013) flexibility i-deals are forms of intrinsic motivation that make employees improve their overall performance in organizations. However, drawing from equity, social exchange and the norm of reciprocity theories co-workers will reciprocate it courtesy of the fairness involved in the distribution, the procedures involved and interactions involved of the outcomes they receive and the inputs they expend compared to their co-workers doing similar jobs. This has the implication that the flexibility i-deals granted to employees should be fair in the eyes of their co-workers.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study suggests that a tied life insurance agent displays organizational citizenship behaviour based on the prediction of flexibility idiosyncratic deals which confers them some intrinsic motivation. Then, perceived organizational justice in the life insurance companies is expected to have an interactive effect on the relationship between these flexible i-deals and organizational citizenship behaviour. Therefore, in the study the independent variable is flexible idiosyncratic deals and the dependent variable is organizational citizenship behaviour. The relationship between flexibility idiosyncratic deals and OCB is moderated by perceived organizational justice. The control variables were employee age, gender, educational level and tenure. A total of eight hypotheses are formulated for the study. The variables are shown in the figure 1 below.

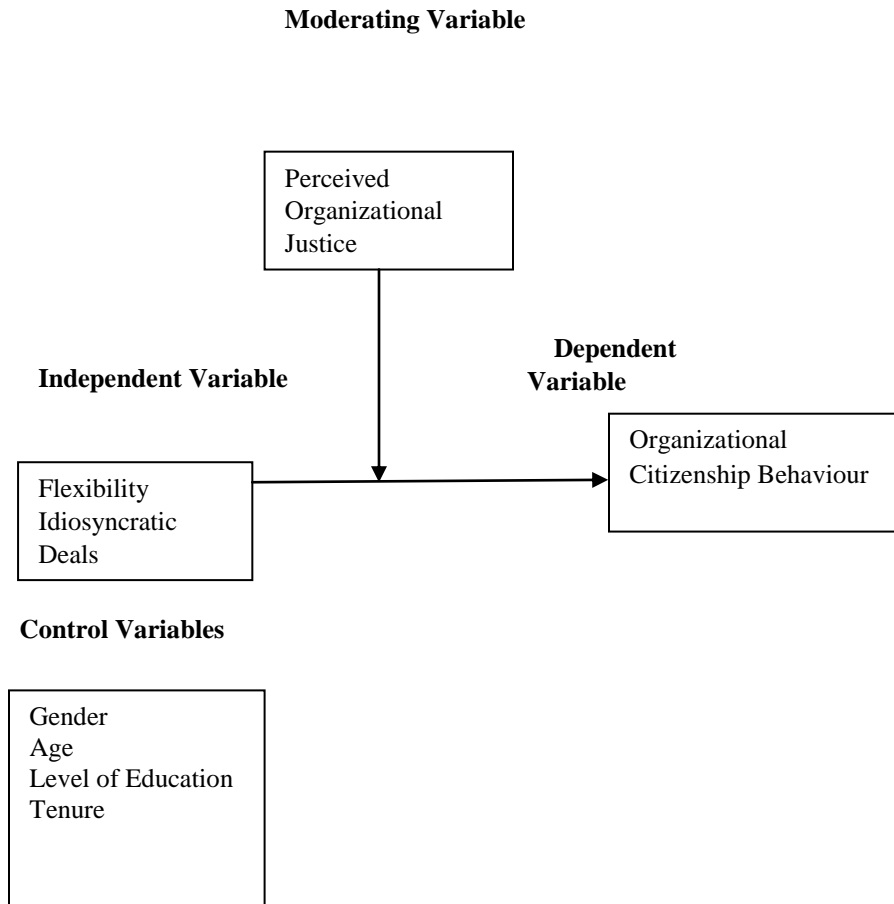


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework
 Source: Research Data, 2019

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection

Data for this study was collected from life insurance agents from companies that commanded the market share in Kenya. These agents gave responses pertaining to the flexibility idiosyncratic deals and perceived organizational justice and organizational citizenship behaviour. The data was collected through surveys that were administered to the respondents and picked after they were filled. The data collection was done at one moment in time by the researcher with one research assistant who was duly trained to help in the survey administration. From a sample of 498 agents 385 responses were returned which translated to 77% rate. Among the life insurance agents, majorities were males and had diploma level of education implying that life insurance jobs didn't require a very high level of education. Majority of them were of less than 30 years of age while many had an experience of less than 10 years working for their companies.

Measures

Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

In measuring this construct the study used the 15- item scale developed and validated in 1995 (Moorman & Blakely, 1995). Participants were asked to rate the extent to which their OCB was like on a seven point likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 7= strongly agree). An item sample is “I often go out of my way to make my new colleagues feel welcome in the in the organization”. The Cronbach’s alpha for the sample was 0.851.

Flexibility Idiosyncratic deals

Flexibility idiosyncratic deals were measured by using the seven-point scale adopted from the scale developed and validated in 2013 (Rosen et al., 2013). The participants were asked to rate the negotiations in which they made with their managers on their flexible employment arrangements on a seven point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 7= strongly disagree). An item sample is “My employer and I have successfully negotiated a unique arrangement that allows me training opportunities.” The Cronbach alpha for the sample was 0.856.

Perceived Organizational Justice

Perceived organizational justice was measured using the seven point likert scale developed and validated by Niehoff & Moorman, 1993). Participants were asked to rate their managers based on their perception of organizational justice on a seven point likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 7= strongly agree). An item sample is “Concerning decisions made about my job, the manager discusses with me the implications of the decisions.” The Cronbach’s alpha for the sample was 0.852.

Control Variables

We controlled for the effects of employee gender, employee age, employee level of education and employee tenure since other researches suggest that they may have significant effects on idiosyncratic deals and IWB.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics for the study variables revealed that POJ, OCB and POJ had means of 6.175, 5.579 and 5.750 respectively. Equally, it revealed that the three variables had standard deviations of 0.674, 0.638 and 0.859 respectively. The study also revealed that all the variables were normal as all were within the acceptable skewness and kurtosis range of -2+2. The descriptive results are shown in table 1 below.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Perceived Organizational Justice, Organizational Citizenship Behaviour and Development Idiosyncratic Deals

Variable	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Perceived Organizational Justice	385	4.65	7.00	6.175	0.674	-0.880	-0.193
Organizational Citizenship Behaviour	385	3.86	6.79	5.579	0.638	-0.049	-1.075
Flexibility Idiosyncratic Deals	385	3.00	7.00	5.453	0.904	-0.212	-0.685

Source: Research Data, 2019

Correlation Results

The correlation results revealed that the variables were positively related with OCB. Both flexibility i-deals and perceived organizational justice were significantly related to OCB at ($r= 0.352, p= 0.00$) and ($r= 0.270, p=0.00$) respectively. This had the implication that both had the ability to influence OCB.

Table 2: Correlation Results

Correlations				
Variables		FIDEALS	POJ	OCB
Flexibility Idiosyncratic deals (FIDEALS)		1		
Perceived organizational justice (POJ)		.403**	1	
Organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB)		.352**	.270**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Research Data, 2019

Tests of Hypotheses

All the variables including the demographics were standardized. Among the demographic variables, employee length of service was significant ($\beta= 0.003, p<0.01$). Overly, the R square of model 1 was 0.009 as depicted in the table. The relationship between flexibility idiosyncratic deals and organizational citizenship behaviour was also positively significant ($\beta=0.426, p<0.01$). This implied that idiosyncratic deals predict innovative work behaviour in the organizations. The addition of the dependent variable increased the predictive power of model two with an Rsquare of 0.187. The moderation was also possible because perceived organizational justice which was the moderator was significant ($\beta=0.172, p<0.01$). The interaction between POJ and FIDEALS was also significant ($\beta=0.113, p<0.01$). The model four which added to the interaction was with an Rsquare of 0.236 showing an increase from when the moderator was added. The results are shown in table 3 below.

Table 3: The moderated regression analyses predicting flexibility idiosyncratic deals and perceived organizational justice as a moderator

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Variable	B (Std Error)	B (Std. Error)	B (Std. Error)	B (Std. Error)
(Constant)	5.580 (0.033)	5.580 (0.030)	5.580 (0.029)	5.583 (0.029)
Zscore: Employee gender	-0.024 (0.035)	0.010 (0.032)*	0.011 (.031)	-0.022 (0.031)
Zscore: Employee's age	-0.061 (.038)	0.123 (0.034)	-0.103 (.034)	-0.089 (0.034)
Zscore: Employee education level	0.059 (0.038)	0.033 (.030)	0.027 (0.030)	0.013 (0.030)
Zscore: Employee length of service	0.003 (.038)**	-0.23 (0.035)	0.008 (.036)	-0.005 (.034)
Zscore (FIDEALS)		0.426 (0.030)**	0.355 (0.032)**	0.231 (0.039)**
Zscore (POJ)			0.172 (.032)**	0.113 (0.033)**
Zscore (FIDEALS_POJ)				0.223 (0.033)**
R	0.97 ^a	0.433 ^b	0.460 ^c	0.486 ^d
R square	0.009	0.187	0.212	0.236
Adjusted R square	-0.001	0.176	0.199	0.222
Std Error of the Estimate	0.63860	0.57924	0.57124	0.56316
F	0.902	17.453	16.900	16.624
F change	0.902	5.155	3.449	
Significant	0.463 ^b	0.000 ^c	0.000 ^d	0.000 ^e

Legend: FIDEALS-Flexibility I-Deals, POJ-Perceived Organizational Justice.

Source: Research Data, 2019.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study confirm previous results of i-deals and employee outcomes like OCB, employee commitment, innovative work behaviour and job satisfaction (Rousseau, 2006; Vidyarthi et al., 2014; Liao et al., 2014; Spieglare et al., 2014). Flexibility i-deals have been previously associated with motivational benefits (Kimwolo & Cheruiyot, 2019). Such i-deals are part of the wider category of intrinsically motivating i-deals (Rosen *et al.*, 2013). Perceived organizational justice which is the perception of fairness in employee outcomes is as per other researchers utilizing equity theory (Li & Croponzano, 2009). This theory explains that employees perceive fairness in their input-outcome relationships (Blau, 1964). Perceived unfairness is discerned when there is more input as compared to outcomes. In the current study, the social exchange theory and equity theories have been used to explain the relationship that is present within co-workers and their supervisors as concerns granting of i-deals (Colquit, 2001).

Since i-deals are motivational grants negotiated by individual employees and granted by supervisors or their employers, the current study postulates therefore, that there

should be fairness in granting them for OCB which is not usually remunerated, to be displayed (Noranee *et al.*, 2017). While looking at effect of POJ on the relationship between financial idiosyncratic deals and OCB, Kimwolo (2019) also found that POJ positively and significantly moderated the relationship. Therefore, there should be an interaction between POJ and such flexibility i-deals for such outcomes to be realized.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study have vital implications for social exchange, equity and idiosyncratic deals theories. Flexibility i-deals are those that are granted to an employee in terms of opportunities for training, capacity building as well as career development. They motivate the employee's OCB since they expose them to unlimited opportunities for private utilization of their skills base and make them acquire knowledge and thus make them perform better in their work roles. Moreover, they make the employees have a special reciprocation to their organizations through organizational citizenship behaviour.

The interaction between flexibility i-deals and perceived organizational justice is equally of importance from this study. In an environment of justice in the granting of flexibility i-deals both the organization and the individual employees benefit. The organization through OCB will benefit since the workers will be better oriented by the motivated colleagues, better publicity by empowered employees and workers working beyond their normal timelines. Though the employees benefit from the i-deals granted, of great importance pertains to the distribution procedures, and the interaction between the employees and the employers or their agents when granting the specific i-deals. Any injustice witnessed by co-workers during their granting will demotivate the employees and nurture an environment of suspicion, individualism and inhibited team work. This kind of scenario will create a weaker exhibition of OCB in the organization which eventually leads to a decline in organizational effectiveness. The interaction between flexibility i-deals and organizational justice is particularly important in the context of the insurance industry in Kenya which is quite competitive coupled with the attachment it has on important organizational decisions given the high levels of unemployment witnessed in Kenya. Therefore, the social exchange relationship between the flexibility and OCB depends much on the interaction with perceived organizational justice.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study provides an important explanation on the industry management practices as it pertains the granting of flexibility i-deals and the role of perceived organizational justice on the distribution, procedures and granting of the same. These I-deals are perceived by individual employees as very important for individual working hence any injustice witnessed by co-workers is likely to evoke feelings of strong resentment and injustice on them. Such feelings are likely to be counteractive in on employee outcomes like OCB. It is therefore incumbent among the life insurance industry practitioners to consider the best ways of granting i-deals that are likely to be perceived by co-workers as unfair for the organization to fully benefit from the employees' inputs in their work roles, particularly those which are not remunerated by the organizations.

The management of the companies should make employees free in their negotiation through clear, considerate and mutually benefitting interactions with the co-workers interested in negotiating for the I-deals. Similarly, the granting of these I-deals should be based on the nature of the input from the particular employees. Development i-deals have previously been viewed by past studies to be granted to employees that have unique contributions and performance to the organizations. This implies that co-workers perceive fairness when these i-deals are given to the “right” people according to them. In order for these to be realized in organizations employers or their agents need to have high levels of integrity so that incidents of corruption are not witnessed. This is important given that the contexts of these companies are critical given that they are operating in Kenya where high levels of corruption are rampant. Therefore, managers and other employees important for granting of i-deals should be employed particularly based on their level of integrity. The adherence of such ethics will make the employees display OCB that eventually makes the organization competitive within the industry.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It can be concluded from this study that flexibility i-deals are significantly related to OCB. This could be so due to the social exchange relationship between employees and their employers or their agents. Employees benefit from their enhanced autonomy in the carrying of their roles flexibly as employers gain through increased effectiveness from their employees.

The findings also indicated that perceived organizational justice moderates the relationship between flexibility i-deals and OCB. Thus the interaction between POJ and flexibility I-deals increased the OCB displayed in the organization. The implication is that with perception of fairness high in the granting of these types of i-deals employees would reciprocate through increased display of OCB in the organization. It also means that the opposite would be true with absence of POJ. Thus life insurance companies would stand to benefit from increased effectiveness with fair granting of flexibility i-deals.

The findings of the study are important for scholars in i-deals and OCB areas of study as they extend the social exchange, idiosyncratic and equity theories (Blau, 1964; Rousseau, 2006). The study is also relevant to practioners in the insurance industry and related financial sectors as it concerns their quest for increased effectiveness in their organizations through OCB. Finally, the study benefits policy makers in government and private organizations in crafting policies that champion fair granting of employee outcomes. Such policies will herald beneficial effectiveness to organizations as well as improve employee welfare and job satisfaction which are important employee performance.

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