

EFFECT OF EMPLOYEE POLITICAL SKILLS, ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR STRATEGY ON AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT IN KENYAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

The study's main objective was to determine effect of employee political skills, organizational citizenship behaviour strategy and affective commitment in Kenyan Public Universities. Social influence theory informed the study. The study used combination of explanatory and descriptive survey and targeted 8904 academic and non-academic staff from four public Kenyan Universities. Stratified sampling technique and Random sampling was employed to select a sample size of 351 respondents. This study used questionnaires to collect data relevant to the study. Cronbach alpha test was used to test reliability while factor analysis was used to test construct validity. Multiple regressions and Hierarchical Multiple Regression were used to test the hypotheses. Findings showed that proactive personality and networking ability have a significant effect on the affective commitment. In addition, organisational citizenship behaviour (altruism and courtesy) had significant moderating effect on the relationship between proactive personality, networking ability and affective commitment. There is need for organizations to focus on whether their employees are satisfied with their job because they are at a risk of losing dissatisfied employees that possess valuable set of skills

Keywords: Proactive Personality, Networking Ability, Organisational Citizenship Behaviour, Affective Commitment, Employee Political Skills

INTRODUCTION

Committed employees are valuable factors that managers use in order to achieve organizations' goals (Tumwesigye, 2010). Therefore, employee commitment could be a determinant for Organizational performance. Akintayo (2010) noted that one of the reasons why commitment has attracted research attention is that organization depends on committed employees to achieve superior performance. There are many evidences which suggest that many organizations increase their employees' commitment to reduce costs, improve employee job performance and therefore enhance their high performance (Hunjra, 2010; Milkovich & Newman, 2008). Based on this point of view, employee's commitment is a managerial concept which can result to increase firm performance and financial success. In this point of view, employee's commitment is considered as a competitive strategy (Shaven and Rally, 2003).

Political skill is characterized by social perceptiveness and the ability to adjust one's behaviour to different and changing situational needs, to influence others. Politically skilled individuals enjoy a sense of personal security that allows them to perceive control over the processes and outcomes of interpersonal interactions within organisations. This enhances the sense of belonging and helps to improve business performance, personal commitment and motivation (Sharma and Hussain, 2013). Political skill is an employee's ability to understand how to work with and influence others in order to advance individual or organizational objectives (Ahearn, *et al*, 2004). Employees who are high in political skill should be able to better navigate their community, college's environment more than individuals who are low in political skill.

The research on perception of organizational politics shows that it has a negative influence on numbers of job outcome including turnover intention (Byrne, 2005), job stress (Azeem *et al.*, 2010), workplace deviance, interpersonal conflict and contextual performance (Witt *et al*, 2002). According to Turnip seed and Rassuli (2005), OCB elements which enhance performance include: elements which add social capital, helping or altruistic elements, elements resulting with time saving or problem solving, and other elements which provide socio-emotional support by boosting morale or developing a nurturing culture. Researchers all over the world are still fertilizing the area of Organizational Citizenship behavior which helps organizations to increase their effectiveness. OCB is all about the behavior of employees so that employees are treated as key players to increase the effectiveness/productivity of an organization. Following this, organizational commitment, positively affected the ethical behavior of employees. Also, the ethical behavior had significant influence on the generosity and altruism of OCB. Employees with high organizational commitment turn to be more passionate and concerned and are more likely to contribute to organizational assignments and goals (Freund, 2005; Janssen, 2004; Marchiori & Henkin, 2004; Moon, 2000).

This is considered an acute problem due to its detrimental effects on the organization especially when the high performing employees leave the organization. Moreover, lack of commitment is dangerous for the organizations, and it undermines the efficiency and productivity of the organization. Furthermore, in some occasions, it threatens the organization's long term survival (Brereton, Beach, and Cliff, 2003). Therefore, commitment of top performing employees has become a big challenge for the employers/organizational managers (Samuel and Chipunza, 2009; Ovadje, 2009). The situation is similar among most of Kenyan State Corporation in Kenya (KIPRRA, 2010).

One of the biggest challenges in Kenya is that the performance of universities is always below expected even when their employees are supposed to perform according to a standardized quantity and quality. In Kenya, government employees are short of performing as detailed in the MSPS (2007 survey). This is despite the fact that they are even obliged to have a proper understanding of a complete and up-to-date job description, job performance requirements, and job standards. There is generally low performance as employees are alienated which stifles their creativity and innovations. Currently, government ministries are going through frustrating period as the outcomes of their performances do not tally with what is expected of them as captured in the CSR Reports for the years 2013 and 2014. This reality has brought to the fore the need to investigate the circus using the lens of employee commitment especially that there are rare investigation of the construct in the public sector within this context. Still most organizations have not achieved the expected performance such as high enrolment, minimum labour turnover, elimination of conflicts within management and maximum employee motivation. However it is not clear why this undesirable situation persists (Atieno, Patrick and Ogweno, 2014) even though political skills and OCB has been applied in some institutions of higher learning and has experienced a number of challenges such as low enrolment, high labour turnover and even low morale among employees.

Previous studies have been done on political skills and its impact in different organizations; however, little research has been done to determine how the political skills affect affective commitment in public higher institutions. Little is known about how employees might respond to their company's political skills, OCB and affective commitment. Thus, the study hypothesized that

H_{o1}: There is no significant effect of proactive personality on affective commitment in Kenyan Public Universities

H_{o2}: There is no significant effect of networking ability on affective commitment in Kenya Public Universities

H_{o3}: There is no significant moderating effect of OCB on the relationship between proactive personality and affective commitment in Kenyan Public Universities

H_{o4}: There is no significant moderating effect of OCB on the relationship between networking ability and affective commitment in Kenyan Public Universities

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Social influence theory (Levy et al., 1998) suggests that individuals who are skilled at engaging in impression management behaviours are more likely to be successful in their impression management efforts than those who are less skilled. Social influence theory suggests that individual characteristics of the influencer may have an important effect on the efficacy of impression management tactics. Social influence theory (Levy, Collins, & Nail, 1998) leads us to postulate that political skill is another key individual variable that will exhibit a strong influence on the effectiveness of impression management techniques. Political skill provides an individual with the ability to understand others and use that knowledge to effectively influence situations. In terms of impression management, it is likely that individuals higher in political skills will achieve more positive images when managing impressions than will their low political skilled counterparts. Integrating the ideas introduced above, we offer two purposes for our study. First, we expand impression management research by investigating the images that supervisor's hold of employees based on the use of five impression management behaviors (supplication, intimidation, ingratiation, self-promotion, and exemplification) in the same study. Secondly, we examine political skills as a moderating variable to determine whether it enhances the effect of the impression management tactics. Social influence theory suggests that political skills also may play the role of a moderator between various impression management tactics and work outcomes to the extent that it serves as a way of separating those who look sincere (high politically skilled) from those who look manipulative (low politically skilled; Levy et al., 1998; Liden & Mitchell, 1988).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Proactive Personality and Affective Commitment

Ashford (2008) argues that having proactive behaviour involves defining new problems, finding new solutions, and providing active leadership through an uncertain future. In its ultimate form, proactive behaviour involves grand ambitions, breakthrough thinking, and the wherewithal to make even the impossible happen. It overhauls the past and makes the future. It creates new industries, changes the rules of competition, or changes the world. Affective commitment has been defined as the emotional attachment a person has to the organization or firm that he/she

works for or an employee's attitude toward the organization. Employees that have a strong affective commitment are most likely to remain within the organization

PAP has been related to extrinsic job-related outcomes such as affective commitment which leads to extrinsic career success, or actual advancements in salary and position (Seibert, Kraimer, & Crant, 2001). In an attempt to examine the criterion validity of the Proactive Personality Scale, they found that proactive personality explained 8% of the variance in objective measures of affective commitment in the case of real estate agents. Additionally proactive personality has been associated with other objective measures such as salary and promotions (Seibert, Crant, & Kraimer, 1999). Proactive personality was also found to be significantly related to subjective evaluations of performance by direct supervisors in diverse backgrounds (Thompson, 2005) as they tend to set high standards, and harness all available resources into achieving those standards.

Meyer et al., (2002) also found that proactive personality is related to turnover i.e. it was found that proactive personality was related to an employee's intent to stay with the organization. In an attempt to understand the antecedents of organizational commitment researchers have found that not only organizational characteristics but also personal characteristics such as proactive personality etc. predict organizational commitment. Proactive employees are not passive recipients of environmental constraints on their behaviour. Rather, they can intentionally and directly change their current circumstances (Crant, 2000). They take initiatives and hence it is anticipated that if such individuals are committed to the organization they would intend to remain with the organization.

Networking Ability and Affective Commitment

Individuals with strong political skills are adept at developing and using diverse networks of people. People in these networks tend to hold assets seen as valuable and necessary for successful personal and organizational functioning. By the sheer force of their typically subtle style, politically skilled individuals easily develop friendships and build strong, beneficial alliances and coalitions. Furthermore, because social networks are deliberately constructed structures, individuals high in networking ability ensure they are well positioned in order to both create and take advantage of opportunities (Baron & Markman, 2000). Masters of the quid pro quo, they are often highly skilled negotiators and deal makers, and adept at conflict management.

Wei et al. (2010) examined the role of networking ability in the supervisor-subordinate relationship dynamics contributing to career prospects, using multiple data sources in Chinese firms. A total of 343 employees, their 343 direct supervisors, and 662 peers completed surveys

to test a model concluding that subordinates use their networking ability in order to influence their relationship with their supervisors, which ultimately contributes to greater career prospects and development. Also, a meta-analysis (Eby, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2005) concludes that political expertise and social capital for example, quantity or quality of accumulated contacts can act as dominant predictors of career success. Quite recently, scholars have debated on the role of political skill in the gender and career success relationship (Perrewe´ and Nelson, 2004).

OCB, Political Skills and Affective Commitment

The influence of AC on OCB has been a well-researched area. Past studies have detailed the positive correlation between AC and OCB (Allen and Meyer, 1996; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; McFarlane and Wayne, 1993; Haque and Aslam, 2011). AC was regarded as a predictor of OCB (Scholl, 1981; Wiener, 1982). In a meta-analytic study of the antecedents, correlates and consequences of organizational commitment, AC ($\rho = .32$) correlated positively with OCB (Meyer, et al., 2002). AC was also regarded as an important factor for predicting extra-role behaviors, such as OCB (Scholl, 1981; Wiener, 1982). Freund (2004) examined the relationship between work commitment and OCB among lawyers in the private sector.

The results show that AC and OCB are significantly related. It should, however, be noted that some other studies have found no correlation between AC and OCB (Williams and Anderson, 1991; Shore and Wayne, 1993). In spite of these differing results it is generally held by scholar-practitioners and researchers that more research evidence supporting a positive relationship between AC and OCB lend credence to the assertion that AC has correlation with OCB. Only a few studies, linking AC to OCB, have been conducted in non-Western context (e.g., Chien and Su, 2009; Su and Hsiao, 2005; Ogba, 2006). Most of the studies on OCB's relationship with other variables have focussed on western countries (Samuel and Aubrey, 2006) using Western measures. These measures are used widely because of their validity and reliability, the applicability of such scale with similar results in non-western cultures (countries) have proved problematic (Cheng and Stockdale, 2003; Lee et al., 2001; Gautam et al., 2001; Wasti, 2002, Ogba, 2006).

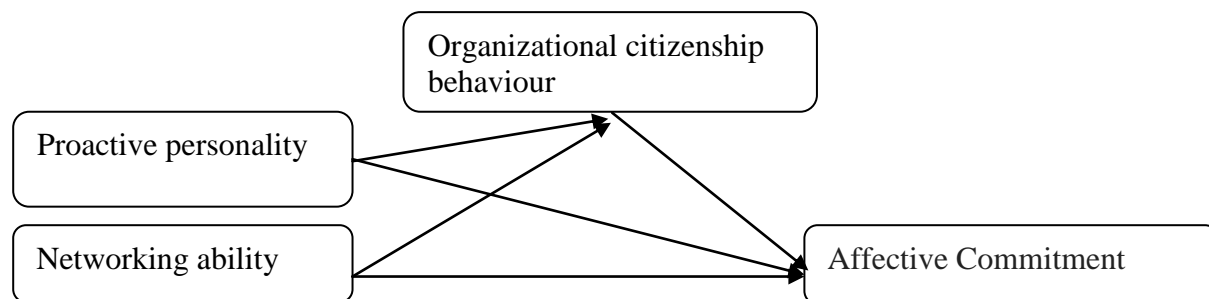
To test the tenure- Commitment and Tenure- OCB relationship, Ng & Fiedman (2011) conducted a meta- analysis of literature published before 2010 to access the moderating effect of tenure of employee in the relationship between affective commitment and the performance of organizational citizenship behaviour among 40 studies which included 11, 416 participants. They predicted that organizational tenure will positively moderate the effect of affective organizational commitment on OCBs and that organizational tenure will negatively moderate the effect of affective organizational commitment on OCB. Findings revealed that the moderating

effect of organizational tenure in the commitment- OCB relationship was positive before 10 years of tenure. Thus individuals who had been with the organization longer showed higher level of commitment and OCB. However, after 10 years, the strength of commitment -OCB relationship decreased as tenure increased.

Chang, Rosen and Levy (2009) conducted a meta-analysis that tested a model that linked perceived organizational politics to job performance (including contextual performance like OCB) , affective commitment, job stress or strain and turnover intentions from various journals published from 1989- 2007. Results indicated that perception of organizational politics had strong positive relationship with strain and intentions to exit an organization and strong negative relationship with job performance and affective commitment. The research also added clear support for the relationship between perceived organizational politics and an aspect of job performance, organizational citizenship behaviour, which had previously not been tested by more researches (Chang et al, 2009).

Li and Kong (2015) findings indicate that employees' political skill not only are helpful for them in dealing with the relationship with their leaders, but also can stimulate their OCB. The paper also shows that the mediation effect of POP is not obvious when they handle LMX. When studying new generation employees, many managers find that their accumulated experience of management is ineffective in applying to this group of new generation employees. From the above theoretical background the following conceptual framework was derived

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used a combination of explanatory and descriptive survey. The study targeted 8,904 academic and non-academic staff from Moi University, University of Eldoret and Kisii University (University HR records, 2016). Random sampling was used to select employees in each university to constitute the sample. This was done by assigning employees numbers. Papers with numbers indicated on them were mixed well and the researcher randomly picked 351

papers from 8,904 papers with staff names. This study used questionnaires to collect data relevant to the study.

Measurement of Variables

The study measured affective commitment using 9-item scale developed by Meyer and Allen (1997) previous studies indicated a cronbach Alpha value .77 to .88 (Hackett, Bycio, & Hausdorf, 1994; Meyer & Allen, 1997). Some of the items were, "This organisation has a great deal of personal meaning for me". The study used a 7 likert scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree.

Independent Variables

The study adapted two items for the political scale dimensions Political Skill Inventory (PSI) Ferris, Treadway *et al.*, (2005) which are Proactive personality (five items), and networking ability (five items). Participants answered by indicating to what extent they agree or disagree with each statement about themselves in the workplace on a one (strongly disagree) to seven (strongly agree) Likert scale.

Moderating Variables

Drawing upon previous researches (Podsakoff *et al.*, 1990), this study adapted two measures of OCB aspects, including altruism and courtesy. Altruism was measured under scale of helping other members of the organization in their tasks. Courtesy is a proxy of preventing problems deriving from the work relationship.

Data Analysis Approach

Quantitative data collected was analysed using descriptive statistical techniques which will be frequencies, mean, standard deviation. The researcher used inferential statistics such multiple regression and Pearson correlation to test hypothesis 1 and 2 and show the relationships that existed between the variables while Hierarchical Multiple Regression was used to test moderating effect of hypothesis 3 and 4 at a confidence level of 95%.

RESULTS

Statistical Differences of study variables against Demographic Information

Findings showed that altruism was statistically different between employee age bracket ($F=111.07$, $p<0.05$), employee job tenure ($F=77.51$, $p<0.05$) and employee job designation ($F=117.22$, $p<0.05$). This infers that altruism is likely to be different between employees who have

worked longer in firms and those who have worked less in a firm. Also, older employees were likely to have more altruism than younger employees. In addition, courtesy was different among employees age bracket ($F= 121.19, p<0.05$) and education level ($F= 171.22, p<0.05$). Moreover, level of proactive personality and networking capability differs among employees' age, education and job designation. Employee affective was different among older employees and younger employees. It also differs among employees with high and low job tenure.

Table 1: Statistical Differences of Employee Political Skills, Organizational Citizenship Behaviour Strategy on Affective Commitment between Employees Demographic Information

	OCB		Employee Political Skills		Commitment
	Altruism	Courtesy	Proactive personality	Networking ability	Affective Commitment
Age bracket	111.07*	121.19*	132.22*	1.06*	221.01*
Job tenure	77.51*	7.11	139.19	119.35*	71.33*
Education Level	1.26	171.21*	170.88*	0.91*	1.01
Job designation	117.22*	1.66	55.15*	188.0*	117.11*

*significant statistical difference at 0.05

Descriptive Statistics

Findings in Table 2 showed that altruism had mean of 3.0 indicating that altruism was average among university employees while courtesy was high among all employees (mean =4.1833). For political skills, proactive personality was low (mean =2.7801) while networking ability was high (mean = 4.0166). Affective commitment was average among university employees (mean 3.2608).

As shown in Table 2, the Cronbach alpha test showed values ranging from a low of 0.703 to a high of 0.911. These findings were in line with the benchmark suggested by Hair, *et al.* (2010) where coefficient of 0.60 is regarded to have an average reliability while coefficient of 0.70 and above indicates that the instrument has a high reliability standard. Although most researchers generally consider an alpha value of 0.70 as the acceptable level of reliability coefficient, lower coefficient is also acceptable (Nunnally, 1978; Sekaran&Bougie, 2010). Thus, it can be concluded that data collected from the pilot study were reliable and have obtained the acceptable level of internal consistency. Therefore, all items were included in the survey instrument.

Table 2: Scored Mean and Reliability Results

	No. of Items	M	SD	Cronbach's Alpha
Altruism	9	3.0119	0.52369	0.703
Courtesy	9	4.1833	0.57663	0.775
Proactive personality	6	2.7801	0.95749	0.911
Networking ability	3	4.0166	0.91583	0.833
Affective Commitment	7	3.2608	1.02269	0.991

Factor Analysis

The researcher ran a principal component analysis to identify patterns in data, and to express the data in such a way as to highlight their similarities and differences. Besides having data set items reduced to manageable level while retaining as much of the original information it helped in identifying groups or clusters of variables. Researcher found varimax rotation appropriate because of its ability to maximize the dispersion of loadings within factors as a result; it loads smaller numbers of variables onto each factor (Field, 2012). On the basis of the criterion of Kaiser (1960), the researcher retained all factors with Eigen values greater than 1. The criterion was based on the idea that the Eigen values represent the amount of variation explained by a factor and that the Eigen value of 1 represents a substantial amount of variation. Sampling adequacy was tested using the Kaiser- Meyer- Olkin Measure (KMO measure) of sampling adequacy. As evidenced in Table 3 below, KMO was greater than 0.5. The KMO Measure is an index for comparing the magnitude of the observed correlation coefficients to the magnitude of the partial correlation coefficients.

Table 3: Factor Analysis

	Total Variance Explained			KMO	Bartlett's Test	
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %		Chi-Square	Sig.
Altruism	3.213	48.666	48.666	0.771	674.194	0.00
	1.856	15.447	64.113			
	1.806	10.08	74.193			
Courtesy	2.125	30.36	30.36	0.541		0.00
	1.697	24.25	54.61			
	1.184	16.91	71.51			
Proactive personality	2.133	35.55	35.55	0.548	1671.374	
	2.041	34.01	69.56			
Networking ability	2.594	43.23	43.23	0.811	2138.448	0.00
	2.052	34.19	77.42			
Affective Commitment	1.795	44.87	44.87	0.0509	2512.708	0.00
	1.055	26.38	71.24			

Hypothesis Testing

The first hypothesis of the study stated that proactive personality have no significant effect on affective commitment. However, findings in Table 4 showed that proactive personality had coefficients of estimate which was significant basing on $\beta_1 = 1.086$ (p-value = 0.000 which is less than $\alpha = 0.05$) thus we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that proactive personality have a significant effect on the affective commitment. Findings coincide with Seibert, Kraimer, & Crant (2001) that proactive personality has been related to extrinsic job-related outcomes such as affective commitment which leads to extrinsic career success, or actual advancements in salary and position. Bowling, Beehr, (2005) argued that proactive individuals actively create environmental change, while less proactive people take a more reactive approach toward their jobs. Proactive personality inclines people to a certain level of affective commitment (Wagner, & Libkuman, 2005). Proactive individuals are more satisfied with their occupation because they remove obstacles preventing satisfaction (Erdogan & Bauer, 2005).

The second hypothesis stated that networking ability had no significant effect on the affective commitment. The study findings showed that the networking ability has significant effect on affective commitment on $\beta_2 = 0.614$ (p-value = 0.072 which is more than $\alpha = 0.05$). The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. Findings are supported by Blickle et al. (2009) that affective commitment and networking ability and that networking ability predicts objective career success. Wei et al. (2010) examined the role of networking ability in the supervisor-subordinate relationship dynamics contributing to career prospects and found a positive relationship.

Table 4: Regression Results

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.	Correlations Zero-order	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	3.475	0.553		6.28	0.00			
Proactive personality	2.063	0.523	1.086	3.943	0.00	0.576	0.572	1.748
Networking ability	1.083	0.595	0.614	1.819	0.072	0.551	0.464	2.155
R	.920a							
R Square	0.65							
Adjusted R Square	0.63							
Std. Error of the Estimate	0.6331							
R Square Change	0.427							
F Change	47.097							
df1	5							
df2	316							

a Dependent Variable: Affective Commitment

Moderating effect OCB on the Relationship between Employee Political Skills and Affective Commitment

Hypothesis 3 postulates that there is no significant moderating effect of OCB on the relationship between proactive personality and affective commitment in Kenya Public Universities. Findings in Table 4 showed that organisational citizenship behaviour (altruism and courtesy) had significant moderating effect on the relationship between proactive personality and affective commitment ($\beta=0.21$, $p<0.05$). This infers that when there is high OCB among employees their proactive personality tend to affect affective commitment more that when there is a low level of OCB. Similarly, more findings showed that OCB had significant effect on the relationship between networking g ability and affective commitment ($\beta=0.51$, $p<0.05$), this infers that with employees having high OCB, networking ability will highly enhance their affective commitment. The findings are supported by Meyer, et al., (2002) that determinants of organizational commitment such as political skills are correlated positively with OCB. The findings also support relationship between employee political skills and an aspect of organizational citizenship behaviour, which had previously not been tested by more researches (Chang et al, 2009).

Table 5 Moderating Effect of OCB on the Relationship between Employee Political Skills and Affective Commitment

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	B(S.E)	B	B
(Constant)	-1.563(0.41)	0.02(0.11)	-0.4(0.39)*
PP	0.6(0.1)*	0.29(0.17)*	-1.6(0.39)**
NA	0.19(0.11)**	0.26(0.10)*	2.13(0.41)**
PP*OCB		0.21(0.03)**	0.22(0.12)*
NA*OCB			0.51(0.11)**
R Square	0.51	0.57	0.65
Adjusted R Square	0.5	0.56	0.63
F	34.5	32.5	36.1
Sig.	.000b	.000c	.000e

a Dependent Variable: Affective Commitment

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, proactive personality positively impacts on affective commitment. It can therefore be said that proactive employees are an asset to the organization since they would rather seek information on their own other than wait on their superiors for feedback. As well, they are effective in identifying opportunities within the work environment and preserver until there is notable change in the organization. Considering the foregoing, there is need for organizations to focus on whether their employees are satisfied with their job because they are at a risk of losing

dissatisfied employees that possess valuable set of skills. Also, it is of vital importance to assure employees that they will progress in their career within the organization.

In addition, networking ability is also a predictor of affective commitment. Employees with networking ability leverage their networks by ensuring that they are connected to influence others. As a result, it is essential for organizations to have employees with high networking ability since they stand a better chance at taking advantage of opportunities that are beneficial to the organization. Finally, it is crucial for organizations to have employees high in networking ability and OCB since it enhances their affective commitment.

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