Congruence and Internalization as predictor of Citizenship Behaviour: Empirical Investigation using PLS

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Chanda Gulati¹ ✉

Prof. (Dr.) Yogesh Upadhyay²

Dr. Garima Mathur³

Abstract

The purpose of the present paper is to empirically test the effect of congruence on extra-role behaviours among employees of hospitality sector in Madhya Pradesh (India). The established concept based hypotheses pointed several relationships and linkages that value congruence have on behavioural intentions. The results demonstrated that congruence effect the internalization process which has a significant role in improving the brand supporting extra-role behaviours among the employees, an inference which is consistent with the previous research, proved new linkages, as well as indicatives to the practitioners that may be helpful in improving the selection dimensions of the organizations.

Keywords: Value Congruence, Brand Identification, Brand Commitment, Brand Citizenship Behaviour, Hospitality.

INTRODUCTION

One of the major challenges that the organization faces today is the establishment of the brand identity. The branding of every organization is fundamentally being classified into external and internal branding. The external branding is the branding efforts that are put in by

the organizations to attract the external customers; while the internal branding is about influencing the behaviour of employees towards the brand, thus it supports the external branding by creating strategically brand aligned activities and ensuring its execution. Branding activities are the intended efforts to create successful brands for organizations' stakeholders. The branding of products are mainly focused on customers; while service branding is

1. Research Scholar, Jiwaji University, Gwalior

2. Head, School of Studies in Management, Jiwaji University, Gwalior

3. Associate Professor, Prestige Institute of Management, Gwalior

employees' focused (de Chernatony & Segal-Horn, 2001). They explained the branding of services as employees' brand understanding and its' delivered brand promise. Branding in services provides an edge to differentiate via service quality but, it mainly relies on employees' attitude and behaviour.

The literature associating internal branding practices and the related brand supporting attitudes and behaviours are still at embryonic stage. In several previous studies, the internal branding practices, for instance brand communications and trainings are being associated with the brand behaviours such as brand loyalty and brand performance (de Chernatony & Segal-Horn, 2001; Punjaisri, 2007). On the other side, the congruence concept have always been proven pioneer for positive behavioural outcomes (Edwards & Cable, 2009).

The connection between value congruence and brand supporting behaviours and attitudes is not been explored frequently. In this study, the congruence of perceived individual values, preferred values and perceived brand values together is being considered for understanding the effect on brand internalization and citizenship behaviours. Understanding more about the congruence effects will help the organizations to develop the internal branding practices for developing better coherence among the employees and the brands.

LITERATURE REVIEW & HYPOTHESES

Several extends of researches have been conducted on the variables of the study. This study indicates the possible hypothetical linkages derived through various conceptual and empirical studies. Overall, five hypotheses were developed; the explanations are mentioned below.

Congruence Effects

The belief about the end states are known as values (Rokeach, 1973). Individuals' values lead their actions, while organizational values provide

guidelines and norms leading their behavioural intentions, and Brand values indicate the associations while delivering promise. In all, the individual, organizational and brand values together should have the potential to indicate better outcomes. Chatman (1989) referred this fit or, congruence as the similarity in values between Individuals and the Organizations. Fit or, the congruence between the employees and organizational values shows positive outcomes as reflected in several researches (Chatman, 1989; Edwards & Cable, 2009). Brands have the capacity to attract brand loyal employees, competent to deliver the promise, consistent in action during the promise delivery and even it stimulates the employees to enact beyond the roles for achieving brand success (Grace & O'Cass, 2005). The positioning of any brand relies on behaviour shown by the employees during service delivery (Samli & Frohlich, 1992). Every service organization is more focused towards grooming of the employees through several internal brand activities to create a brand aligned workforce with a strong brand identity. The pool of brand aligned workforce is created by the congruence developed between the employee and organizational values that is posit as Value congruence (Lina Xiong, 2014). Xiong elaborated further that internal branding exercises ensure to create congruence between employees and organization for a uniform delivery of brand promise. This study has taken the value congruence in terms of all three values that embraces the employees to be consistent to make the organization successful.

The congruence with the unique brand value if demonstrated in the behaviour and action of the employees during encounters with the customers will give the brand competitive advantage (Berry, 2000). Berry and Lampo (2004) explained that service brand can be understood only if the right demonstrations of the brand values in the right sense are displayed during service delivery. Brand delivery is successful if brand values are conveyed through better brand performance during customer interaction (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005). The brand

promise delivery is completely different from the good service delivery. Service delivery emphasize more on functional values which is built-in work roles, while brand promise delivery is the unique experience shared about the brand to the customers in a consistent way requiring citizenship roles (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2005). So, the employees should try transferring the brand values during interaction with the customers (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005).

Brand success is determined by the congruence which leads to identification and commitment among the employees towards the brand performance. Many researchers have found several antecedents, both organizational and employee factors that help in creating employees' brand supporting attitude and behaviour (King & Grace, 2009 ; Morhart, et al., 2009). Burman, et al. (2005) explained internal branding as the management of context factors such as cultural and structural fit as well as key levers like brand aligned human resources management, communication and leadership for generating commitment and citizenship behaviour for maintaining consistency in brand delivery. The internal brand management and external branding practices should be coherent in imparting the knowledge about the brand to the employees, which even helps the employees establishing the fit. Employees' better brand performance may be achieved through the systems and processes set up under internal branding practices, and thus the brand performance flows from the organization to the customer through the connecting employees, contributing to competitive advantage. The service brand values helps in the internalization process for consistent delivery of services and brand promises (Vallaster & de, Chernatony, 2005). The result demonstrated positive commitment and identification if diverse cultural groups understand the consistent brand values. Culture often operates differently at individual levels indicating implicit knowledge (practical based on prototypes and associations) and explicit knowledge (propositional based on ideologies) that

shapes non-reflective behaviour and conscious behaviour respectively (Lizardo 2017). The cultural conformity is based on values and even depends on situations (Leung and Morris 2015). Prior work has emphasised that person culture fit is associated with several positive outcomes such as increased productivity, better commitment and reduced turnover (Chatman and O'Reilly 2016, Kristof-Brown et al. 2005). But, sometimes the adaptation with the culture differs depending on the varying individual's ability to adjust (Srivastava et al. 2018). The constrained situation with cues and accurate signals is driven by implicit knowledge while unconstrained situations with inconsistent cues are more inclined to explicit knowledge. Thus, cultural fit even conceptualised as situated construct stressing that few individuals are better able to adjust in varied cultures depending on the difference between individual's normative commitment and organizational norms that predicts individual's identification and their voluntary choice in the organization (Lu et al., 2019). The findings of Burman & Zeplin (2005) too emphasized on cultural fit stimulating commitment for brands. The role of IB in translating and reinforcing brand values among the employees is accepted by many authors (de Chernatony & Segal-Horn, 2001; Punjaisri et al., 2007).

H1: Congruence has a significant relationship with Brand Identification.

H2: Congruence has a significant relationship with Brand Commitment.

H3: Congruence has a significant effect on Brand Citizenship Behaviour.

Brand Identification & Commitment

The concept originated from Identification theory that employees identifying with the existing groups within organizations in terms of interest maintain better consistency between organization and personal choices (Dutton et al., 1994). The identification with the brand will help in understanding and creating coherence among

employees' values, organizational values and brand values. Thus, the internalization of brands initiates with the process of identification with these values. While the identification focuses on cognitive connect, Commitment reflects emotional connect (Edwards, 2005). Few scholars have noted that identification is precursory to commitment (Burmman and Zeplin, 2005), the same is confirmed by Cheney and Tompkins (1987).

The commitment concept suggests that employees believe and accept the existing organizational values and supportive in exerting effort from organizational behalf (Castro et al. (2005). The concept of commitment is widely applied to different context, team, group, union and management. However, the use of commitment in terms of brands initiated late. Commitment viewed as one-dimensional term explaining affective sense (Porter et al., 1974). The authors defined commitment as "strong belief in the values and goals and acceptance of same, which shows the willingness to put considerable effort and reflects strong desire to maintain the organizational membership". Few scholars criticized the one-dimensional perspective, indicating it as two-dimensional (Mowday et al., 1982) and three dimensional construct (Allen and Meyer, 1990). The brand commitment among the employees indicate the degree of emotional connect generating extra efforts to strive for the brand goals. Burmann & Zeplin (2005) has considered it as employees' desire to maintain a continued relationship with the brand. El-Kassar, A.N. et al. (2017) has also confirmed the relationship between identification and commitment stressing that identification leads to enhance the commitment of the employees towards the organization. The identification effects the commitment is also being supported in context of police officers in the study conducted by Chevalier, S. et al. (2019). Many other authors too have confirmed it as psychological relationship to the brand (Johnson, Chang, & Yang, 2010; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnysky, 2002).

H4: Brand Identification has a significant relationship with Brand Commitment.

Effect on Brand Citizenship Behaviour

The employees' brand related behaviours are synonymous to Citizenship behaviour that explains the voluntary behaviours of employees out of the formal periphery of assigned roles. These extra roles contribute in increasing the organization's overall performance (Podsakoff et al., 2000). Whilst OCB is focused to internal premises helping other employees in their task, BCB even consider going beyond the scope of organization helping the customer and addressing the brand issues sharing the brand intense care towards customers. Burmann & Zeplin (2005) suggested seven dimensions of BCB indicating help rendered to colleagues as well as customers, brand enthusiasm, endorsement, sportsmanship, consideration, brand development and advancement. They defined BCB as aggregated construct of extra-roles contributing in improving the identity (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005).

Burmann and Zeplin (2005) argued that employee commitment is pivotal to the brand citizenship behaviour. The right set of HR activities including the communication network and leadership steer brand commitment, thus, helps in internalizing and identifying with the brand. Identification is basically based on Social Identity theory that states employees identify with the organization if there is congruence between employee and organizational identity (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). The identification improves if trust is involved resulting in commitment and outstanding performance (Rousseau, 1998). The commitment has been noted as a significant contributor in enhancing the citizenship behaviours by several authors (Paramaarth, D.N. et al. 2019; Yeh, C.M. 2019). Thus, Brand aligned employees will demonstrate brand aligned attitude and behaviour even in extra-roles with a competent brand performance. For service organizations, delivering the brand values to the customers is extremely challenging as the service encounter experience is created together by the employees and the customers. The congruity of brand and actual self contributes in Brand Identification and Brand

Citizenship Behavior; while congruity of brand and ideal self relates to Brand Identification and Brand Pride (Helm et al., 2016). Hartline, Maxham, & McKee, 2000 suggested the performance at that juncture of service encounters provide brand reality evidence as it directly impacts the expected customer brand equity; which is determinant of the employee brand internalization (Xiong, 2014). Thus, the fit among the values results in brand internalization likely to develop positive brand supporting behaviours and other outcomes. In this study, the cultural congruence among self, organizational culture and service brand together is being proposed as a construct strengthening the employees' brand internalization resulting into brand supporting outcomes.

H5: Brand Commitment has a significant relationship with Brand Citizenship Behaviour. Collectively, the assumption may be framed for assessment that;

H6: Value Congruence and Brand Internalization (Identification and Commitment) have a significant effect on Brand Citizenship Behaviour

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

This empirical study emphasises on the linkages of congruence and brand supporting behaviours. Through the literatures of previous studies, a conceptual comprehensive framework is established including Congruence of three values contributing in internalization of brand that leads to develop the citizenship behaviours among the employees.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study focuses on the effect of Congruence on brand behaviours in the hospitality sector. Survey was conducted among the employees

of hotels in Madhya Pradesh region.

Survey instrument

The research instruments used were the standardized questionnaires of the constructs. The measures of the study contained six parts. Congruence was measured using the instrument Organization Culture Profile developed by O'Reilly, Chatman and Caldwell (1991). The eight-item scale of Employee brand identification capturing sense of belongingness, sense of pride and ownership was taken from Herrbach, et al., 2004; Mael and Ashforth, 1992; O'Reilly and Chatman, 1986; Shamir, et al., 1998 adopted by Punjaisri et al, 2009. The Brand Commitment scale was adapted from Maltz and Kohli, 1996 used by King and Grace, 2010. Employees' Brand Citizenship Behaviors' dimensions measured by the standard instrument based on Burmann and Zeplin (2005). In total 500 questionnaires were distributed electronically as well as individually, out of which 411 were received filled (82.2% of response rate). The responses of the individuals were taken on Likert-type scale with a sensitivity of 7, where 1 indicated Very Strongly Disagree and 7 indicated Very Strongly Agree.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The data was checked for its reliability scores for different scales by the use of Cronbach's alpha value. The reliability coefficients deduced for the constructs, Brand Citizenship Behavior, Brand Commitment, Brand Identification and Value Congruence are 0.934, 0.919, 0.844 and 1.000 respectively (Table 1). The Cronbach alpha score indicated good consistency among the scale items, and satisfied Nunnally (1978) assumption that values above 0.7 are acceptable for the study.

Table 1 : (Reliability Coefficient)

Variable Name	Cronbach's Alpha
Brand Citizenship Behavior	0.934
Brand Commitment	0.919
Brand Identification	0.844
Value Congruence	1.000

The initial test of reliability scores were convincing and hence accepted for further examination of hypotheses. To further assess the robustness, the discriminant and convergent validity was tested. The Discriminant validity indicates the uniqueness of the studied constructs, by using Fornell & Larcker

Criterion (1981) comparing the AVE value with the correlation square of the inter-construct and the cross loadings, the uniqueness were assessed. The Fornell-Larcker Criterion scores and the Cross loadings scores both have justified the discriminant validity (Table 2)

Table 2 : Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	Brand Citizenship Behaviour	Brand Commitment	Brand Identification	Value Congruence
Brand Citizenship Behaviour	0.858			
Brand Commitment	0.857	0.897		
Brand Identification	0.772	0.866	0.873	
Value Congruence	-0.538	-0.661	-0.612	1.000
Cross Loadings				
	Brand Citizenship Behaviour	Brand Commitment	Brand Identification	Value Congruence
BCB1	0.744	0.583	0.442	-0.312
BCB2	0.869	0.767	0.743	-0.577
BCB3	0.884	0.754	0.664	-0.445
BCB4	0.837	0.700	0.639	-0.420
BCB5	0.898	0.788	0.712	-0.439
BCB6	0.915	0.738	0.681	-0.443
BCB7	0.775	0.733	0.663	-0.531
BC1	0.718	0.825	0.649	-0.425
BC2	0.818	0.905	0.761	-0.612
BC3	0.760	0.924	0.826	-0.629
BC4	0.779	0.931	0.857	-0.682
BI4	0.699	0.765	0.863	-0.465
BI7	0.617	0.764	0.842	-0.553
BI8	0.707	0.740	0.913	-0.582
Congruence	-0.538	-0.661	-0.612	1.000

The correlatedness in the scale items which indicate the unexplained variance is assessed in the convergent validity. The Fornell-Larcker (1981) criterion confirms that AVE should have greater than 0.5 values to meet convergent validity. The result

indicated that AVE of studied constructs are 0.719, 0.805, 0.762, 1.000 for BCB, Brand Commitment, Brand Identification and Value Congruence respectively, hence fulfilling the convergent validity criteria.

Table 3

Variable's Name	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Brand Citizenship Behavior	0.719
Brand Commitment	0.805
Brand Identification	0.762
Value Congruence	1.000

Further, to check the hypotheses, SmartPLS was used and represented through PLS graph (Chin, 1998). The Path coefficients, beta and t value along with R square and Adjusted R², were assessed for observing the hypotheses statements. Table 4 and Table 5 respectively explains the model measuring the hypothesis H1, H2, H3, H4 and H5. The path coefficient values and the critical ratios were estimated, where the values indicated that value congruence has negative (beta -0.612 & -0.209, p.000) and the significant effect on Identification and Commitment respectively, while it has insignificant direct effect on Brand Citizenship Behaviour (beta

0.051, p.349) hence, H1 and H2 is supported, but H3 in not supported. The hypothesis H4 indicated a positive and significant effect of brand identification on brand commitment (beta 0.738, p.000). Even H5 indicated significant proving that commitment has significant effect on citizenship behaviour. The collective effect of value congruence, identification and commitment on citizenship behaviour also proved significant (b -0.403, p.000), thus the analysis deduced that the value congruence if improves brand internalization will definitely prompt the employees to exhibit citizenship behaviour, supporting H6.

Figure 1: Model showing Path Coefficients with p values

Table 4 : Beta & T- indices

Hypothesis	Relationship	Beta	T Value	P Values	Result
H5	Brand Commitment -> Brand Citizenship Behavior	0.891	26.976	0.000	Supported
H4	Brand Identification -> Brand Commitment	0.738	17.478	0.000	Supported
H3	Value Congruence -> Brand Citizenship Behavior	0.051	0.937	0.349	Not Supported
H2	Value Congruence -> Brand Commitment	-0.209	3.709	0.000	Supported
H1	Value Congruence -> Brand Identification	-0.612	14.276	0.000	Supported
H6	Value Congruence -> Brand Identification -> Brand Commitment -> Brand Citizenship Behavior	-0.403	10.855	0.000	Supported

Further regression weights on dependent variables were observed for calculating the variance explained. The variances explained are 0.375, 778

and 0.768 respectively by brand identification, commitment and citizenship behaviour on their respective independent variables.

Figure 2 : Model with Regression Weights

Table 5: Regression Weights

	R Square/R Square Adjusted
Brand Citizenship Behaviour	0.734
Brand Commitment	0.776
Brand Identification	0.375

The result was found consistent with the findings of Burmann & Zeplin (2005) supporting H1, H2 & H5. Whereas, the findings were inconsistent in proving the direct relation between congruence and BCB, may be further empirically tested on the Helm (2016) deductions that citizenship behaviour is the outcome of congruence among brand values and actual self, not ideal self. H4 was also in line with the previous study of Burmann (2005); Cheney (1987); Punjaisri (2009); & Yeh (2019), hence supporting the result. The findings indicate a strong link between congruence and commitment; congruence and identification that precede the final behavioural intentions triggering citizenship behaviour among the employees.

IMPLICATIONS

The findings of the present study indicate that the values congruence among the organizational, individual and brand values are pivotal in deciding several positive behavioural intentions. For the practitioners, the suggestions may be vital for structuring the selection process in which congruence should be given utmost importance measuring the harmony of the self with the task, which may improve the overall behavioral outcomes. The similar research should be undertaken in other sectors, so that the inclusion of congruence dimensions may be done in the selection parameters pervasively.

CONCLUSION

The present study has demonstrated a better understanding of congruence and its influence on behavioural intentions in hospitality sector. The study has clarified in between linkages and

preceding and succeeding variables that lead to display extra-role behaviours among the employees. Few indications of future studies are also represented to classify the congruence of actual and ideal values among two and then to see its congruence with brand values, so that the result may be evaluated from different dimension too. The result confirms that congruence is paramount in deciding the voluntary behavioural intentions and triggers the citizenship behaviour among the employees.

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