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Socio-Economic Wellbeing and behavior at School or Work To what Extent are They Related? Evidence from Romania

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Abstract. *Holding employees who are highly motivated and who illustrate fulfilment in respect to their work is a catalyst of positive change for nowadays organizations, who perform operations in quickly changing circumstances. Such individuals are known to engage more in organizational citizenship behaviour and steer away from deviant workplace behaviour. As employees display different personality traits and work-related motivation, only organizations which know how to properly engage their personnel, foster organizational citizenship actions and nurture ethical conduct within all organizational levels can attain a leading position on the market. The paper aims to examine the extent to which the socio-economic wellbeing influences 'good' or 'bad' behaviours at work and/or at school. The paper's objectives are two-folded: (1) to understand if there is a causal relationship between the socio-economic wellbeing of individuals and their behaviour at work or/and at school; (2) to determine the extent to which the socio-economic wellbeing contributes to shaping a 'good' or a 'bad' behaviour at work or/and at school. Correlations and simple linear regression model were employed to understand the predictive power of the socio-economic wellbeing on behaviour once a causal relationship has been confirmed. Results show that the perceived ambition to obtain a high social status, accumulate wealth and become rich and powerful predicts positively a 'bad' behaviour and negatively a 'good' behaviour.*

Keywords: Socio-economic wellbeing, work or school behaviour, social status, Romania, employee engagement.

Introduction

Conducting business in the nowadays complex settings requires organizations to adhere to a multifaceted set of requirements, be able to properly manage, engage and motivate their employees while being diligent in the provision of utmost value to their stakeholders. In doing so, the voluntary type of behaviour displayed by employees and that goes beyond the tasks included in their job description acts a factor that enhances the well performance of organizations and enables competitive advantage in a sustainable way.

Moreover, proving organizational citizenship behaviour shows employees are adaptable and responsive (Pace et al., 2021) and it is an essential phenomenon for the organization's change transitioning process (Farahat, 2018). Employees' engagement in actions of organizational citizenship presents several other benefits, as it minimizes differences between the results that are attained, boosts work productivity and helps the organization to attract and keep competent

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workforce (Grego-Planer, 2019). Organizational citizenship behaviour can also constitute the answer to the manner in which an organization develops employees' innovative actions (Spik, 2016). However, despite the growing attention that organizational citizenship behaviour receives from scholars, no common ground was reached concerning its assessment and multidimensional structure (Ma et al., 2022; Morrison, 1994).

Some employees may also engage in deviant workplace behaviour, which produces downgrading effects such as an increase in employees' willingness to resign and a lower organizational citizenship behaviour (Pletzer et al., 2022; Sathappan, 2021). Research (Abbasi et al., 2018; Bachok et al., 2022; Kalemci et al., 2019; Kwentoh et al., 2020) acknowledges workplace deviance as the employee's conduct which disobeys organizational regulations and jeopardizes organizational objectives, further impacting productivity. In this context, immediate measures need to be employed at organizational level to cancel off the destabilizing consequences of workplace deviance by setting an ethical stance at all its levels.

The present article foresees, in line with literature review and through an online questionnaire-based survey, an analysis of the extent to which the socio-economic wellbeing, defined as an ambition to obtain a high social status in society, accumulate wealth, become rich and powerful, influences individuals' 'good' or 'bad' behaviours displayed in different contexts, at work and/or at school. The research objectives are comprehending if a causal relationship exists between the socio-economic wellbeing of individuals and their behaviour at work or/and at school and secondly, determining the extent to which the socio-economic wellbeing contributes to shaping a 'good' or a 'bad' behaviour at work or/and at school.

Literature review

Faced with an everchanging business context defined by globalization, a high level of competitiveness and quick technological advancements, organizations need to have a wide outlook towards the external environment, remodel organizational structures and properly manage their employees and financial assets to make sure they remain competitive (Kotenko et al., 2021; Metwally et al., 2019; Rodriguez Perez & Ordóñez de Pablos, 2003; Verghese, 2020; Zelga, 2017). Additionally, the suitable identification of risks and vulnerabilities and the dissemination of the conducted efforts to stakeholders is also meaningful in attaining competitive advantage per Păunescu and Argatu (2020). The decision-making processes of organizations are however subject to business uncertainty, namely to a type of future that holds an unclear probability of occurrence (Altig et al., 2022; Pomerol, 2018), which makes organizations to rather not choose actions that suppose great costs and whose effects cannot be reversed (Tajaddini & Gholipour, 2021). In this light, the implementation and ongoing monitoring of performance assessment procedures is a noteworthy tool that allows organizations to stand out on the market, as per the research of Păunescu et al. (2008).

To steer towards business success in such complex settings, companies must also pay a great degree of attention in respecting their ethical responsibilities and further accomplishing their stakeholders' expectations concerning what is adequate to be done, as expressed through particular norms or standards (Carroll, 2000; Grigoropoulos, 2019). Per the work of Tripathy (2019), the recognition of ethical standards in an organization's life was upshifted by the globalization phenomenon when organizations started to merge. Nowadays, the adherence to ethical conduct at organizational scale is not solely expected to be done as it is an urgent matter (Gangadharan, 2013) as organizations are liable towards both environmentally and socially aware communities, according to Păunescu and Acatrinei (Pantea) (2012). Ethics at organizational level hold particular

importance as organizational wrongdoings such as ineffective procedures of corporate governance, managerial issues and the absence of ethical rigor at the top of the organization's hierarchy trigger individual deviant behaviour in the workplace, per Roszkowska and Melé (2021).

Besides the cultivation of ethical conduct among employees, organizations can reach excellence by refining their employees' efficiency and their work-related behaviour (Dash & Pradhan, 2014). A strategic aspect in this sense is the generation of collective knowledge in the presence of employees' voluntary intention to collaborate in this process (Sadeghi et al., 2016). Thus, research pinpoints to organizational citizenship behaviour, which is also titled "the good soldier syndrome" and that implies employees' self-executed actions that are not the result of exterior demands, are not part of their job description and are not formally rewarded by the organization (Stan, 2014). The research by AlZgool et al. (2023) underlines that organizational citizenship behaviour is sometimes associated with contextual performance, which rather sustains the context that facilitates the job duties.

A form of conduct that is completely undesirable to organizations and that employees may also adhere to is workplace deviant behaviour, involving actions performed by the employee that are not enacted by accident, are against the organizational norms and are carried out to the detriment of the organization (Memon et al., 2021).

In the context of the knowledge economy, employees represent assets that are impossible to be replicated by other market players, hence a careful attention must be assigned by organizations regarding the treatment provided to their employees to help them reach performance and minimize their company withdrawal chances (Hermawan et al., 2020; Vatasoiu, et al., 2010) as well as to foster the formation of competitive advantage (Gabčanová, 2011).

Per Kumar (2014) there exist employees that depict work behaviour placed above expectations and who conduct work tasks even beyond the work hours without being formally rewarded by the organization, such kind of actions holding the denomination of organizational citizenship behaviour. In light of the social exchange theory, employees display a positive conduct that is beneficial both for themselves and the organization, when they observe that the organization also mirrors good will (Vázquez-Rodríguez et al., 2021). Explaining the causes of organizational citizenship behaviour, Tefera and Hunsaker (2020) claim that such actions stem from the employee's care for other individuals, for the organization or may result from the employee's intention to be perceived as devoted. Additionally, the research of Verghese (2020) holds that organizational citizenship behaviour contains two dimensions, these being altruism, which involves assistance provided to individuals, and compliance, that pertains to a person's alignment with the organization's guidelines.

Research notes that when organizations hold great levels of organizational citizenship behaviour, they have greater chances of enhancing their performance and better keep their personnel (Chen et al., 2018; Hermawan et al., 2020). By adhering to organizational citizenship behaviour, organizations can positively influence emotional resources and lower the managerial costs (Wei, 2014). Supplementary to this beneficial outcome, organizational citizenship behaviour is highly meaningful as it can affect in a positive way the results linked to safety performance and work accidents' minimization (Testa et al., 2018).

Understanding the predictors of organizational citizenship behaviour is instrumental in comprehending the powerful beneficial impact of such actions enacted by employees. In this sense, Yaakobi and Weisberg (2020) claim that knowledge and the situational capabilities constitute predictors of organizational citizenship behaviour and make employees know how to put in practice this conduct in an efficient way. Similarly, Dewi et al. (2021), O'Connell et al. (2001) and Organ

and Ryan (1995) place emphasis on the supportiveness level of the leader, the degree of fairness as perceived by the employee, the organizational commitment and job satisfaction as variables that correlate with organizational citizenship behaviour. Additionally, de Geus et al. (2020) pinpoint to work life quality and justice as mediators of organizational citizenship behaviour, whereas Pavalache-Ilie (2014) connects personality factors such as consciousness, self-esteem, agreeableness, the need for association and empathy with organizational citizenship behaviour. On the same line, Knez et al. (2019) argue that the emotional identification of an employee with his work is a significant predictor of organizational citizenship behaviour.

Opposite to the workplace helping conduct displayed by employees, there is the workplace deviant behaviour, that destroys workplace norms and is conducted in a voluntary manner by employees, affecting the wellbeing of the organization (Omotayo et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2022). Per the work of Sustiyatik et al. (2019), deviance at the workplace implies committing actions such as fraud, theft, vandalism and absenteeism, whereas Chirasha and Mahapa (2012) recognize the late arrival to work, improper utilization of the company's assets and verbal abuse as deviant conduct in the workplace. According to Promsri (2018), a share of between 33 and 75 percent of employees demonstrate involvement in workplace deviant behaviour that produced considerable financial losses.

As understanding the root cause of a phenomenon is the key solution in downgrading its effects, the research of Tabor et al. (2018) argues that workplace deviant behaviour is primarily triggered by employees' perception of injustice, hence their belief regarding the promises that the employer must respect. Additionally, Farhadi et al. (2015) found that age and organizational tenure are significant predictors of workplace deviant behaviour. In line with the theory presented, the research hypotheses are framed as follows.

H1: There is a strong negative correlation between socio-economic wellbeing and 'good' workplace behaviour.

H2: There is a strong positive correlation between socio-economic wellbeing and 'bad' workplace behaviour.

Methodology

The paper aims to examine the extent to which the socio-economic wellbeing influences 'good' or 'bad' behaviours at work and/or at school. The paper's objectives are two-folded: (1) to understand if there is a causal relationship between the socio-economic wellbeing of individuals and their behaviour at work or/and at school; (2) to determine the extent to which the socio-economic wellbeing contributes to shaping a 'good' or a 'bad' behaviour at work or/and at school. Correlations and simple linear regression model were employed to understand the predictive power of the socio-economic wellbeing on behaviour once a causal relationship has been confirmed.

The present research relies on data collected online in Romania through a questionnaire-based survey available in English. The survey targeted mainly business students enrolled in English teaching programmes in Romania. Data was collected for a period of three months (from March to May 2022). Our research used a non-probabilistic sampling method, namely convenience sampling, which allowed the researchers to involve in the research all those students willing to participate and available at the given time. Our sample includes 533 responses. Other than gender, all variables were measured on the 1÷7 Likert-type scale. The variables measures included three items for *socio-economic wellbeing*--obtaining a high social status in society, accumulating wealth,

and becoming rich and powerful--, five items for '*good' behaviour*--helping others who were absent, volunteering for doing things not required, helping others who have heavy workloads, attending functions not required but that helps, and participating above the norm--, and six items for *'bad' behaviour*--working on personal matters instead of working, spending time fantasizing or daydreaming instead of working, saying things hurtful to someone, taking longer breaks than are acceptable, not following the instructions, and letting work unfinished for others.

Results and discussions

This section presents the results of the statistical analysis performed, including descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations and simple linear regression. To ensure that the linear regression can offer us a valid result, we checked the normality of data by measuring Skewness and Kurtosis of the distribution's shape. Following these measures, all the items with the Skewness and Kurtosis values between -2 and +2 were retained in the research model. None of the items were excluded. The reliability of data was verified by calculating the Cronbach alpha coefficients (Table 1). The alpha coefficients are above 0.7 for all the variables measured, meaning that the data are highly reliable for regression analysis. Table 1 shows that there are statistically significant correlations between the measured variables. As such, we found that there is a weak negative corelation between socio-economic wellbeing and 'good' workplace behaviour (r=-0.088), statistically significant at $p<0.01$ and an average positive corelation between socio-economic wellbeing and 'bad' workplace behaviour (r=0.174), statistically significant at $p<0.01$.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlations

	C. alpha	Mean	SD	Socio-economic wellbeing	'Good' behaviour	'Bad' behaviour
Socio-economic wellbeing (3 items)	0.790	4.93	1.284	1	-0.088**	0.174***
'Good' behaviour (5 items)	0.794	4.75	1.079		1	-0.282***
'Bad' behaviour (6 items)	0.854	3.12	1.255			1

*Note: *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001.*
Source: Authors' own research.

We run two simple linear regressions to test the hypotheses that check the influence of socio-economic wellbeing on 'good' and 'bad' behaviour at work or/ and at school (Table 2). We see that our regression models explain 1.6% (R^2) of the overall variance in the 'good' behaviour, and 1.5% (R^2) of the overall variance in the 'bad' behaviour. This is a statistically significant contribution ($p<0.001$). The coefficients show that socio-economic wellbeing is a significant and negative predictor of the 'good' behaviour ($b = -0.131$, $p < 0.001$), while it significantly but positively predicts 'bad' behaviour ($b = 0.212$, $p < 0.001$). Thus, our model of regression shows that a 1-unit increase in socio-economic wellbeing will result in 0.131 unit decrease in 'good' behaviour and 0.212 unit increase in 'bad' behaviour. The standardized beta values indicate that socio-economic wellbeing influences negatively by 15.6% ($\beta = -0.156$, $t(533) = -3.779$) the 'good' behaviour and positively by 21,6% ($\beta = 0.216$, $t(533) = 5.197$) the 'bad' behaviour. Therefore, hypotheses H1 and H2 have been successfully confirmed.

Table 2. Regression analysis

H1:	**b**	**β**	**t**	**R**	**R^2**	**ΔR^2**	**ΔF**	**p**
'Good' behaviour	-0.131^{***}	-0.156^{***}	-3.779	0.201^{***}	0.016	0.016	10.221^{***}	0.000
H2:	b	β	t	R	R^2	ΔR^2	ΔF	p
'Bad' behaviour	0.212^{***}	0.216^{***}	5.197	0.188^{***}	0.015	0.015	8.660^{***}	0.000

*Note: *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001.*
Source: Authors' own research.

The paper's findings asserting that employees' socio-economic wellbeing predicts negatively the 'good' behaviour are in line with Kumar (2014), Mosadeghrad (2013) and Mihai et al. (2014), who state that holding human resources of great quality and who are committed to their job duties represents a success enabler for organizations, if corroborated with the proper employee management and engagement. Secondly, confirmation is achieved by previous research of Dewi et al. (2021), O'Connell et al. (2001) and Organ and Ryan (1995), who recognize that leadership attributes and employee's organizational commitment and job satisfaction correlate with organizational citizenship conduct. Furthermore, the hypothesis reflects adherence to Le Roy and Rioux (2012), Tremblay (2021) and Van Dyne et al. (1994), who claim that a positive correlation exists between organizational citizenship behaviour and employee's degree of affective commitment, meaning the employee's emotional attachment towards the workplace based on the belief that he or she is treated fairly by the company. Supplementary support is provided by literature recognizing that individuals who experience emotional intelligence and positive affect have a greater tendency to reciprocate the respect offered by the employer through higher levels of performance (Malik & Lenka, 2018; Mohyi, 2021; Narayanan, 2016; Smith et al., 1983; Yaqub et al., 2021).

Secondly, by proving that socio-economic wellbeing is positively correlated to a strong extent with 'bad' workplace behaviour, the research confirms the work of Yıldız and Alpkan (2015), who state that employee's emotions and perceptions can trigger a negative perspective driving a negative conduct towards the organization. Additionally, the finding is in line with Wang et al. (2018), who claim that deviant workplace behaviour arises when employees do not have the needed motivation to adhere to the required behaviour or they are influenced by the social context to disobey it. Ultimately, the finding adheres to Piquero and Moffitt (2014) and O'Neill et al. (2011), who recognize employees' self-control as a strong predictor of deviance at the workplace.

Conclusion

Sustaining growth by the organizations of the present is a double-edged sword due to the complexity of economic and social factors, to the same extent to which it is lengthy, requiring an equilibrium point between seeking competitiveness and ensuring employee welfare. Research acknowledges that delivering stakeholders' promises in an ethical manner, nurturing an organizational culture based on timeliness and clearly set procedures, as well as encouraging excellence in the workplace are determinants of success for the organizations that wish to maintain operational stability and enter an ultimate level of efficiency. As no two individuals are the same, employee engagement needs to be carefully designed and implemented.

The paper examined the causal relationship between the socio-economic wellbeing and 'good' or 'bad' behaviours at work and/or at school. Moreover, it determined the extent to which the socio-economic wellbeing contributed to shaping a 'good' or a 'bad' behaviour at work or/and at school. Results showed that the perceived ambition to obtain a high social status, accumulate

wealth and become rich and powerful predicts positively a 'bad' behaviour and negatively a 'good' behaviour.

The paper's findings illustrate applicability for organizations, which can better shape human resources procedures aimed to improve employees' engagement and personal identification with the organizational culture, so as to positively alter citizenship actions and minimize deviance at the workplace.

A first research limitation refers to the type of the regression model used, which disregards control variables or participation as mediators or moderators of other variables in the causal relationship tested. Secondly, another research limit involved the short time period for data collection, and increasing it may extend the questionnaire response rate.

Further analysis could test the regression model by controlling for variables such as gender, age and education. Additionally, the inclusion of attributes pertaining to the organization, for instance the leadership style and employee motivation and engagement practices, can provide a heightened understanding of the research matter.

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