

The Influence of High-Power Distance on Turnover Intention and Emotional Exhaustion among Information Technology Workers in Korea: The Mediating Effects of Compulsory Citizenship Behavior

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Korean corporations are characterized by high power distance. In such environment, problems including all types of irregularities and even corruption scandals have emerged, and many negative outcomes have arisen as a result of the abuse of power. Based on this reality we conducted this empirical study that focuses on the negative aspects of power distance, unlike the many studies that emphasize the positive aspects of power distance. In order to emphasize the negative role of power distance, we examined the changes in emotional exhaustion and turnover intention caused by the recognition of power distance among information technology(IT) workers in the Korean IT industry. To clarify the root cause of power distance leading to turnover intention job burnout, we focused on compulsory citizenship behavior and verified it through its mediating effects. The results suggest that workers' negative perception of power distance increases compulsory citizenship behavior, whereby management uses coercive mechanisms to make workers perform extra tasks. Such behavior leads to turnover intention and emotional exhaustion. Finally, this study provided practical suggestions for mitigating this situation, and discussed future directions of research.

Key words: *Power distance, Compulsory citizenship behavior, Turnover intention, Emotional exhaustion.*

Introduction

The positive aspects of power distance have been emphasized in previous studies. For example, power distance has been shown to have a positive effect on organizational citizenship behavior (Asgari et al., 2008), organizational commitment (Zeeshan and Sabir, 2014), and is positively related to collectivism (Lim et al., 2011). In organizations with high levels of power distance, employees are more likely to follow the leader's directions and the hierarchical structure (Zhao et al., 2013). However, one of the key questions in relation to such positive outcomes through power distance is whether or not employees really appreciate power distance and whether or not they are really acting voluntarily, loyally and sincerely for their leaders or organizations. Organizations may have two styles of employees: those who can easily accommodate power distance and who find it harder to accommodate. Employees with a lower-acceptance of power distance are more likely to feel a greater sense of anger towards their leader and they will also have a greater response to procedural injustice (Liu et al., 2013). In addition, employees may act involuntarily following leader's demands or pressure due to the recognition of power distance. Such behavior is expected to have a negative impact on employees. Ultimately, although power distance has positive consequences, it may also have adverse consequences for organizations, and it cannot be seen as a universally desirable trait. This study explains two ways in which power distance may have negative consequences, namely how it increases emotional exhaustion and turnover intention. It suggests the main cause of this is compulsory citizenship behavior. It is not a voluntary civic behavior that is carried out and based on an individual's will, but an involuntary non-role-related behavior or prosocial behavior that must be carried out by an individual for their organization (Vigoda-Gadot, 2006). Thus, if organizational members perceive a high level power distance, they will conform to the policies of the organization and the organization overall without any sense of resistance (Kirkman et al., 2009), which means in turn that compulsory citizenship behavior will increase because employees are essentially coerced to perform according to leader's instructions or demands. Compulsory citizenship behavior reduces job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job burnout (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007); (Witt et al., 2000).

Based on this, this study demonstrates some of the negative aspects of power distance and explains how it may increase compulsory citizenship behavior, which in turn increases turnover intention and emotional exhaustion. Further, we make some suggestions on how to deal with some of the negative aspects of power distance among information technology (IT) employees in the Korean IT industry. Lastly, we suggest possible directions for future research about power distance.

Literature review

A. Power distance

Power distance is an antecedent factor of abusive supervision (Kang and Jensen, 2009). The concept was first introduced by Mulder in 1985 (Terzi, 2011). It is generally divided into social and personal levels. At the societal level, it refers to "the extent to which a society accepts the fact that power in institutions and organizations is distributed unequally" (Hofstede, 1980). At the individual level, it refers to "the extent to which an individual accepts the unequal distribution of power in institutions and organizations" (Clugston et al., 2000). Those cultures with a high level of power distance tend towards authoritarian decision-making mechanisms. On the other hand, cultures with a low level of power distance tend towards participatory decision-making mechanisms (Rodrigues, 1998). High power distance is generally more bureaucratic and hierarchical. It is strongly related to higher hierarchical inequality (Kang and Jensen, 2009). In such organizations or leaders with strong power distance, it is expected that employees will be more likely to engage in involuntary or coerced behaviors.

B. Compulsory citizenship behavior

Organizational citizenship behavior refers to individual behavior that is voluntary that increases the effective functioning of an organization, but is not explicitly or directly recognized as belonging to the formal reward system (Organ, 1988). The concept of compulsory citizenship behavior is the opposite of organizational citizenship behavior in the sense that it is not a civic activity carried out as the result of the will of an individual but is essentially an involuntary non-role-related behavior or prosocial behavior that must be carried out for the benefit of the organization (Vigoda-Gadot, 2006). Thus, compulsory citizenship behavior can be seen as extra role behavior resulting from coercive or oppressive mechanisms. Compulsory citizenship behavior is a common phenomenon in organizations and a number of employees have experienced compulsory citizenship behavior at work (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007). In situations where compulsory citizenship behavior is high, employees tend to feel abused or exploited (Tepper et al., 2004). Thus, they may be less willing to put in as much effort as they could into all their roles, including in-role performance, extra-role performance, and organizational citizenship behavior (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007). Overall, compulsory citizenship behavior may thus actually reduce employee's motivation to increase organizational performance because the members are reacting against acts of repression and compulsion.

C. The relationship between power distance and compulsory citizenship behavior

Power distance may have a positive influence on compulsory citizenship behavior. The reason is that higher power distance provides higher hierarchical inequality and more authority for supervisors, and thereby increases the possibility that supervisors will abuse their authority and power (Kang and Jensen, 2009). Abusive supervision is most likely to occur in countries with high level of a power distance (Tepper, 2007). In such high level power distance cultures, organizational members may have to endure all kinds of abusive or undesirable treatment from supervisors because of this unequal power (Kang and Jensen, 2009). High power distance essentially requires that employees should follow their leader's demands, instructions or commands unconditionally. Employees are thus more likely to perform citizenship behavior under enforced conditions. Resultantly, abusive behavior may be positively correlated to compulsory citizenship behavior and it reflects much more negatively in terms of extra-role behavior (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007). Thus, we formed the following hypothesis:

H1: Power distance will have a positive influence on compulsory citizenship behavior.

D. Emotional exhaustion

Emotional exhaustion is a concept that was introduced in theories about burnout and stress in the workplace (Nikolova et al., 2014), and it is widely studied as it relates to job stressors (Maslach and Jackson, 1984). Emotional exhaustion can be defined as a chronic depletion of energy at the workplace, and individuals who are emotionally exhausted feel drained, overextended, and are often unable to recover control over their emotions (Greenglass et al., 2003). It has been suggested that when organizational members experience a large volume of work, their emotional exhaustion, anger, and levels of cynicism will increase, leading in turn to higher levels of distress. Thus, emotional depletion is likely to occur amongst those workers with heavy workloads, which is likely to result in their stress or job burnout. Additionally, employees' emotional exhaustion leads to lower organizational commitment and higher job dissatisfaction, which prompts them to facilitate deviant behaviors (Mulki et al., 2006).

E. Turnover intention

Turnover intention is one of the main problems in Human Resources (HR) and organizational management (Iyigun and Tamer, 2012). It occurs when members of an organization who do not like their organizations decide that they want to give up their roles as part of that organization and move to another organization (Mobley, 1982). Turnover intention can increase the costs related to employing staff, weaken the reputation of organizations, and also

diminishes the knowledge capital of organizations (Iyigun and Tamer, 2012; Liu et al., 2010). Turnover intention is influenced by three categories of factors, namely the work environment and the economy, personal factors related to individual employees, and the organization itself (Moynihan and Pandey, 2007). Study (Cotton and Tuttle, 1986) provided three correlates of turnover, classified as structural or work-related factor, personal characteristics of the employees, and external factors.

F. The relationship of compulsory citizenship behavior to emotional exhaustion and turnover intention

Employee's compulsory citizenship behavior may have a positive effect on emotional exhaustion and turnover intention. This is because citizenship behaviors that force employees to act in an oppressive environment reduce employees' job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and in turn job burnout increases by this process (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007); (Witt et al., 2000). However, when employees recognize a feeling of job satisfaction, they respond with increased organizational commitment and show a favorable attitude toward their workplace (Jaramillo et al., 2006). Ultimately, these employees have a lower level of intention to quit (Jaramillo et al., 2006); (Raabe and Beehr, 2003); (Ramaswami and Singh, 2003). This suggests that higher job satisfaction reduces turnover intention, and that lower job satisfaction may increase turnover intention. The more pressure supervisors place on employees to engage in extra-role behaviors, the more likely it is that employees' job stress and frequency of burnout will increase (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007). Therefore, burnout refers to a prolonged response to interpersonal stressors and chronic emotional dissatisfaction on the job, and emotional exhaustion is one of the three dimensions of burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). Based on these theories, it can be said that employees' actions performed due to forced demands and without spontaneity, lead to increases in stress and eventually to emotional exhaustion as time goes by. Thus, we formed the following hypotheses:

H2: Compulsory citizenship behavior will have a positive influence on emotional exhaustion.

H3: Compulsory citizenship behavior will have a positive influence on turnover intention.

G. The mediating effect of compulsory citizenship behavior

Existing research (Kang and Jensen, 2009) has argued that a high level of power distance has a positive influence on subordinates' recognizing abusive supervision practices. Research (Aryee et al., 2007) further hypothesized that an authoritarian style will be positively related to abusive supervision. Leaders who abuse their power may need to rely more on subordinates behaving obediently. In this respect employees can be forced to act involuntarily, because it is difficult for them to refuse their leader's demands or commands due to high power

distance. Abusive behavior may be positively associated to compulsory citizenship behavior and it reflects much more negatively in terms of extra-role behavior (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007). Thus, power distance may have a positive influence on compulsory citizenship behavior. Further, we expect that if compulsory citizenship behavior is increased, it may lead to employee's emotional exhaustion and turnover intention. Research (Vigoda-Gadot, 2006) has suggested that organizational citizenship behavior is negatively associated with job burnout, job stress, and the intention to leave, which means that voluntary behavior such as organizational citizenship behavior is negatively related to job burnout, job stress, and turnover intention. In contrast, employees are frequently confronted with strong managerial or social pressure to behave involuntarily and participate in informal work activities (Vigoda-Gadot, 2006).

Essentially employees must behave against their will as a result of coercion in this context. Such behaviors can be seen as compulsory citizenship behavior, which is different from voluntary organizational citizenship behavior. Thus, it may be positively related to turnover intention, and it may also be positively related to emotional exhaustion, which is a sub-factor of job burnout. Thus, we formed the following hypotheses:

H 4: Compulsory citizenship behavior will mediate the relationship between power distance and emotional exhaustion.

H 5: Compulsory citizenship behavior will mediate the relationship between power distance and turnover intention.

Math

A. Sample and data collection

Korean workers engaged in the IT industry were surveyed and the samples collected from the participants. The survey period was from May 30, 2018 to Jun 15, 2018. A total of 190 questionnaires were distributed in this study. The actual number of questionnaires collected was 185. From this total, 175 questions were used for the empirical analysis, and 10 questionnaires were discarded as they were not answered completely or correctly.

B. Measures

Power distance can be defined as simply the difference in strength between the stronger and less powerful people in an organization (Hofstede, 1980). We used the instrument developed by (Zhang and Begley, 2011) to measure power distance through a total of 5 items. A sample item included "In work related matters, managers have a right to expect obedience from their

subordinates."

Compulsory citizenship behavior can be defined as an involuntary non-role-related behavior or prosocial behavior that must be carried out for the organization (Vigoda-Gadot, 2006). For measuring compulsory citizenship behavior, we used the instrument developed by (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007) which included a total of 5 items. A sample item included "I feel that I am forced to assist my supervisor against my will and beyond my formal job obligations."

Emotional exhaustion can be defined as the chronic depletion of energy at the workplace, and individuals who are emotionally exhausted feel drained, overextended, and are unable to recover emotional control (Greenglass et al., 2003). Emotional exhaustion was measured using a total of 5 items with an instrument taken from (Maslach et al., 1997). A sample item included "It is very tiring to do my work"

Turnover intention can be defined as the situation that arises when members of an organization who do not like their organizations decide that they want to give up their roles as a member in their organization and move to another organization (Mobley, 1982). Turnover intention was measured using a total of 5 items through the instrument developed by (Bozeman and Perrewé, 2001). A sample item included "I will probably look for a new job in the near future." All ratings were completed on a seven-point scale (1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree).

Results

A detailed description of this sample's characteristics is as follows: Data showed that 105 males (60.0%) and 70 females (40.0%) participated in the survey. The number of participants in their twenties was 65 (37.1%), in their thirties was 45 (25.7%), and in their forties or over was 65 (37.2%). 104 participants (59.4%) had worked with their leader for 1~12 months, 49 participants (28.0%) had worked with their leader for 1~5years, and 22 participants (12.6%) had worked with their leader for 5 years or more.

Table I displays the results of goodness fit model. In this study, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to verify the validity of the latent variables. The result showed that $\chi^2 / df = 2.062$, RMSEA = .078, TLI = .949, CFI = .956, NFI = .919, IFI = .957, PNFI = .784, and PGFI = .652. These results satisfy the acceptable standard of (Osman et al., 2017). Therefore, it can be considered valid and acceptable.

For average variance extraction (AVE), all variables were higher than .5 (power distance=.741, compulsory citizenship behavior=.685, emotional exhaustion=.693, turnover intention=.700).

For composite reliability (C.R), all variables were higher than 0.7 (power distance=.851, compulsory citizenship behavior=.840, emotional exhaustion=.828, turnover intention=.813). When AVE is higher than .5 and CR is higher than .7, they have significant composite reliability (Lee et al., 2005). Therefore, it can be considered valid and acceptable.

Table 1: Results of the goodness of fit model

	AVE	C.R
Power distance	.741	.851
Compulsory citizenship behavior	.685	.840
Emotional exhaustion	.693	.828
Turnover intention	.700	.813
Absolute fit indexes	$X^2/df = 2.062$, RMSEA=.078	
Incremental fit indexes	TLI = .949, CFI = .956, NFI = .919, IFI = .957	
Parsimony adjusted indexes	PNFI = .784, PGFI = .652	

Table II shows the results of the descriptive statistics, correlation, and reliability analysis. It has been verified that all variables have a positive relationship with each other. Further the results of the reliability analysis showed that all variables are higher than .7(power distance=.945, compulsory citizenship behavior=.940, emotional exhaustion=.941, turnover intention=.941). The study conducted by (Nunnally, 1978) suggested that reliability is significant and acceptable when it is more than .7. Therefore, the result of the reliability analysis can be considered valid and acceptable.

Power distance is positively related to compulsory citizenship behavior($r=.339$, $p<.001$), emotional exhaustion($r=.285$, $p<.001$), and turnover intention($r=.270$, $p<.001$). Compulsory citizenship behavior is also positively related to emotional exhaustion($r=.554$, $p<.001$), and turnover intention($r=.411$, $p<.001$).

Table 2: The descriptive statistics, reliability, and correlation analysis

	Cronach's a	Mean	Std. Deviation	1	2	3	4
1	.945	4.064	1.525	-			
2	.940	3.675	1.398	.339***	-		
3	.941	3.443	1.489	.285***	.554***	-	
4	.941	3.581	1.676	.270***	.411***	.512***	-

1= power distance, 2= compulsory citizenship behavior, 3=emotional exhaustion, 4=turnover intention

***= $p < .001$ **= $p < .01$ *= $p < .05$

Regression analysis was performed using the SPSS 18 program for hypothesis testing. The results showed that power distance ($\beta = .339$, $p < .001$) had a positive influence on compulsory citizenship behavior. Thus, H 1 is supported. Compulsory citizenship behavior ($\beta = .554$, $p < .001$) had a positive influence on emotional exhaustion, and ($\beta = .411$, $p < .001$) also had a positive influence on turnover intention. Thus, H 2 and H 3 are supported.

Finally, we examined the mediating effect of compulsory citizenship behavior. First, we examined the mediating effect of compulsory citizenship behavior on the relationship between power distance and emotional exhaustion. Firstly, power distance ($\beta = .339$, $p < .001$) had a positive influence on compulsory citizenship behavior. Secondly, power distance ($\beta = .285$, $p < .001$) had a positive influence on emotional exhaustion. Thirdly, compulsory citizenship behavior ($\beta = .554$, $p < .001$) had a positive influence on emotional exhaustion. Fourthly, as set out in Table III below, step 1 explained that power distance ($\beta = .285$, $p < .001$) had a positive influence on emotional exhaustion. Step 2 explained power distance ($\beta = .110$, $p < .05$) had a positive influence on emotional exhaustion and compulsory citizenship behavior ($\beta = .516$, $p < .001$) had a positive influence on emotional exhaustion. The effect of power distance ($\beta = .110$, $p < .05$) on emotional exhaustion in the second step was lower than that of power distance ($\beta = .285$, $p < .001$) in the first step and the level of significance also decreased. A Sobel test was also performed to further confirm the mediating effect of compulsory citizenship behavior. The results showed that $Z = 3.504$, $P < .001$. From these results, the mediating effect of compulsory citizenship behavior is significant, and it has been verified that it plays a role as a partial mediator between power distance and emotional exhaustion. Thus, H 4 is supported. Table III shows the mediating effect of compulsory citizenship behavior on the relationship between power distance and emotional exhaustion.

Table 3: Mediating effect of compulsory citizenship behavior on the relationship between power distance and emotional exhaustion

	Dependant : Emotional exhaustion				VFI
	1 step		2step		
	β	t	β	t	
Power distance	.285***	3.196	.110*	1.649	1.130
Compulsory citizenship behavior			.516***	7.709	1.130
R^2 (Adjusted R^2)	.081(.076)		.317(.309)		
ΔR^2 (Adjusted R^2)	-		.236(.233)		
F	15.331***		39.969***		

***= $p < .001$ **= $p < .01$ *= $p < .05$

Next, we examined the mediating effect of compulsory citizenship behavior on the relationship between power distance and turnover intention.

Firstly, power distance ($\beta = .339, p < .001$) had a positive influence on compulsory citizenship behavior.

Secondly, power distance ($\beta = .270, p < .001$) had a positive influence on turnover intention.

Thirdly, compulsory citizenship behavior ($\beta = .411, p < .001$) had a positive influence on turnover intention.

Fourthly, as set out in Table IV below, step 1 explained power distance ($\beta = .270, p < .001$) had a positive influence on turnover intention. Step 2 explained power distance ($\beta = .148, p < .05$) had a positive influence on turnover intention and compulsory citizenship behavior ($\beta = .361, p < .001$) had a positive influence on turnover intention. The effect of power distance ($\beta = .148, p < .05$) on turnover intention in the second step was lower than that of power distance ($\beta = .270, p < .001$) in the first step and the level of significance also decreased.

A Sobel test was also performed to further confirm the mediating effect of compulsory citizenship behavior. The results showed that $Z = 2.964, P < .01$.

According to these results, the mediating effect of compulsory citizenship behavior is significant, and it has been verified to play a role as a partial mediator between power distance and turnover intention. Thus, H 5 is supported. Table IV shows the mediating effect

of compulsory citizenship behavior on the relationship between power distance and turnover intention.

Table 4: Mediating effect of compulsory citizenship behavior on the relationship between power distance and turnover intention

	Dependant :Turnover intention				VFI
	1 step		2step		
	β	t	β	t	
Power distance	.270***	3.694	.148*	2.029	1.130
compulsory citizenship behavior			.361***	4.943	1.130
R^2 (Adjusted R^2)	.073(.068)		.188(.179)		
ΔR^2 (Adjusted R^2)	-		.115(.111)		
F	14.649***		19.964***		

***= $p < .001$ **= $p < .01$ *= $p < .05$

CONCLUSION

A. Conclusion and research implications

This study examined whether or not power distance had a positive effect on compulsory citizenship behavior, emotional exhaustion, and turnover intention. Further, it also examined the mediating effect of compulsory citizenship behavior on the relationship of power distance to emotional exhaustion and turnover intention among employees who work in the IT industry. The conclusions and implications of this study are as follows: First, power distance had a positive effect on compulsory citizenship behavior. This suggests that perceiving a high level of power distance increased compulsory citizenship behavior among the employees surveyed in this study. Thus, organizations in the IT industry should reduce power distance and provide a more positive perception and framework of power. Furthermore, it also suggests that leaders or organizations should not abuse their power. Second, compulsory citizenship behavior had a positive influence on both emotional exhaustion and turnover intention. This suggests that behavior undertaken due to coercion or pressure may have negative consequences, in this instance emotional exhaustion and turnover intention. Such negative consequences can have an adverse impact on both individuals and organizations.

Therefore, leaders or organizations should strive to reduce pressure or compulsive behavior. Third, compulsory citizenship behavior had a mediating effect on the relationship of power distance to emotional exhaustion and turnover intention. This suggests that power distance

leads to compulsory citizenship behavior, and then compulsory citizenship behavior leads to emotional exhaustion and turnover intention. Thus, power distance had a positive effect on emotional exhaustion and turnover intention through compulsory citizenship behavior. Further the results showed that power distance had a direct positive influence on emotional exhaustion and turnover intention. Therefore, compulsory citizenship behavior had a partial mediating effect. Ultimately, this study emphasizes the negative role of high-power distance. Negative perceptions of power distance result in various negative consequences. Thus, leaders and organizations should use power ethically and fairly, and reduce the negative perception of power distance in the Korean IT industry.

B. Limitations and directions for future research

Limitations of this study and future research directions are as follows: First, this study focused on only one mediating role of compulsory citizenship behavior. Future research should explore various mediators such as trust in a leader and ethical behavior. Additionally, researchers should also turn their attention to examine organizational performance factors such as organizational commitment (Hahm, 2017). Second, this study focused on the consequences of high power distance. Future studies should focus on factors that increase and decrease power distance and examine their impact. Third, in addition to traditional variables, researchers should investigate a wide range of factors such as creativity and innovation. Such research will contribute to the further development of a positive work environment in the IT industry.



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Volume 7, Issue 4, 2019

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