

## Predictors of Employee Displayed Altruism and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour Amidst the Time of COVID-19 Pandemic

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### ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted employee performance and individual productivity. Organizational citizenship behaviour is viewed as an interpretation of an employee's performance that contributes to the overall organization's success or failure. To increase organizational effectiveness and achieve its objectives, it is essential to understand the underlying factors influencing employees' organizational citizenship behaviour. This research aims to study the employees' altruistic and organizational citizenship behaviour and how it is impacted with age. Altruism involves selfless acts or undertakings that put the welfare of others before one's own. A sample size of 300 was taken out of which 255 responses were discretely recorded with 130 female and 125 male participants, respectively, using the purposive sampling method. Results of the data show that there is no significant difference between the organization citizenship behaviour and altruism displayed by employees with respect to age. The study has numerous practical and theoretical implications such that OCB can be incorporated into performance appraisal systems that aim to benefit the organizations. They may formally adopt measuring and rewarding these behaviours to ensure organizational commitment.

**Keywords:** *Altruism, Organizational Citizenship Behaviour, Performance.*

*"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give." –Winston Churchill*

The working culture and employee behaviour amidst the pandemic have been altering in following a uniform pattern that is unlikely to be the same as initially. The harmful impact of COVID-19 on businesses necessitates a drastic change in HR policies, management behaviours, and employee performance in order to remain competitive during the pandemic (Cita Sari & Budiyantri, 2020) and whether the changes and the shift from traditional methods of working have helped in making the employee behaviour better.

### *Altruism*

Altruism is an empathetic feeling towards others that does not involve any selfish desire in return. Altruism is often demonstrated through pro-social behaviour such as helping,

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sharing, cooperation and caring. Konovsky and Pugh (1994) pointed out that altruistic behaviour is a positive behaviour of an employee to the organization, which cannot be undermined.

The normative theory claims that the strength of moral (personal) duty, a cognitive framework of norms and values, and the importance or appropriateness of feelings of moral obligation are three basic influences on altruism. Shared group beliefs about acceptable actions and social incentives affect ethical personal responsibilities or norms, which differ from individual to individual (Tullberg et al., 1996). In essence, people are socialized to follow the social responsibility tradition and to assist others (Berkowitz & Daniels, 1963).

The motivational (intra and interpersonal) and behavioural forces that underpin altruism are complex, arising from various sources both inside and outside the individual. People help because they assume it is the required social response, either based on prior experience or observations of others (McPeck & Cialdini, 1977).

### ***Organizational Citizenship Behaviour***

OCB could be a comparatively new conception in performance analysis however it represents human conduct of voluntary action. Organ coined the term "OCB" as a construct because he saw it as a more precise interpretation of "performance" in the arguments about performance caused by satisfaction. Organ (1988) identified five categories of OCB: -

- Altruism - the helping behaviour showed by the individual for another individual.
- Courtesy- discussing changes within organization openly.
- Conscientiousness - working more than the minimum required work.
- Sportsmanship - by not complaining about trivial matters, and
- Civic virtue -being an active participant ensuring governance of organization.

Barnard's work identifies with employee displayed OCB in terms of the fact that cooperative behaviour is shown by employees when they associate themselves to a favourable situation such that their actions complement the situation and their behaviour simultaneously while also yielding a good result (Williamson, 1995). Organizations, according to Barnard, are cooperative processes that integrate the efforts of individuals. Organizations depend on participant willingness and obtain it through various inducements (material rewards, opportunities for distinction, prestige, personal power, etc (Perrow & Williamson, 1991).

### ***Research question***

- How age influence the level of altruism and organizational citizenship behaviour shown by employees working in the corporate sector?

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### ***Scholarly Referred and Period of Literature Reviewed***

The studies in this literature review are presented from various journal articles through scholarly sources. These studies were published and conducted from year 1986-to 2021. The secondary data was collected from multiple sources such as Google scholar, Research Gate, ResearchGate, Open Library, Sage publications, Microsoft academic and PROQUEST Theses.

### ***Studies on Altruism***

The Bhagwat Gita offers a practical approach to liberation by describing the concept of Karma Yoga. It directs us towards the necessity of selfless action or altruism (Patwari, 2014). The subject of the Gita elaborates on the view of selfless action, done devotedly and wholeheartedly without attachment to the result leading to perfection. Altruistic employees have a better reputation than non-altruistic employees (Delamater et al., 2018). Research evidence shows that getting an altruistic reputation is profitable for employees in the long run. It facilitates learning capacity directly and indirectly through relationship conflict (Guinot et al., 2015). Although there are some advantages that altruism seems to offer for companies, future research could study various kinds of effects of altruism in organizations. The patent justification is that the successful entrepreneur provides people with jobs. But as K.K. Nair (1986) points out, these jobs daily mangle the spirits of men in meaningless labour. The residual yield of altruistic action is enough for a man's basic needs. Such behaviours are often demonstrated as performance that supports the social and psychological environment in which task performance occurs. To establish the relationship pattern between employees' altruism and organizational adaptation, a study by Jaja et al., (2014) concluded that the exhibition of altruism among employees of domestic aviation companies resulted in sharing of knowledge and consequently made the organizations adaptive.

Age-related differences in altruism arise from the availability of resources and changes across adulthood. A study conducted by Harbaugh, Mayr, and Burghart (2007) demonstrated empirically that some motives are related to the hedonic response by activation of related brain regions when one contributes money to the public good. This association is stronger for voluntary actions over mandatory contributions to the public support and welfare (i.e. taxes), even though the latter form of pure altruism also leads to activation of brain areas associated with reward processing and a feeling of contentment with positivity. Freund et al. (2001) argued that the accumulation and display of resources are particularly crucial in younger adults. Younger adults typically have not yet had enough and the same amount of time and number of opportunities to get and collect resources as that of middle age or older adults.

### ***Studies on Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB)***

Various studies have found that employee behaviours can change during pandemics. Several research studies, for example, found that the pandemic resulted in lower employee engagement (Ahmed et al., 2020) due to remote jobs and job insecurity.

Bukhari et al., (2009) investigated the relationship between chosen altruism, conscientiousness, civic virtue, and OCB and concluded that they are significantly related. Their results also show consistency with the 32 western researchers suggesting that top management be thoughtful about citizenship behaviours for better efficiency of the business, which can be functional both for the employees and the organization. W.Organ(1993), in his research, found that employees who demonstrate conscientiousness at work, try to prevent issues with their coworkers, inform others before taking necessary actions, and refrain from excessively complaining about work and are likely to do so as an organization is treated fairly. However, these researches did not address the variable of the age of an employee acting as an indicator to the employee displayed citizenship behaviour. A study by Zhang et al. (2011) identified four subtypes of organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB): altruistic OCB based on personality type, responsible OCB emphasizing reciprocity, instrumental OCB, which is related to self-interest, and compulsory OCB, identifying with stress. In a similar study by Lam et al. (1999), people in different nations differed in how they looked at

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the emic dimensions of OCB, but not at etic dimensions such as interpersonal harmony and company resources. Both the studies show a lack of support against the cultural barriers supporting their display of organizational citizenship behaviour at their workplace.

While investigating the mediating process of job involvement in the relationship between job characteristics and OCB Chen & Chiu (2009) found that job characteristics can increase employee displayed OCB. Job involvement also mediates the relationship between organizational socialization and self-job-concerned voice (Wu et al., 2014). The findings were only limited to job characteristics that influenced employee' displayed OCB and not the other underlying behavioural concerns that might have been involved in the process.

Mcbain (2004) intends to address how organizational effectiveness may be improved through organizational citizenship behaviours of commercial bank employees in India. He found that certain types of organizational citizenship behaviour may prove to be averse to organizational effectiveness. A study by Borman & Motowidlo (1997) suggested the importance of contextual activities such as problem-solving and learning through experiences as performance criteria also impact organizational effectiveness and employee behaviour. The study lacks evidence about the existing relationship between employees' readiness to help and solve complex tasks for others. Organ & Ryan, 1995 discuss nonmanagerial and nonprofessional groups and how the relation between job satisfaction and OCB is higher than the association between satisfaction and in-role performance. They concluded that other attitudes (perceived justice, organizational commitment, and leader supportiveness) had a similar level of correlation with OCB as satisfaction. Differences in employees' intentions to endorse the company, remain, and performance was substantially associated with working cognition measures (Guinot et al., 2015). More research studies are needed to determine what contextual factors influence employees' intent to use OCBs and discretionary effort.

### *Summary*

The literature review mentioned above consists of relevant aspects and work done on altruism and organizational citizenship behaviour and the role it plays in organizations and employee behaviour. It deals with how other components such as job involvement, job role, and performance criteria can impact employee displayed OCB, which can be studied in future research to understand the concepts better. Altruism on the other hand is an inherent motive to welfare and provide help to others. The younger generation might be less willing to invest their resources such as money on altruistic acts because they are in dire need of these resources to achieve and save for extrinsic instrumental goals, including personal growth, sustainable future, success, competence, status, etc.

OCB has a positive effect on organizational performance, as most studies have already proven, since these extra efforts of employees are neither officially mandated nor expressly compensated. However, employees accept those roles voluntarily because they feel like a part of the organization. Even though OCB is a spontaneous initiative taken by employees, companies should have an opportunity to demonstrate their OCB. Organizations can build an environment that not only allows for OCB, but also encourages and supports it. Employees who believe their work is relevant and that their company provides an opportunity for advancement are more likely to keep and stay with the company (Nimon et al., 2020). In general, it has been claimed that organizations with a higher degree of OCB have lower absenteeism, turnover, employee satisfaction, and loyalty (Titrek et al., 2014).

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### *Aim*

This research aims to study the impact of age on employee displayed altruism and organizational citizenship behaviour.

### *Objectives*

- To understand whether an employee's age is a contributing factor in showing altruism and organizational citizenship behaviour.
- To show whether older employees are more altruistic and show higher organizational citizenship behaviour than younger employees using relevant psychometric tools.

### *Hypothesis*

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Employees' altruistic behaviour and organizational citizenship behaviour significantly vary with age.

**H<sub>0</sub>:** Employees' altruistic behaviour and organizational citizenship behaviour do not vary with age.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### *Research Design*

The study was conducted using the quantitative method to arrive at results and fulfil the study's aim. Quantitative research is characterized as a systematic analysis through data collection and the application of statistical or computational assessment techniques. Quantitative analysis is used in situations where statistical conclusions are needed to gather actionable insights and are needed for any organization's development.

### *Operational Definitions*

#### **Altruism**

Konovsky and Pugh (1994) pointed out that altruistic behaviour is a positive behaviour of an employee to the organization, which cannot be undermined. Altruism is often demonstrated through pro social behaviour such as helping, sharing, cooperation, caring.

#### **Organizational Citizenship Behaviour**

OCB is a new conception in performance analysis. The critical objective of OCB was to identify the behaviours of an employee that are sometimes inadequately measured or overlooked in traditional measures of performance, but that, on the other hand, works to increase organizational efficiency or functionality (Alshaabani et al., 2021).

### *Sampling*

Data collection is essential in research since the data is intended to help understand and interpret a theoretical framework. It is then important to choose the method of obtaining data and collecting it with caution, mainly because no analysis can compensate for improperly collected data population (Tongco, 2007).

### *Type of Sampling Method*

Considering the research design, aim and objectives, purposive sampling method was used to arrive at concrete results for this study. A purposive sample's main purpose is to obtain a sample that can be presumed to be representative of the population (Tongco, 2007). Purposive sampling can be combined with a range of data collection techniques.

**Sample Size:** The sample size calculator was used to arrive at a suitable sample size for the targeted population. It was calculated to be 170. However, the researcher aimed to take a

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sample size of at least 300 to arrive at better statistical results; 255 responses were recorded as the most suitable and concrete data responses with 130 female and 125 male participants.

### *Inclusion Criteria*

- Indian citizen with English proficiency
- Aged between 25-55 years
- Employed in any organization irrespective of position, role or compensation
- Having reliable access to internet and technology

### *Exclusion Criteria*

- Employees with no background or employment history of working in corporate.

### *Tools*

Two psychometric tools were used in this study,

- **The Self-Report Altruism (SRA):** The Self-Report Altruism (SRA) Scale given by Rushton, J. P., Chrisjohn, R. D., & Fekken, G. C. (1981) consists of 20 items. Respondents can rate how much they participate in altruistic activities using the categories of "Never," "Once," and "More Than Once." 'Frequently' and 'Quite Frequently.' Researchers in many countries have used and adapted the SRA scale, and it has been validated in India (Khanna et al., 1993). Psychometric stability, internal consistency, and discriminant validity were found in the SRA-scale. The test-retest reliability is 0.72, and the adjusted split-half reliability correlation coefficient was 0.73. It is validated to be used in the Indian culture (Khanna et al., 1993). The association between the SRA-scale and a measure of social desirability ( $r = 0.05$ ) is especially noteworthy (Philippe Rushton, 1983), it measures more than just the propensity to react in a socially desirable manner. The tool is easy to administer, and the scoring can be done by summing up all item ratings together. A higher score indicates greater altruism.
- **Organizational Citizenship Behaviour Scale:** Podsakoff et al. (1990) OCBS Organizational Citizenship Behaviour Scale was used as another tool to examine other aspects of OCBs in the workplace. This scale contains 24 items that can be used to measure an employee's actions in terms of altruism (five items), conscientiousness (five items), sportsmanship (five items), courtesy (five items), and civic virtue (five items). Responses are given on a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 to 5), with 1 indicating strong disagreement and 5 indicating strong agreement. The scale has a high construct validity (as determined by confirmatory factor analysis), and each of the five sub-scales is reliable. The OCBS is reliable and valid in Indian context (Jain & Cooper, 2012) and can be used in Indian organizations (Shanker, 2014). The internal consistency reliability was recorded to be 0.87. The average score of all 24 items gives overall OCB.

### *Process of Data Collection*

The primary source of data collection was quantitative using psychometric tools such as SRA Self report Altruism scale and OCBS Organizational Citizenship Behaviour scale. The data is collected from the representative sample i.e., employees working in corporate sector. The process used was purposive sampling. Two different samples were considered. With each independent sample, one sample constituting employees aged between 25-40 years and other between 40-55 years. The secondary data for the research study is collected from

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relevant research studies, text books, journals, and thesis related to the research area and variables taken into consideration to fulfil the purpose of the study.

### Data Analysis

After collecting the data from the sample, it was tested whether it is normally distributed. Test of normality revealed that the data is not normally distributed hence non-parametric tests were used to calculate the results for the study.

## RESULTS

The study aimed for testing the impact of age on employee displayed altruism and organizational citizenship behaviour. The study's objectives were to understand whether age of an employee is a contributing factor in showing altruism and organizational citizenship behaviour and whether older employees are more altruistic and show higher organizational citizenship behaviour compared to younger employees using relevant psychometric tools.

### Hypothesis

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Employees' altruistic behaviour and organizational citizenship behaviour significantly vary with age.

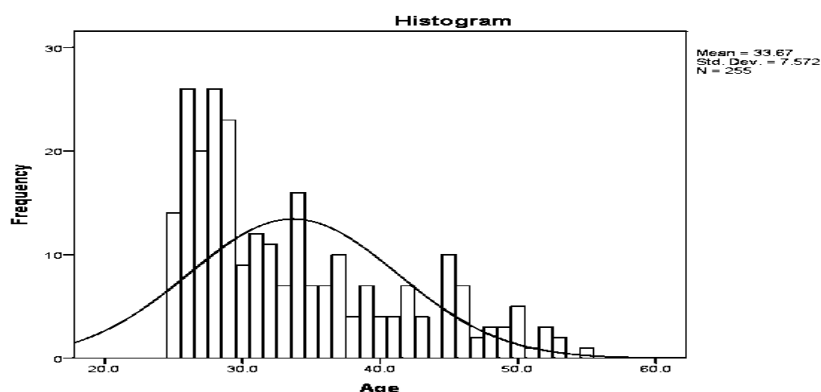
**H<sub>0</sub>:** Employees' altruistic behaviour and organizational citizenship behaviour do not vary with age.

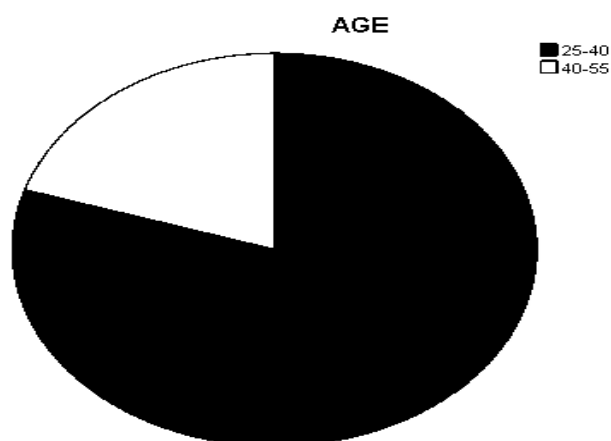
### Sample

Using purposive sampling method, data was recorded using google forms which were sent to the targeted population. The researcher was able to collect 303 responses. However, 48 responses were eliminated since they were not a characteristic part of the inclusion criteria selected by the researcher. A total of 255 responses were recorded as the most suitable and concrete data responses, with 130 female and 125 male participants, respectively.

**Table I** Table showing sample data statistics

		Age	Gender
N	Valid	255	255
	Missing	71	71
Mean		33.675	.490
Median		31.000	.000
Mode		26.0 <sup>a</sup>	.0
Std. Deviation		7.5722	.5009





**Table II Test of normality for Organisational Citizenship Behaviour Scale (OCBS)**

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
OCBS	.083	254	.000	.979	254	.001

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

**Table III Test of normality for Self-Report Altruism Scale (SRA)**

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
SRA	.035	255	.200*	.990	255	.074

\*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The Shapiro-Wilk data significant value should be greater than .05 for the data to be normally distributed. The test of normality in the case for OCBS test scores showed the value to be .001 which is less than .05 (.001 < .05) with which it can be concluded that the data was not normally distributed. While when the SRA scale was tested for normality, the test showed .074 as the significant data value which is greater than .05 (.074 > .05). Hence, the data for SRA was normally distributed. Overall, the data was not normally distributed. Therefore, the Mann-Whitney U test (a non-parametric test) was used to analyze data for independent samples.

**Table IV Mann-Whitney U test statistics**

	OCBS	SRA
Mann-Whitney U	2796.500	3004.000
Z	-.743	-.168
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.457	.867

a. Grouping Variable: Age

*p* value > .05 level of significance.

The *p*-value from Mann-Whitney U test from Table IV is .457 for Organisational Citizenship Behaviour Scale (OCBS) and .867 for Self-Report Altruism Scale (SRA). Both *p* values were greater than .05 level of significance, which showed no significant difference with respect to age between the organizational citizenship behaviour and altruism displayed by younger and older employees. Hence, the null hypothesis was retained and the alternate hypothesis was rejected. To test the relationship between variables, a correlation analysis



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was performed. The bivariate correlation procedure was subjected to a two-tailed statistical significance test with a value of ( $p < 0.01$ ). Table V contains descriptive statistics and correlations for all study variables, showing correlation among the chosen variables.

**Table V Spearman's correlation test statistics**

		OCBS	SRA	AGE	
Spearman's rho	OCBS	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.541**	.008
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.901
		N	255	255	255
	SRA	Correlation Coefficient	.541**	1.000	-.013
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.832
		N	255	255	255
	AGE	Correlation Coefficient	.008	-.013	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.901	.832	.
		N	255	255	255

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

The table shows the value of Spearman correlation coefficient( $r$ ) with respect to the test scores on both scales in association with the age variable. For both OCBS ( $r=.90$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and the SRA scale ( $r=.83$ ,  $p < .01$ ) the  $r$  value was more than the significance level which showed that we should retain the null hypothesis and there exists no significant difference between the variables. Moreover, there was a moderate correlation between the variables, proving the study's findings that employees' organizational citizenship behaviour and altruism do not vary with age.

### DISCUSSION

This research aimed to study about the impact of age on employee displayed altruism and organizational citizenship behaviour. The objectives of the study were to understand whether age of an employee is a contributing factor in showing altruism and organizational citizenship behaviour, and whether older employees are more altruistic and show higher organizational citizenship behaviour compared to younger employees using relevant psychometric tools. The null hypothesis clearly defines that employees' altruistic and organisational citizenship behaviours do not vary with age. In contrast, the alternate hypothesis mentions the significant differences in altruistic behaviour and organizational citizenship behaviour displayed by employees that vary with age.

The researcher aimed to take the sample size of at least 300 to arrive at critical results. A total of 255 responses were recorded as most suitable and concrete data responses with 130 female and 125 male participants respectively. Non- parametric tests were used to arrive at concrete results for whether the test hypothesis could be retained. The test results showed that there exists no significant difference between the organization citizenship behaviour and altruism displayed by employees with respect to age. The null hypothesis is retained.

There is a paradox in human relations today whilst the Digital Era of 21<sup>st</sup> century. On one hand, competition is heavily influenced by political, economic, and business interests while on the other hand (Mcbain,2004), there are those who volunteer themselves, putting themselves in danger and risk for the benefit of others. This caring attitude toward others can manifest itself in a variety of ways, including altruistic behaviour. No significant differences were found between the age groups in terms of altruism and OCB displayed by employees, according to the research findings. There is no difference in treatment or special treatment

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for employees of different ages. Young employees can become better with relevant learning experiences, and become leaders or supervisors, and lead older employees. These opportunities arise as a result of one's efforts and work skills. Although the results show no difference, the age group <32 years has the highest OCB (75) compared to the older age group. Existing research studies had shown to underestimate youth's willingness to behave (Yuana Rizky O. Mandagie, 2018) altruistically because they did not take advantage of understanding and using such behaviours. Also, such studies were mostly limited to a specific or one culture and historic period of time. Nowadays, youth are more inclined to work voluntarily for social causes, welfare, and even cooperative team behaviour (Shragay & Tziner, 2011). The cooperative behaviour, sportsmanship etc. are all components of organizational citizenship behaviour. They are more likely to show efficiency in their work with a sense of satisfaction (Meintjes & Hofmeyr, 2018) that contributes to organizational effectiveness (Cohen & Liani, 2017).

One explanation for the lack of significant OCB differences is that employees, regardless of tenure, have the equal opportunity to be promoted and feel reinforced. According to Dirgahayu, 2020, it did not rule out the possibility of employees with less tenure progressing at their workplace than employees who have been employed in the same organization for a longer time comparatively. Additionally, OCB levels increased when there was more organizational support and engagement at the workplace, especially amidst the pandemic (Alshaabani et al., 2021). It is determined by employee performance and the delivery output that makes him different from others. Previously before COVID-19, organizations worked in stable environments that required lesser changes; however, they are now competing in a more dynamic environment (Moradi, 2015). Leaders today are advised to use two sets of different behaviours, including transformational and transactional leadership (O.S et al., 2013), to influence their employees, eventually leading to more commitment and displaying of OCB towards their work and colleagues.

### ***Major findings***

Organizational citizenship behaviour and altruism displayed by employees did not vary with age and there was no significant difference between the group results of the tests on independent samples. Hence, the null hypothesis was retained. There was a moderate correlation between employees' age and the relative OCB and altruistic behaviour displayed by them on various occasions at the workplace. Some existent literature, like the study by Asgari et al., 2020 supports this evidence further. Altruism and the levels of OCB displayed by employees is determined by employee performance and the delivery output that makes them different from others. It holds no characteristic relevance with respect to age.

### ***Limitations***

This research study had several limitations that future research scholars can address to capture more data with better representative results. The sample size could be extended to study a more relevant and larger group of data to attain better significant results with normally distributed data. Data collection in physical settings can be preferred over the online mode of collection to avoid errors so that more concrete and valid data can be collected and analyzed.

### ***Future Implications***

The study can be implied in all organizational settings, especially those with higher head count. Based on demographic profiles, employee characteristic traits might provide a better understanding and evaluation criteria for bringing the desired change in the organisation's

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functioning and overall development. Future studies may incorporate them into a practical and valid process for better application. Finally, researchers can use and study other variables into their study to provide further evidence for various associations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Team performance and employee retention are some factors that are influenced through employee behaviour. In turn, employee behaviour is a reflection of an employee's values and the level of altruism and OCB displayed at work. Practices concerning human resources play a vital role in enhancing employees' organizational citizenship behaviours and firm performance (Eloha, 2012). Hence, supporting and studying altruistic behaviour can contribute to organizational psychology to a great extent.

To assist organizations during the pandemic, the government can implement associated risk management systems or models. Furthermore, supportive policies and HR measures will relieve business operations during the pandemic, allowing organizations to recover from the unexpected disruption and perform effectively. This will have significant impact on workers' overall organizational citizenship behaviour and their working conditions.

### CONCLUSION

There are no significant differences found in OCB values and altruism based on age among the workers of the corporate sector. It is suggestive of creating a positive work environment in which employees are educated to be courteous, observe one another, create a pleasant work environment, and be allowed to apply ideas so that employees feel valued. OCB can be displayed and formed more with time, which yields both high employee and organizations' productivity.

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