

ORGANISATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR

Spotlight on underlying factors influencing organisational citizenship behaviour in Mauritian business organisations

WHITE PAPER

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Empowering businesses and work environment
through a culture of civic virtues, sportsmanship and altruism

As businesses face increasing pressure to survive amidst fierce competition, globalisation, digitalisation, geopolitical tensions, and the global pandemic, nurturing the right work environment that encourages employee ethical behaviour and organisational citizenship behaviour has gained growing attention, as it significantly impacts organisational performance and success.

This white paper sheds light on the underlying characteristics and importance of organisational citizenship behaviour in shaping a highly engaging and performing work environment. It examines the key enabling factors that motivate employees to go the extra mile and voluntarily perform beyond their typical job descriptions in business organisations in Mauritius.

The growing importance of Organisational Citizenship Behaviour

With the growing need for employees to embrace citizenship behaviour, more so in an even-more challenging context driven by socio-economic pressures, understanding the underlying factors that influence ethical and citizenship behaviours within organisations has become even more pressing today.

The long term success of an organisation relies heavily on how strong the organisational culture is and how conducive the work environment is for employees to self-engage and excel.

The prevailing work culture and ethical climate in the organisation have an important bearing on how employees conduct themselves, fulfil their duties, and perform in the work environment.

As a business leader, one should ask the following questions:

- Is the work environment healthy and conducive enough to enable the employees to self-engage, demonstrate high commitment levels, and voluntarily go beyond their normal call of duty for the organisation to outperform?
- Does the work environment have the necessary elements to create and reinforce a self-engaging, ethical, and performing culture within the organisation?

These questions put the spotlight on leadership, culture, and the support systems in the workplace.

The role that business leaders play in the workplace, the way they act and perform in the fulfilment of business goals; the way they are perceived by their subordinates; and the prevalence of the nature and intensity of workplace pressures are key factors that influence employees' ethical behaviour, citizenship behaviour, and performance in the organisation.

Defining Organisational Citizenship Behaviour

Smith (1983) and Organ (1988) first coined the concept of Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) as fostering a positive working environment that motivates employees to surpass the expected minimum role requirements (Alizadeh et al., 2012; Organ & Konovsky, 1989; Smith et al., 1983).

This is achieved by employees doing more than their usual job descriptions and assigned duties, by helping other teams, volunteering for extra work, avoiding unnecessary conflicts, respecting the spirit and letter of rules and regulations, and gracefully bearing occasional work-related impositions (Robbins & Judge, 2013).

Bateman & Organ (1983) define organisational citizenship behaviour as a set of behaviours in which employees act and perform beyond their prescribed duties and voluntarily engage in improving the individual's or company's behaviour. The underlying philosophy of organisational citizenship behaviour is driven by the fact that employees' delivery levels go beyond their official job descriptions, and they would, accordingly, go the extra mile for the organisation's welfare out of loyalty to their bosses and the company at large.

This is often the result of voluntary compassion for and reciprocity towards their leaders in exchange for the fair treatment and welfare they obtain. As Konovsky and Pugh (1994) highlighted, organisational citizenship behaviour occurs in an environment characterised by *social exchange* and the quality of superior-subordinate relationships. Gouldner (1960) referred to employees' feelings of obligation to pay back what they have benefited from their employers.

Organisational citizenship behaviour entails employees' self-motivated behaviours contributing to the achievement of organisational goals even if these are not explicitly prescribed in their job descriptions (Lavelle, 2010). Typical manifestations in such work environments are:

- People who show greater concern for their organisation and its sustainable development;
- People who voluntarily go above and beyond the call of duty in the best interests of their organisation and stakeholders involved; and
- People who consider the welfare of their organisation a top priority and base their decisions and actions on what is the right thing to do for the organisation and its stakeholders.

Ethical Leadership drives Organisational Citizenship Behaviour

To gain a broader perspective on the relationship between ethical leadership and organisational citizenship behaviour, it is crucial to take cognisance of the empirical findings from studies across the globe.

Based on an empirical study conducted by Mo and Shi (2017) in China, the relationship between ethical leadership and organisational citizenship behaviour was examined through two key mechanisms:

- (a) Social learning (from the *social learning theory*)
- (b) Social exchange (from the *social exchange theory*)

The findings confirmed a positive relationship between ethical leadership and organisational citizenship behaviour which was sequentially mediated by perceived procedural justice and employees' organisational concerns (Mo & Shi, 2017). This was in line with previous empirical findings, where it was noted that employees working with ethical leaders were more favourably inclined to go beyond their official scope of work to help attain broader organisational goals (Kalshoven et al., 2011).

These findings were also supported by the social learning theory of Bandura (1977), whereby employees look up to their leaders, learn from their behavioural displays and acts, and imitate them accordingly. In other words, ethical leaders enhance their employees' behaviours through their own ethical role modelling and personal moral traits.

The more employees perceive their bosses as being ethical and promoting ethical values, principles, and decision making, the more these employees will be guided by such principles and feel motivated to excel in their job.

This is supported by empirical studies showing that the relationship between ethical leadership and organisational citizenship behaviour was largely influenced by the mediating effects of employees' perceptions of their leaders' ethical stance (Mayer et al., 2009).

This is further supported by the social exchange theory, which explains how employees go the extra mile and express proactive citizenship behaviour in the organisation. Employees generally feel indebted to their leaders if they are being looked after and treated well, which results in the employees reciprocating accordingly by supporting their leaders to attain the bigger organisational objectives (Mayer et al., 2009; Rioux & Penner, 2001).

The American studies revealed similar findings whereby ethical leadership positively influences employees' organisational citizenship behaviour through employee motivational orientation towards achieving organisational goals (Neubert & Roberts, 2013).



The positive effects of organisational citizenship behaviour result in organisational performance and productivity, efficiency, customer satisfaction, and cost reduction (Podsakoff et al., 1997).

This is further confirmed by a recent study conducted in Mauritius where it was found that organisational citizenship behaviour plays a mediating role in job satisfaction and employee performance (Ramesh & Goolaup, 2020).

Conversely, counterproductive work behaviour adversely impacts employees' performance and behaviour. Mayer et al. (2009) elaborated on the relationship between ethical leadership and employee misconduct as a result of the mediating effects of an ethical climate. In other words, an adverse ethical climate arising from deficiencies in ethical leadership leads employees to engage in unethical practices and conduct with deeper adverse bearing and impact on the organisation. The more such unhealthy conditions prevail, the more a state of anomie (a condition of instability resulting from a breakdown of standards and values) will creep in, thereby polluting the internal work climate and hindering progress.

Such conditions should be addressed by leaders demonstrating more prominently their ethical leadership traits and transparency in their decision making and actions, flowing from top down through the organisation, thus enabling an ethical climate to permeate further in the workplace (Elçi et al., 2013).



Ethical Leaders enhance their employees' behaviours through their own ethical role modelling and personal moral traits (Bandura, 1977).

An empirical perspective: Organisational Citizenship Behaviour in Mauritian Businesses

Organisational Citizenship Behaviour was gauged in Mauritius through 24 measurement questions loaded on a 5-factor model as devised by Podsakoff et al. (1990). The study revealed a 3-factor model emerging as the underlying factors characterising organisational citizenship behaviour in Mauritian organisations, as illustrated in Figure 1.

The three key emerging characteristics are:

- **Altruism**
- **Sportsmanship**
- **Civic Virtue**

“**Altruism**” is characterised by the behaviours or actions of employees helping other colleagues or team members in their work, in addressing their workloads, or even in their personal matters. The findings also show that it also covers a broader form of respect for others in the organisation, such as respecting the rights of others and the company’s rules and policies. The findings indicate that the respondents regard them as being related and forming an integral part of a broader understanding of altruism.

“**Sportsmanship**” emerged as a set of behaviours characterised by honesty at work, doing the job responsibly without being reminded by the supervisors, avoiding issues that could affect relationships with co-workers, and refraining from complaining about trivial matters. It is also about constructively maintaining progress, unity, and harmony, especially when the organisation is going through challenging times.

“**Civic Virtue**” refers to behaviours and actions that go above and beyond the call of duty to voluntarily assist the organisation even when it is not mandatory. It entails demonstrating a higher level of commitment than usual, as well as being fully attuned to and interested in organisational matters and the welfare of the organisation.

FIGURE 1

The emerging characteristics of OCB in business organisations in Mauritius

Organisational Citizenship Behaviour 3-Factor Model Emerging from the Study		
Altruism characteristics	Sportsmanship characteristics	Civic Virtue characteristics
<p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ you willingly help others who have work related problems ▪ you help others who have been absent ▪ you voluntarily help new employees to easily integrate the organisation and support them in getting acquainted with the organisational culture, policies, processes, and systems 	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ you believe in giving an honest day's work for an honest day's pay ▪ you try to avoid creating problems for co-workers ▪ you do your job without constant requests from your boss ▪ you stand strong to support your organisation when needed 	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ you attend functions that are not required but help the company image ▪ you attend meetings that are not mandatory, but important ▪ you read and keep up with the organisation's announcements and memos

The good thing to note from the findings of the study is that there is a tendency to witness or experience organisational citizenship behaviour in Mauritius, at varying degrees. It nevertheless remains to be confirmed, from an empirical perspective, whether this tendency is intrinsically linked with the specificities of the multi-cultural aspects of Mauritius or to some other determinants.

From the 5-factor model used to assess organisational citizenship behaviour in Mauritius, the two factors that did not emerge and could not be confirmed in the study were:

- **Courtesy** (e.g., being polite and respectful towards others)
- **Conscientiousness** (e.g., being diligent in the efficient use of organisational resources)

This does not mean that such traits are absent in the work environment. Instead, it appears that the respondents have a broader view and understanding of altruism and sportsmanship and see aspects of courtesy and conscientiousness as forming an integral part of altruism and sportsmanship, respectively.

The study shows that the respondents did not identify the specific nuances which could have categorised “courtesy” and “conscientiousness” as distinct factors but rather viewed them as related and integral to the respective emerging factors.

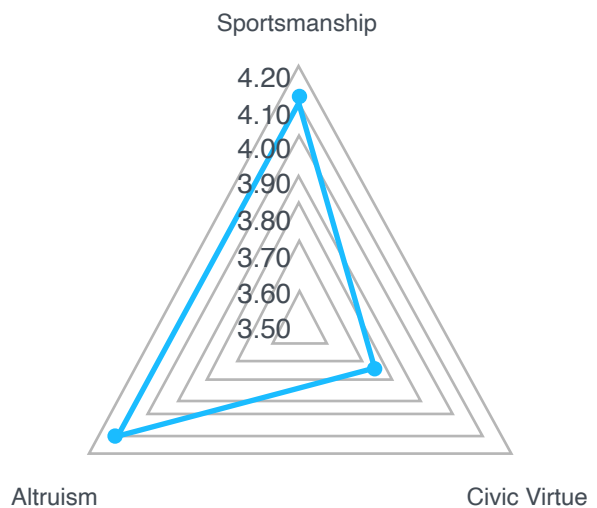
As the study suggests, this could be explained by the fact that employees in general tend to be guided by three main dimensions:

- their ability to demonstrate a positive attitude and goodness;
- their willingness to help others; and
- their readiness to voluntarily support the welfare of their organisation.

FIGURE 2

Respondents’ mean score ratings of the emerging factors characterising OCB in Mauritian businesses

(On a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree)



The study also reveals that there is, among the three factors, a stronger prevalence of altruism and sportsmanship traits within business organisations in Mauritius, as characterised by the higher mean score ratings of these two factors.

These tendencies could be explained by the fact that Mauritians in general are more inclined towards helping and supporting each other, as well as collaborating and delivering their duties responsibly.

Key Levers of Organisational Citizenship Behaviour

Figure 3 provides business stakeholders with a holistic view of the key levers that enable and foster a self-engaging, ethical, conducive, and performing work environment.

The study confirms that these key levers, namely: *Organisational Culture, Ethical Organisational Climate, Ethical Leadership and Workplace Pressures*, are intrinsically interrelated and have corresponding effects on organisational citizenship behaviour in business organisations in Mauritius. The key levers are:

A culture of people consideration and team spirit

The study shows that the type of organisational culture prevailing in the workplace influences organisational citizenship behaviour. For instance, the prevalence of people consideration and team spirit in the organisation positively influences employees to perform beyond their normal duties. It also fosters respect and support for others, as well as assists co-workers through extra efforts, even when it is not mandatory.

The prevalence of ethical culture and climate at work

Mitonga-Monga and Cilliers (2015) found that workplace ethical culture and climate had the greatest impact on work engagement.

The study confirms that organisational culture, ethical organisational climate, and organisational citizenship behaviour are intrinsically correlated. It further shows that both the prevailing workplace culture and ethical climate influence the employees' behaviour, more so in their willingness to voluntarily deliver above and beyond what is expected.

For instance, a positive inclination towards an ethical organisational climate is often characterised by concerns about what is best for the employees, clients, and the public, as well as a general disposition to abide by organisational rules and policies.

The study suggests that when an ethical climate prevails in the organisation, it has a positive effect on fostering civic virtues, altruism, and a willingness to work towards the best interests of the co-workers, teams, and the organisation at large. Conversely, in a climate where ethical norms and behaviours are not respected in the organisation, it is bound to have counterproductive effects on the employees' behaviour, work engagement, ethical stance, and performance.

The role of leaders and their ethical behaviour

The study further indicates that when fairness, sharing of power, concerns for work ethics and the environment, integrity, and people consideration prevail in an organisation, they positively influence the way employees perform as well as their perception of the work environment.

The more visible ethical leadership behaviours and ethically-oriented decision making are in the organisation, the more employees will perceive their work environment as motivating, performing, and conducive to team collaboration, productivity, and ethical conduct.

These findings add to the research by Mo et al. (2012), which established ethical leadership as a key predictor of employees' moral attitude and behaviour. Furthermore, earlier studies also discovered a favourable relationship between ethical leadership and employees' job satisfaction and motivational organisational commitment (Brown, Trevino & Harrison, 2005; Vitell & Singhapakdi, 2008). Other research complements the local findings, showing that strong levels of organisational citizenship and commitment are also reported by employees when they have a high perception of ethical leadership (Mitonga-Monga & Cilliers, 2016).

It thus requires business leaders to be fully conscious that their decisions and actions significantly impact how their employees perceive them as they heavily influence their employees' conduct, engagement and commitment in the work environment.

Leaders must seamlessly explain the underlying rationale of their business decisions and actions that are of concern or interest to their employees, as this approach will reinforce respect, trust, and ethical conduct among employees.

Hence, it is of fundamental importance for leaders to demonstrate ethical stewardship in the way they operate and promote transparency in their decision making.

Regulating workplace pressures

The results of the study show that ethical leadership and workplace pressures play a crucial mediating role and considerably influence organisational citizenship behaviour and perceived employee performance in the business environment of Mauritius.

It was found that workplace pressures have a negative correlation with organisational citizenship behaviour and perceived employee performance. Adverse workplace pressures could come in various forms (e.g., pressure to compromise ethical standards to win business deals, pressure to protect the company's image at all costs, or pressure to abide by the demands of powerful groups of people). Such types of workplace pressure are likely to have a negative impact on the employees and the work environment. The study suggests that improper workplace pressures are counterproductive to shaping and nurturing citizenship behaviour in the organisation. It creates a form of fear in the employees for their own job security or career prospects, thereby affecting the employees' health and morale, engagement level, and performance.

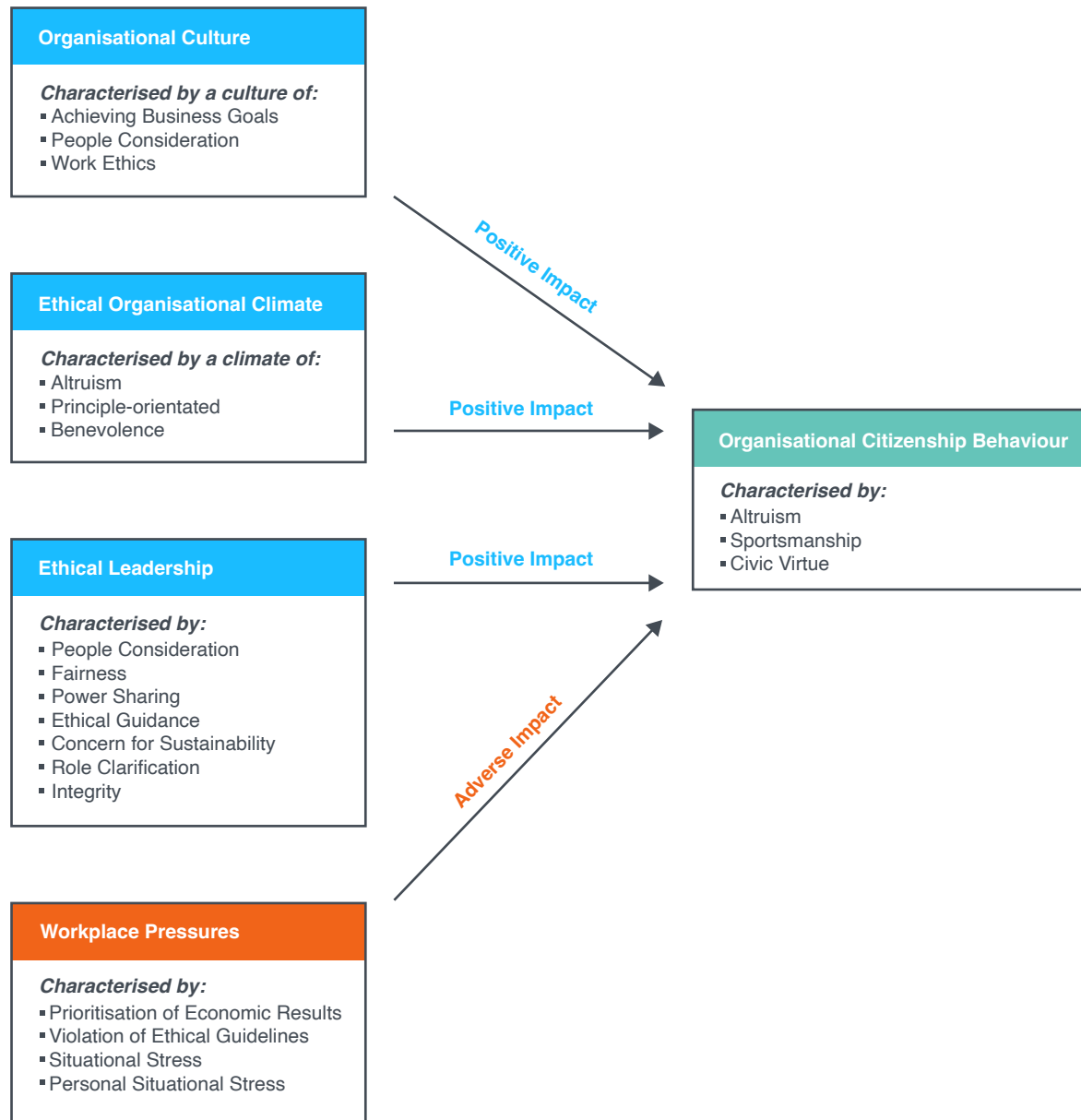
Regulating the type and nature of workplace pressures as well as taking appropriate disciplinary measures against ethical deviants have emerged as examples that would help foster ethical and citizenship behaviour amongst employees and create a culture of fairness and commitment.

A culture of people consideration, fairness, and ethical consideration thus positively reinforces the engagement and commitment levels of employees, motivating them to voluntarily do extra efforts to support their colleagues, bosses, and organisation whenever needed.

FIGURE 3

Key components and attributes impacting Organisational Citizenship Behaviour in Mauritian business organisations

(Based on outcomes of Confirmatory Factor Analysis, Path Analysis and Regression Tests)



Conclusion

Business organisations are predominantly driven by their economically oriented mission and objectives for the benefit of their key stakeholders. They are often compelled to compete under tight constraints to gain market share, productivity, and the generation of sustained profits and economic value. The overall quest to meet such business goals and fulfil them places an undeniable reliance on the organisational human capacity as a collaborative and fully engaged unit.

While every business leader recognises the value of human resources, they typically rely on the traditional approaches of focusing on quantitative delivery metrics and rewarding their employees for meeting the set objectives through pay and benefits structures. The question that then comes to mind is:

Do such specific measures give organisations the guarantee that they will be able to build highly engaged and committed workforces, retain their best talents, and encourage their employees to voluntarily go the extra mile for their bosses and companies?

Economic rewards are a key component of motivation and talent retention, but they do not necessarily guarantee a socially conducive work environment where employees will outperform, even if they receive such rewards.

HR systems may fall short in creating a highly engaged work environment and a committed workforce if organisational leaders and decision makers do not open themselves to new approaches for elevating employees' engagement, commitment, performance, and loyalty.

The quest to inculcate organisational citizenship behaviour through their own ethical behaviour and actions and those of their subordinates is viewed as a fundamental prerequisite in shaping a stronger foundation for the organisation's long-term socio-economic value creation and harmony.

The empirical evidence gained through this study reinforces this point. Business leaders need to be even more aware of the key underlying enablers of organisational citizenship behaviour and their benefits to the organisation: a self-engaging, synergistic, and conducive work environment that not only ignites voluntary commitment levels and employees' willingness to deliver above and beyond their usual standard duties, but also empowers the organisation to create an unmatched capability through these socio-psychological contracts.



The role of leaders and their orientation towards ethical practices, fairness, people consideration, concerns for the welfare of others, integrity, work ethics, sustainability, and mitigation of adverse workplace pressures are the key ingredients that will fuel the engine for nurturing organisational citizenship behaviour in the workplace.

In this dynamic and challenging work era, business leaders should embed ethical and citizenship behaviour into the organisational DNA as a top priority. This will go a long way towards laying the right foundation for maximising everyone's potential and permeating a strong culture characterised by civic virtues, sportsmanship, and altruism.

Methodology and Participants' Profiles

Methodology: Quantitative study, cross sectional design & survey strategy executed between November 2019 and February 2020.

Target Population: 2,534 'large' establishments across 19 industries in Mauritius (employing 10 or more persons as defined by Statistics Mauritius, 2017).

Sample Size: 526 participants of varying backgrounds working in these 'large' establishments (523 retained post quality assurance and controls).

Data gathering: Through Computer Aided Personal Interview ("CAPI") undertaken by Kantar as per scope entrusted.

Instruments: Master questionnaire of 232 items, compiled and marginally adapted from well-established instruments used globally. Measured through a 5-point Likert scale (1 being Strongly Disagree and 5 being Strongly Agree). Key instruments used for this multidimensional study are as follows:

- State of Ethics & Compliance Standards and Practices: Adapted from Ethics & Compliance Initiatives (2018)
- Organisational Culture: Organisational Culture Assessment Questionnaire (Sashkin & Rosenbach, 2013)
- Ethical Organisational Climate: Ethical Climate Questionnaire (Victor & Cullen, 1998)
- Ethical Leadership & Decision Making: Ethical Leadership at Work Questionnaire (Kalshoven et al., 2011)
- Internal & External Workplace Pressures : Adapted from "Factors eliciting Managerial Unethical Decision Making" (Lasakova & Remisova, 2017)
- Organisational Citizenship Behaviour: Organisational Citizenship Behaviour Scale (Podsakoff et al., 1990)
- Employee Ethical Behaviour & Conduct: Adapted from Scale of Measurement of Questionable Behaviour (Maesschalck, 2004)

- Perceived Employee Performance: Adapted from Perceived Organisational Performance (Delaney & Huselid, 1996)

Statistical analysis: Descriptive statistics, correlation, multiple regression, exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, path analysis and model fit indices amongst others.

Tools used: IBM SPSS, Amos Software Packages, Hayes' Process Procedures for SPSS and Microsoft.

FIGURE 4
Size of organisation surveyed

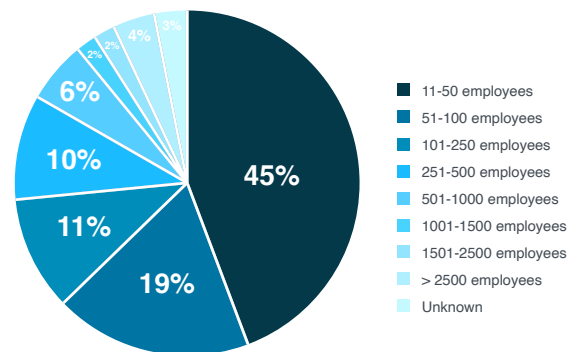
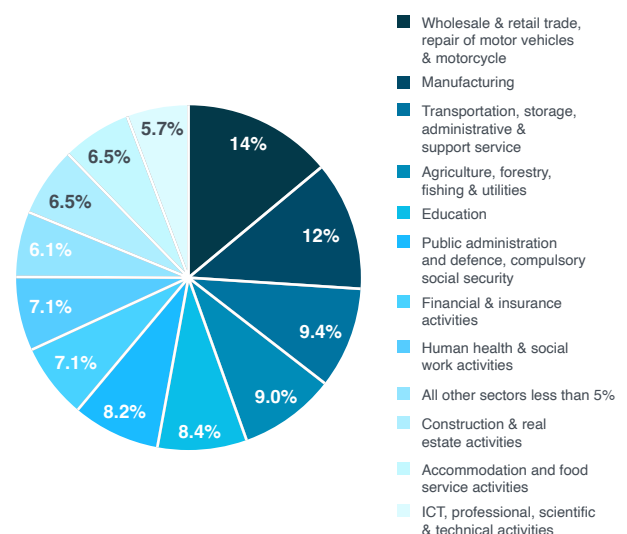


FIGURE 5
Key industry sectors surveyed (regrouped)



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About this Paper

This paper forms part of an overarching strategy to share and disseminate the research findings from the author's multifaceted study "*The dynamics of ethical climate: mediating effects of ethical leadership and workplace pressures on organisational citizenship behaviour*" in the business context of Mauritius. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2022.2128250>

The main objective of this paper is to focus on one particular aspect of this multidimensional study, more specifically on organisational citizenship behaviour, its underlying factors, and how it can be reinforced in business organisations.

Through this paper, the author attempts to bring together key concepts, findings, insights, views, and recommendations on the topic of focus in a relatively non-technical format to ease the dissemination to a broader audience for the welfare of the business community. An attempt has also been made to recognise the work of other scholars and researchers through the references, to help bridge the academic and business worlds.

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We acknowledge the valuable inputs of all the respondents and stakeholders who participated in this study. By sharing their experiences, they have provided a much needed insight into today's reality. Their important contributions are much appreciated as they will go a long way towards further strengthening the ethical culture in business for the greater good.

We also acknowledge the strategic mindset and creative capabilities of Peppi Ltd, our brand innovation consultant, in helping us build, develop and connect our LeadEthics purpose-driven brand and experiences.

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Rishi O. Sookdawoor is a Doctor of Business Leadership from the Graduate School of Business Leadership, University of South Africa. He is a multi-functional, strategic and board-level executive with a 20-year track record of spearheading strategic ventures and transforming businesses. With a strong passion and advocacy for ethical leadership, Dr. Sookdawoor aims to contribute to the body of knowledge through his research and opinion papers on ethical leadership and organisational citizenship behaviour. In his quest to contribute towards shaping a stronger ethical culture in business organisations, he advocates for the collective drive and stewardship of business leaders in fostering ethical culture and behaviour in the business community.

Dr. Sookdawoor is also the founding research member of LeadEthics, a platform dedicated to steering forward the mission of fostering ethical leadership at national and global levels. He can be reached at: rsookdawoor@leadethics.com

About LEAETHICS

LEAETHICS is a platform dedicated to empowering the business community to foster ethical leadership and culture. Through its research, LEAETHICS provides insights on the ethical culture, behaviour and leadership in business organisations in Mauritius. Based on empirical research, insights, and experiences, it puts forward the key ethics related actions required to implement highly effective ethics standards and programmes in the business community.

LEAETHICS aims to bring together policymakers, industry leaders, business drivers, professionals, ethics & governance experts and scholars from Mauritius and all over the world to share their experiences, ideas, resources, and techniques, and make the right call to collectively commit to putting ethics at the top of the leadership agenda and drive the transformation of ethical organisational culture and leadership for the greater good.

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