

Effects of Power Distance Diversity within Workgroups on Work Role Performance and Organizational Citizenship Behavior

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Keywords

Power distance; Workgroups; Workgroup diversity; Performance; Organizational citizenship behavior.

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to analyze the effect of power distance diversity within workgroups, from the perspectives of work role performance and organizational citizenship behavior. A sample of 251 employees, from a multinational company's subsidiary, was analyzed to determine the existence of relationships between power distance diversity, work role performance and organizational citizenship behavior. Results indicated two main findings. First, the most power distance diverse workgroups had a negative effect on the work role performance of the employees. Secondly, the most power distance diverse workgroups negatively influenced two dimensions of organizational citizenship behavior: altruism and civic virtue. In addition to the previous main findings, it was concluded that power distance had a negative impact within the workgroups of the organization that was studied. The development of this research made a significant contribution to the innovative research field of cultural dimensions' relationship with the performance and the behavior of the employees. Additionally, this research is among the first to study the effects of power distance on the work role performance and the organizational citizenship behavior of employees.

Introduction

Research evidence proves that workgroups are vital for the organizations in order to achieve goals and increase effectiveness and productivity within the whole organization elements, processes, and outcomes. Workgroups may be composed by employees that have several different cultural characteristics; such diversity within the workgroup might have positive or negative effects on the performance and the behaviors shown by the employees. Some researchers have noted that there is a need for investigating the effects of the diversity of cultural values on people's actions and behaviors (Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007; Shore, Chung-Herrera, Dean, Ehrhart, Jung, Randel & Singh, 2009). Specifically, the power distance cultural dimension has been proved to affect workgroups' processes and performances (Paulus, Bichelmeyer, Malopinsky, Pereira & Rastogi, 2005); besides, the employees' extent of power distance –short or large– might have an impact on the possible demonstration of organizational citizenship behavior (Paine & Organ, 2000).

Based on a quantitative study, the research analyzes the effect that the diversity of the power distance cultural dimension might have on the organizational citizenship behavior and the work role performance of employees. The research intends to be an innovative work in the research field of cultural dimensions in relation to the employees' performance and behavior; this may lead to the development and the conduction of new researches in the future.

Literature Review

Diversity and Workgroups

Organizations are increasingly trusting workgroups to develop answers and solutions in order to maintain the organization success (Kozlowski & Bell, 2003; Ilgen, 1999, West, Borrill, & Unsworth, 1998, in Sonnentag & Frese, 2005). Furthermore, Diez (2006) affirmed that, in the organizational context, groups have increased their significance since the 20th century's middle. Then, what can

be understood by group? According to Kozlowski & Ilgen's review in 2006, a team –or group– is defined as the association of at least two people that socially interact, have common objectives, and develop different relevant roles and responsibilities.

Moreland (1999) said that organizations are developing workgroups to improve productivity through the handling of work that once was done by several individuals. Research evidence found by the author suggests that they are accomplishing it, yet from time to time workgroups lack of succeed; that lower performance might be solved by changing the composition of the workgroup, regarding individual and demographic characteristics, abilities, and opinions, among others. However, those changes concerning the workgroup's variability –whether it is incorporating more diversity or reducing it– have to be carefully managed, in order to avoid struggles between the workgroup's members and keep them away from negatively influence the performance (Moreland, 1999).

Diversity, heterogeneity, or dissimilarity, has attracted much attention in the late century; it is a very complex concept since it refers to all differences and inclusions, so there is not a common opinion on what kind of differences should be given more emphasis regarding to workplaces (Konrad, Prasad & Pringle, 2006). Workgroups have developed a higher degree of diversity throughout the years, and in following years they are going to become even more diverse (Triandis et al., 1994; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998; Jackson et al., 2003, in Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007). Van Knippenberg & Schippers (2007) affirmed that nowadays organizations are introducing more diversity into workgroups, by incorporating many different backgrounds within the workgroups, considering that “work group diversity, [is] the degree to which there are differences between group members [that] may affect group process and performance positively as well as negatively” (p.515).

Within an organization, people that differ from the majority are more susceptible to depart, to feel unsatisfied and less psychologically committed (Moch, 1980; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998, in Shore, Chung-Herrera, Dean, Ehrhart, Jung, Randel, & Singh, 2009). Williams & O'Reilly (1998) agreed with that by mentioning that individuals that are less like the group majority and might propose a different point of view, are also the individuals more likely to end up being excluded and confined.

In contrast, Shore et al. (2009) declared that “[racial/ethnic] diversity creates value and benefit for team outcomes” (p.118), therefore one could assume that cultural diversity, since culture is influenced by race and ethnicity, will create benefits for workgroups at the organizations. Even though that negative implications could happen when dealing with employees' diversity, the current organizations face several challenges to get advantages from their employees' diversity; the organizations that have successfully managed diversity are the ones that truly value and celebrate the diversity of the employees, those organizations make efforts across the whole organization to understand and accept that differences are worthy (Marchant & Del Río, 2008).

Power Distance: A Cultural Dimension

The cultural dimensions –common characteristics of a culture– presented by Hofstede in 1980, and extended by Hofstede & Bond (1988) and Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov (2010), are the most popular references used in studies regarding cultural aspects; in spite of that, these have also been the most criticized dimensions.

Power distance was the first cultural dimension developed through the IBM data used by Hofstede in 1980; its origin is based on human inequality, specifically regarding the power that is involved in the relationship between bosses and employees (Hofstede, 2001). According to Hofstede et al. (2010), in general terms power distance is “the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is



distributed unequally.” (p.61); also, that distribution of power is explained on the basis of the actions of the members that have more power.

The concept of power distance can be brought to an organizational approach by defining it as the measure of power inequality between bosses and subordinates, perceived by the less powerful individuals, the subordinates (Mulder, 1977; Hofstede, 2001). As Mead (1998) affirmed, if there is a small power distance, managers are more likely to ask for support and consult their subordinates when decisions have to be made, they both cooperate with each other, employees have little fear of disagreeing with supervisors, and the distance between each other is reasonably small so the “subordinates will rather easily approach and contradict their bosses.” (Hofstede et al., 2010, p.61); otherwise, when the power distance is large the employees perform according to the managers directions.

Moreover, subordinates that are placed in a large power distance environment are reluctant to involve in decisions, they passively attend their managers’ instructions, and therefore managers have an unlimited power over employees (Khatri, 2009). In a large power distance context, the degree of the employees’ dependence on bosses is considerably high, and the distance between the subordinates and their bosses is reasonably large so “subordinates are unlikely to approach and contradict their bosses directly.” (Hofstede et al., 2010, p.61).

Additionally, Paulus et al. (2005) studied the impact of power distance on different team processes, such as decision making, elaboration of products, communication, accomplishment of goals, distribution of roles, and performance; their results show that the low power distance team had a great performance when dealing with possible conflicts.

Work Role Performance

For many years, there have been a few efforts to describe and clarify the concept of performance, even though it is a common measure in research; as mentioned before, performance involves actions –what employees do at work– and outcomes –what the employees obtain from their behavior and actions– (Sonnentag & Frese, 2002). Performance can be divided into task performance and contextual performance (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993, in Sonnentag & Frese, 2002); task performance is the “individual’s proficiency with which he or she performs activities which contribute to the organization’s ‘technical core’.” (p.6) and contextual performance “refers to activities which do not contribute to the technical core but which support the organizational, social, and psychological environment in which organizational goals are pursued” (p.6). For the purposes of this study, the research is focused only on task performance, because of its relationship with the tasks and responsibilities of the employee’s positions.

Griffin, Neal, & Parker (2007) developed a model for work role performance –based on previous models and investigations relating the field of performance– which involves nine dimensions established by a cross-classification of the three behaviors that support the effectiveness and the three forms of behavior. According to the authors, any dimension can be used separately from the whole model without affecting the validity of the selected dimension’s items; therefore, for this research, the performance is measured through the use of two dimensions of the model. The first dimension is *individual task proficiency*, which involves the behaviors that show that “an employee meets the known expectations and requirements of his or her role as an individual.” (Griffin, Neal, & Parker, 2007, p.331); this dimension comprises the common emphasis of the studies concerning performance. The second one is *individual task proactivity*, which refers to the engagement of employees with personal initiative, innovation at work, and “self-starting, future-oriented behavior to change their individual work situations, their individual work roles, or themselves.” (Griffin, Neal, & Parker, 2007, p.332).

Effects of Diversity on Work Role Performance

Additionally, it is relevant to mention that diversity has an effect on workgroups' performance since it can either increase or reduce the productivity and satisfaction of workgroup employees; therefore, it might be conceived as a double-edged weapon, considering that its effects are still ambiguous (Vásquez, 2006; Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007). Workgroup effectiveness can be positive or negative influenced by cultural diversity because "when people must work together in groups to perform a task, the cultural differences between group members often become more apparent." (Thomas, 2008, p.169). According to Thomas (2008), the performance of the more culturally diverse workgroups is likely to be lower than the performance of the more culturally homogeneous workgroups; on the other hand, the culturally diverse opinions and perspectives of the workgroup's members should turn into innovative and excellent decisions. In addition, the capability of employees for adapting to diverse and fluctuating scenarios is a significant part of their performance (Hesketh & Neal, 1999; Murphy & Jackson, 1999, in Sonnentag & Frese, 2002).

Effects of Power Distance on Work Role Performance

About the relationship between power distance and workgroups' performance, there is not much research on this matter. Fortunately, Hofstede (1991) stated that power distance is one of the two most problematic dimensions regarding the effective performance of a group; besides, power distance is a relevant characteristic that influences the relationships within a group.

Based on the cited facts about diverse workgroups and performance, and keeping power distance cultural dimension as focus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 1 When increasing the power distance diversity within workgroups, the members decrease their individual task proficiency.

Hypothesis 2 When increasing the power distance diversity within workgroups, the members decrease their individual task proactivity.

Organizational Citizenship Behavior

There are three vital behaviors to operate an organization: (a) people have to be induced to join and linger in the organization, (b) assignments must be reliably fulfilled by employees, and (c) innovation and spontaneity have to be present when accomplishing organizational purposes that go further the role expectations (Katz, 1964). Those intentions that go beyond the employees' roles are the antecedents of the concept of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), whose earliest references were made by Smith, Organ & Near in 1983 and Bateman & Organ, also in 1983.

The OCB construct was developed for the first time by Organ in 1988. It has been defined as an individual discretionary behavior that promotes organizational effectiveness, and it is mainly an unpunishable personal choice neither officially requested nor formally rewarded by the organization (Organ, 1988; Farh, Podsakoff & Organ, 1990; Organ, 1990; Graham, 1991; Van Dyne, Graham & Dienesch, 1994).

In a simple summary, OCB is the propensity of the employee to perform beyond his or her role expectative at work. OCB was originally composed by five dimensions developed by Organ (1988) that have been most studied by researchers; these dimensions join to form the wide construct of OCB. The concept of every OCB dimension can be described as follows, according to Organ's work (1988, 1990): *altruism* involves the voluntarily made actions that help a coworker under complex or difficult circumstances; *conscientiousness* refers to those actions that go further the minimums required concerning attendance, punctuality, and resources management, among others –one must not confuse it with the Big Five personality dimension that goes by

the same name—; *sportsmanship* is the tolerance attitude shown by the employee when dealing with inconvenient, uncomfortable or unexpected situations, without making any complaints about it; *courtesy* includes every action that is made to help a coworker, in order to prevent any problems or issues that might affect him or her; and *civic virtue* attends to the involvement of the employee with the organization's political processes, which includes checking the email, meetings attendance, opinion expression, and keeping up with the organization's affairs.

Nevertheless, those original dimensions have been modified and restructured by other authors along the development of new studies and researches. The dimensions have been given different names according to authors' perceptions and approaches (e.g. Graham, 1983, 1991; Moorman & Blakely, 1995; Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Moorman & Fetter, 1990; Van Dyne, Graham & Dienesch, 1994; Williams & Anderson, 1991).

Research outcomes support the fact that OCB is associated with performance; specifically it has an influence on workgroups and organization. For instance, Walz & Niehoff's (1996) work on 34 Limited Menu Restaurants partially supported that OCB is related to the organization's performance; some measures about organizational effectiveness did not have a significant relationship with OCB, but the authors concluded that those measures, such as profit margin and financial performance, might have been out of control of employees. According to the existing empirical evidence, Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Paine & Bachrach (2000) stated that OCB is related to performance, even if some dimensions—helping behaviors— show a stronger relationship than others—sportsmanship—. However, there is little research evidence to support the assumption that OCB affects units' performance and improves organizations' and/or workgroups' effectiveness; still, many reasons explain why OCB might be positively related to organizational performance and effectiveness. These reasons include that OCB might: improve the employees and managerial productivity, upgrade the management of resources, affect the coordination of employees within and across workgroups, reinforce the organization's skill of attracting and retaining the greatest employees, enhance the organizational performance stability, and improve the organization's skill of adapting to variations in the environment (Podsakoff & Mackenzie, 1997).

The work of Karambayya (1991) suggests that the team size, the stability of the team members, and the interpersonal interaction might influence the employee's preference to perform OCB. As well, George & Jones (1997) stressed the relevance of the group, a contextual factor, as an influence on OCB. Moreover, there are some characteristics of the groups that affect the employees' OCB, for example: the group cohesiveness, the quality of the relationship among the members, the potency of the group, and the group support perception (Berber & Rofcanin, 2012).

Paine & Organ (2000) found that in large power distance cultures, such as China, a large power distance represents that the employees are less expected to confront their superiors, they do as they are told and this limits the OCB, because even their possible initiatives could be perceived as challenges to the authority. In a small power distance culture, the employees' perception of fair treatment determines their possible demonstration of OCB (Paine & Organ, 2000); it is basically the opposite as in large power distance scenarios.

Hence, it is relevant to test whether the power distance diversity, as a characteristic of the workgroups, has an effect on the dimensions of OCB of the employees. The following hypotheses address to this fact:

Hypothesis 3 When increasing the power distance diversity within workgroups, the members decrease their altruism.

Hypothesis 4 When increasing the power distance diversity within workgroups, the members decrease their conscientiousness.

Hypothesis 5 When increasing the power distance diversity within workgroups, the members decrease their courtesy.

Hypothesis 6 When increasing the power distance diversity within workgroups, the members decrease their sportsmanship.

Hypothesis 7 When increasing the power distance diversity within workgroups, the members decrease their civic virtue.

Method

Participants

The research was conducted among the employees from a Costa Rican-located USA multinational company with multiple business units around the world.

The study involved 51 formal workgroups that comprised a total of 551 employees. Because of the extension of the questionnaire, the bosses of the 51 workgroups evaluated the OCB and the work role performance for a maximum of seven employees. Altogether, there were collected 251 evaluations of these two last variables. On the other hand, for measuring the power distance within the workgroups, it was intended to collect data from all the 551 employees. However, it was only possible to obtain an answer rate of 80.40%.

Measures and Procedure

Power Distance

For measuring the power distance of the employees, the 6-item scale developed by Dorfman & Howell (1988) was used. Their reliability score was .63, and several authors have used these measure to conduct studies (Nicholson, 1991; Fernandez, Carlson, Stepina, & Nicholson, 1997, in Wu, 2006). Examples of the items included: *Managers should seldom ask for the opinions of employees*, and *Employees should not disagree with management decisions*. The answers were presented on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1=*strongly disagree*, 5 =*strongly agree*). The alpha coefficient for this research was .65.

Power Distance Diversity

The power distance diversity or variability was measured through the power distance standard deviation, according to the workgroups' power distance mean.

Work Role Performance

Work role performance was measured through the use of two of the nine dimensions that compose the 27-item work role performance model developed by Griffin, Neal, & Parker (2007). The authors affirmed that each of the nine dimensions can be evaluated independently from the whole model, when the interest lies on measuring specific characteristics of the work role performance. The two dimensions that were used in this research are *individual task proficiency* and *individual task proactivity*; each of them comprises three items. The authors obtained alpha coefficients of .83 and .90, respectively for each dimension. The original items' drafting was developed for the employees to evaluate themselves. However, in this research the bosses evaluated the employees' work role performance; therefore, the items' pronouns were changed. Examples of the items were: *Completed the core tasks well using the standard procedure*, and *Initiated better ways of doing the core tasks*. An extra item in the individual task proficiency dimension was included. This item was *Completed tasks or duties in an adequate time*. Both

dimensions respectively had alpha coefficients of .90 and .88 in this study. The answers were presented on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1=*not at all*, 5 =*a lot*).

Organizational Citizenship Behavior

OCB was measured by the 24-item scale developed by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman & Fetter (1990), based on the previous work of Organ (1988, 1990). The construct is composed by five dimensions; which are: *altruism* (the voluntarily actions that help a coworker under complex or difficult circumstances), *conscientiousness* (the actions that go further the minimums required concerning attendance, punctuality, and resources management), *sportsmanship* (the tolerance attitude shown by the employee when dealing with unexpected situations, without making any complaints), *courtesy* (the actions that help a coworker to prevent any problems or issues that might affect him or her), and *civic virtue* (the involvement of the employee with the organization's political processes). The reliability score ranges from .70 to .93 in many researches (Farh, Earley & Lin, 1997, in Tayyab, 2005; Argentero, Cortese & Ferretti, 2008). The answers were presented on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1=*strongly disagree*, 5 =*strongly agree*). The alpha coefficient for each dimension was: .87 for altruism, .77 for conscientiousness, .91 for sportsmanship, .88 for courtesy, and .83 for civic virtue. Examples of the items include: *Helps others who have been absent* (altruism), *Does not take extra breaks* (conscientiousness), *Does not abuse the rights of others* (courtesy), *Tends to make "mountains out of molehills"* (sportsmanship), and *Keeps abreast of changes in the organization* (civic virtue).

Control Variables

The influences of the sex and the age of the employees were statistically controlled in order to prevent bias within the research. Sex was categorized as *Men* (1) or *Women* (2). Age was measured as complete years; for example: *18 years*.

Analysis

For testing the research hypotheses, a multilevel regression analysis was conducted. The analysis included determining the effect of power distance diversity on the individual performance, composed for the purposes of the research by work role performance and OCB.

Results

A summary of the mean, standard deviation, maximum, and minimum values of the research variables is shown in the table 1. The constructs of OCB and work role performance were divided into the correspondent dimensions. The control variables were also included in the descriptive statistics.

The main result is that the power distance dimension had a mean value of 25, this represents that on average the employees have a short power distance. Results for the OCB construct show that four dimensions have a mean value within a range from 72 to 77, and civic virtue is the exception with a 60 mean value. Therefore, the bosses perceive that on average the employees are greatly behaving beyond the expectations and requirements that the organization is asking, they are making additional efforts within their workplace to promote organizational effectiveness. Nevertheless, the bosses feel that the employees are not much compromised with the political processes of the organization; for example, attending meetings and keeping up on the organization's affairs. Regarding the employees' performance, the mean values for both analyzed dimensions were relatively high. Concerning individual task proficiency, the results indicated that employees constantly perform according to their work role; about the individual task proactivity's results, employees are moderately showing initiative behaviors and taking

few innovative actions at work. On the basis of these results, the employees are perceived as individuals who confidently meet their duties and responsibilities at work; but they are not willing to take work initiatives very often, they rather maintain their usual work conditions.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the main research variables.

Construct	Mean	Standard Deviation	Maximum	Minimum
Power Distance	25.27	13.53	83.33	0.00
Altruism	75.02	17.50	100.00	10.00
Conscientiousness	75.40	16.92	100.00	15.00
Sportsmanship	72.39	23.08	100.00	0.00
Courtesy	77.23	18.03	100.00	10.00
Civic Virtue	60.43	18.81	100.00	0.00
Individual Task Proficiency	77.49	18.88	100.00	12.50
Individual Task Proactivity	68.89	22.50	100.00	0.00
Age	30.00	6.00	54.00	18.00
Sex	0.57			

Note. $n=251$. Descriptive statistics for age are shown in years. The mean value for sex represents the percentage of men within the sample.

The figure 1 shows the distribution of the power distance coefficient of variation (C_V), within the workgroups. In this case, every workgroup has its own power distance mean, so there are 51 power distance means. The C_V was calculated to measure how diverse was every workgroup regarding its power distance mean. The results show that almost a third of the workgroups have a C_V under 40%. Those workgroups are more homogenous regarding the power distance of their members. On the other hand, almost half of the workgroups have a C_V above 50%. It means that most of the workgroups are heterogeneous regarding the power distance of their members.

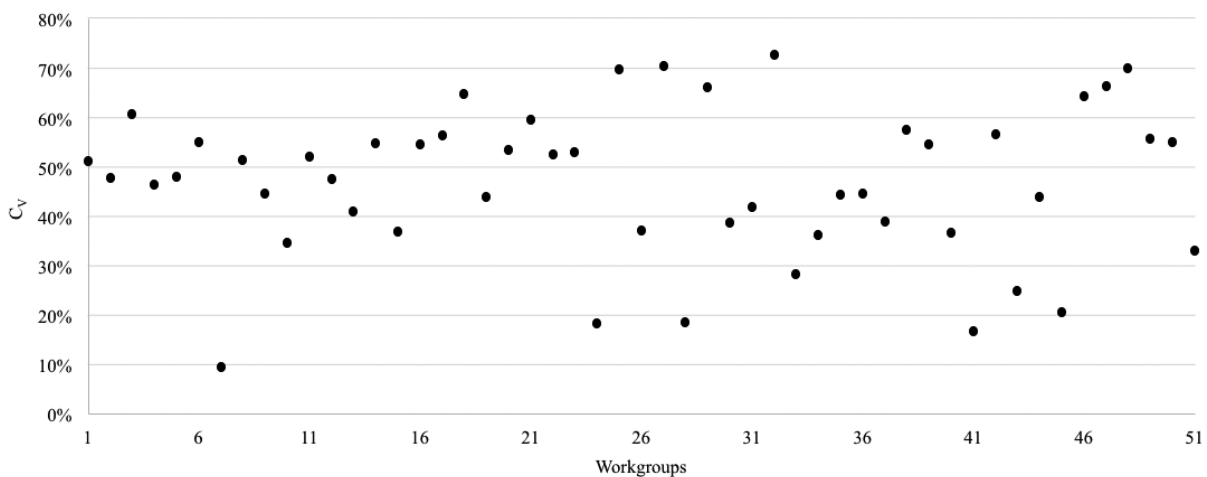


Figure 1. Coefficient of variation of the power distance in the workgroups. $n= 51$ workgroups comprising 443 employees.

The table 2 displays a multilevel regression analysis, which predicts the individual performance –based on OCB and work role performance– from the power distance cultural dimension and its diversity. The results show that power distance diversity is negatively correlated with altruism, civic virtue, individual task proficiency, and individual task productivity. This represents that when increasing by one the power distance standard deviation within a group, the employee’s altruism decreases by .76, the employee’s civic virtue decreases by 1.14, the employee’s individual task proficiency decreases by .99, and the employee’s individual task productivity decreases by 1.01.

Unfortunately, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, and courtesy did not show a significant correlation with power distance diversity within the workgroups. However, the coefficients for conscientiousness and courtesy showed the same negative value tendency as altruism and civic virtue. On the other hand, the sportsmanship’s coefficient was the only one that showed a positive value.

Additionally, the power distance of the employees showed a significant correlation with sportsmanship. As a result, when the power distance of an employee increases by one point, the sportsmanship decreases in .20.

It is worth to mention that the control variable of age showed a significant negative correlation with sportsmanship. When the age of the employees increases by one, the sportsmanship decreases by .71. Consequently, older employees will make more complaints when facing inconvenient situations.

Table 2. Multilevel Regression Analysis predicting the Individual Performance from Power Distance Diversity.

Parameter	Altruism	Conscientiousness	Courtesy	Sportsmanship	Civic Virtue	Individual Task Proficiency	Individual Task Proactivity
Fixed Effects							
Intercept	81.47** (8.14)	75.58** (7.95)	83.65** (8.74)	94.36** (10.52)	73.12** (8.97)	92.91** (8.86)	77.52** (10.42)
Men vs. Women	-.55 (2.19)	-2.24 (2.10)	-1.17 (2.10)	5.56 (2.82)	-3.00 (1.89)	-3.15 (2.29)	.74 (2.77)
Age	.05 (0.18)	.18 (.18)	-.05 (.18)	-.71** (.24)	.10 (.16)	-.05 (.19)	.15 (.23)
Power Distance	.06 (.08)	-.02 (.08)	-.04 (.08)	-.20* (.11)	-.03 (.07)	-.01 (.09)	-.04 (.10)
Power Distance Standard Deviation	-.76* (.43)	-.34 (.42)	-.26 (.51)	.06 (.55)	-1.14* (.57)	-.99** (.48)	-1.01* (.55)
Random Parameters							
Intercept	60.26* (23.89)	64.44* (22.85)	120.99* (34.70)	103.80* (38.48)	177.60* (44.17)	90.25* (31.34)	107.34* (40.09)
Residual	247.82* (24.92)	225.13* (22.47)	213.66* (21.49)	408.75* (40.72)	167.36* (16.86)	264.80* (26.73)	392.63* (39.44)

Note. Standard errors are in parentheses. vs. = versus. n=251.

** $p < .05$

* $p < .10$

Discussion

The research intended to analyze the effect of power distance diversity within workgroups on two dimensions of work role performance and the five dimensions of OCB.

Initially, the outcomes provided evidence to support the following hypotheses: Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 regarding work role performance, and Hypothesis 3 and Hypothesis 7 regarding OCB. These statements supported that power distance diversity can have a negative influence on the individual performance of the employees. This might be due to the fact that, when having different cultural characteristics the employees might confront their coworkers because those characteristics led the employees to demonstrate different opinions and points of view. Therefore, the following situations may happen: diverse workgroups might have more issues regarding communication and interaction among the members of the workgroups diverse workgroups can become more conflictive, employees possibly will feel out-of-place within the workgroup, and employees may show less commitment to the workgroup. In addition, the results only provided partial evidence to support Hypothesis 4, Hypothesis 5 and Hypothesis 6; thus, these hypotheses were rejected.

The results evidenced that the mean value for power distance was 9.73 points lower when comparing it to the Hofstede's Costa Rican power distance index of 1980. It is reasonable that the value has changed; and this may attend to the fact that societies are evolving to a context with more equal opportunities, where the individuals are becoming to perceive the others around as similar human beings, with the same rights and duties. Particularly for the organizational context, the power distance mean showed by the data reflects that the employees perceive that their opinions are asked by their bosses when decisions have to be made and there are no retaliations when disagreeing or challenging their bosses.

The previous fact might be related to the findings regarding individual task proactivity. Since employees are being asked to give opinions and points of view, the employees might be feeling more comfortable at work. Thus, they are developing some initiative and innovative actions and behaviors, which stood for the individual task proactivity dimension. In addition, employees are successfully showing behaviors that go beyond what the organization is expecting them to achieve, and they are also making extra efforts to encourage effectiveness within the organization. It may be possible that employees are perceiving that when giving their opinions and ideas, they are contributing to the company; consequently, they are performing above the required standard to contribute much more. In spite of that, employees do not leave behind their specific tasks, responsibilities, and duties; because based on the individual task proficiency dimension, they are mainly performing according to their work role.

Regarding the power distance diversity within workgroups. The results stated that workgroups' employees have different extents of power distance, this drove to the conclusion that workgroups are very diverse in terms of power distance. As a result, this confirms that organizations are forming more culturally diverse workgroups. However, the study suggested that homogenous workgroups are the ones highly performing within the organizations; because those workgroups are positively influencing the OCBs and the work role performance of the employees.

The results from the multilevel regression analysis allowed to state that when workgroups are more diverse regarding power distance, the employee's altruism, civic virtue, individual task proficiency, and individual task proactivity have a tendency to decrease. For instance, if employees decrease the presence or execution of these dimensions, these dimensions at the workgroup level will be probably reduced too. Concerning the sportsmanship dimension, the results indicated that the tolerance attitude that an employee demonstrates, when unpredicted circumstances occur within the workgroup, did not have a significant relationship with the variability of power distance within the workgroup. However, this dimension was negatively



correlated with the power distance of the employees. Thus, it might be possible that employees with a large power distance also have less tolerance for unpredicted circumstances. For example, since employees with a large power distance prefer not to argue, they might not accept it well when being asked to contradict or criticize their superiors, because this would represent an uncomfortable situation for them. Additionally, the control variable age had a negative effect on the employees' sportsmanship. This might attend to the fact that older employees do not make many faults or mistakes at work, due to their experience; thus, they do not react well when uncomfortable situations happen. Finally, on the basis of this regression analyses, it was possible to infer that within workgroups with more power distance diversity, the OCB and work role performance decrease; because the differences in power distance might cause disputes among the members of the workgroups.

Conclusion

The previous outcomes led to determine that power distance diversity, within workgroups, does have an effect on the individual performance of the employees under study. Particularly in this study, the effect of power distance diversity within workgroups lies on the reduction of the work role performance and the organizational citizenship behavior of the employees.

The most relevant findings, as support for some of the statements in the review of the literature, include the next three statements. First, workgroups were identified as heterogeneous, or very diverse, in terms of the power distance cultural dimension. Second, on the basis of this power distance diversity within the workgroups, the research found that such diversity influences in a negative way the performance of altruism and civic virtue, two dimensions of OCB. Third, the power distance diversity affects the employee's work role performance in a negative way. Therefore, it is possible to infer that power distance diversity within workgroups negatively influences employees' actions, behaviors, and outcomes, within the organizational that was analyzed.

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