

EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANISATIONAL IDENTIFICATION AND ORGANISATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR AMONG EMPLOYEES IN A UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY IN SOUTH AFRICA

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–Abstract–

Organisational identification is an important construct in organisational behaviour research since employees use it as a source of information about themselves to enhance their self-worth, while organisational citizenship behaviour continues to be of great interest among practitioners and academics in the workplace. The importance of organisational identification lies in its plausible effects on organisational citizenship behaviour. Drawing from a synthesis of the literature, this study seeks to establish a relationship between organisational identification and organisational citizenship behaviour, in a university of technology in South Africa. A quantitative research approach using a cross-sectional survey design and a post-positivist paradigm was applied in this study. Data were collected with the aid of a structured questionnaire and the results are based on 253 responses

obtained through a convenience sampling technique. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics, correlation and regression analyses. A correlation analysis indicated that organisational identification and organisational citizenship behaviour were significantly and positively related. In terms of practical significance, weak to moderate relationships were also revealed between the two constructs. Furthermore, multiple regression analyses revealed that a significant amount of unique variance in altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy and civic virtue could be accounted for by organisational identification. As a result, this study contributes to the extant literature as it demonstrated that the management of this institution could make use of organisational identification to prompt their employees to display organisational citizenship behaviours in the workplace successfully.

Key Words: Identification, Social categories, Altruism, Conscientiousness, Sportsmanship, Courtesy, Civic virtue

JEL Classification: J53, M12, M54

1. INTRODUCTION

The business environment today is increasingly challenged by technological advancements and global competition. In such dynamic situations, organisations search for ways to improve their employees' behaviours so that they may exhibit positive attitudes in the workplace. Dávila and García (2012) argue that the congruence between the people and the attributes of the organisation may have an impact on how people act and behave within the workplace. The authors add that this congruence occurs when the organisation is able to meet its employees' needs and/or when employees find similarities between their attributes and those of the organisation for which they work. In line with the arguments put forward above, Hayashi (2014) contends that organisational identification (OI) is the root construct in organisational phenomena since every organisation is an aggregation of individuals. Iqbal, Qasem and Anwar (2013) aptly encapsulate the definition of OI as the perception of oneness with an organisation, where an individual defines him/herself in terms of the organisation of which he/she is a member. Yildiz (2013) provides further affirmations that OI is a strong connection that reflects a psychological situation between an employee and a specific organisation. Gözükarar and Şimsek (2015) posit that employees with a high level of OI exhibit positive behaviours and attitudes towards their organisations. More specifically, they frequently display extra-role behaviours, help colleagues to solve work-related problems and contribute to maintaining a climate that fosters collaboration (Zappalà, Toscano & Licciardello, 2019). Accordingly, OI appears to be a

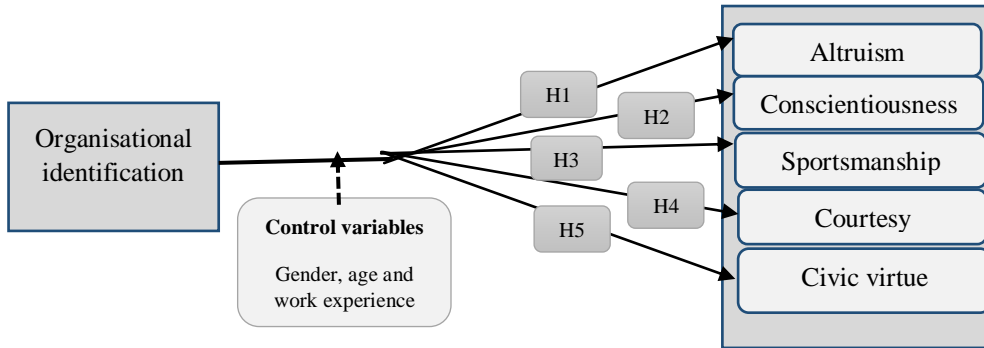
determinant variable that may explain many desirable employees' behaviours within organisations such as organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB).

Organisational citizenship behaviour is a type of behaviour that is not formally described in employees' job descriptions but is highly desired by organisations (Duarte, 2015). Vijayabanu, Govindarajan and Renganathan (2014) suggest that organisations need employees who are good citizens and are willing to extend their responsibilities to co-workers and employers. In the literature, it is argued that when employees exhibit OCB in the workplace, it can enhance an organisation's performance and increase its competitive advantage (Ahmed, Rasheed & Jehanzeb, 2012). Nguyen *et al.* (2016) assert that OCB is contagious since employees working in groups or around other colleagues who tend to exhibit OCB in a daily basis are more likely to start displaying OCB themselves.

Despite calls for studies to explain the dynamics of social identification in organisations, the construct of OI has not received much attention from researchers, especially in the organisational psychology field (Dávila & García, 2012). A lack of such focus has been a major shortcoming in this body of research, leading to suggestions that these areas are low-hanging fruits for future research (Tatachari, 2014). On the other hand, the concept of OCB continues to be of great interest among practitioners and academics (Nguyen, Chang, Rowley & Japutra, 2016) as it has received a fair amount of attention internationally. Of note, Bukhari (2008) observes that, to date, most of the research in the field of organisational behaviour was held in the geographical context of Western cultures. The author contends that in sub-continental countries, culture, environment, values and norms are different and need a separate study to make applicable HR practices. In view of this gap, a review of the literature on OCB alludes to the need for more research studies on the construct in sub-continental regions. Furthermore, the institution being surveyed is experiencing very low morale amongst staff, which might be due to a lack of identification with the institution (organisation) resulting in the absence of a display of OCB. The results of this study will shed more light on this situation and be of particular relevance to the management thereof.

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between OI and the five dimensions of OCB. A conceptual framework linking OI to the five dimensions of OCB is presented and these relationships are encapsulated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework illustrating probable relationship between organisational identification and organisational citizenship behaviour



Based on the conceptual framework (Figure 1), the following hypotheses are formulated:

- H1: Organisational identification has a significant effect on altruism.
- H2: Organisational identification has a significant effect on conscientiousness.
- H3: Organisational identification has a significant effect on sportsmanship.
- H4: Organisational identification has a significant effect on courtesy.
- H5: Organisational identification has a significant effect on civic virtue.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Organisational identification

The concept of OI is grounded in the Social Identity Theory (SIT) wherewith individuals classify themselves and others into various social categories, such as organisational membership, gender categories, race groups, age cohorts, or religious affiliations and view their membership in particular groups based on social roles (Jones & Volpe, 2010). Demir (2015) points out that people use group identification as sources of information about themselves and they may also use the group or organisation's status or social standards to enhance their self-worth (Demir, 2015). As a result, OI appears as a particular form of social identification in which individuals categorise themselves as members of an organisation (Miao, Eva, Newman & Schwarz, 2018). For Broomé, Ko and Rosander (2016), OI expresses employees' perceptions of their membership with the organisation and

view themselves as sharing the same attributes as those of the organisation for which they work for. Thus, through OI, employees merge their interests, goals and objectives with those of the organisation. Yung (2013) posits that employees can identify with different organisational groups, namely a workgroup or a team, or the organisation as a whole and these levels of identification are unlikely to be mutually exclusive. For Hameed, Roques and Arain (2013), identification is the level at which the self-conception of an individual has the same characteristics to that of the other identities with which he/she identifies him/herself. Identification describes cognitions, not the actual behaviours of individuals. However, these cognitions can ultimately influence the engagement of behaviours to reinforce perceptions of group membership (Cole, 2013). Hayashi (2014) considers that OI can be construed as having cognitive and affective dimensions. In order for an organisation to survive effectively and maintain its aims, OI is one critical concept (Yildiz, 2013). Moreover, it has a potential to account for many important attitudes and behaviours in organisations such as OCB.

2.2. Organisational citizenship behaviour

The Social Exchange Theory (SET), which conceptualises the relationship between employees and their organisation, has been cited widely as an explanation for why employees might act as good organisational citizens. It is stated that employees who receive positive treatment at work from their employers tend to reciprocate by contributing to the organisation's goals (Habeeb, 2019). Tamunomiebi and Onah (2019) assert that this theory was developed to enhance the understanding of human behaviours in its social endeavours. Vijayabanu *et al.* (2014) define OCB as an additional role behaviour, which is vital for organisations, but which is not defined officially and depends upon the organisational culture. This type of behaviour benefits organisations by improving teamwork effectiveness, efficiency and workplace climate (Nguyen *et al.*, 2016). Five OCB dimensions, namely altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy and civic virtue exist (Castellano, 2015). These behaviours have been grouped in two main categories: there are certain behaviours that benefit individuals (OCBI) and others that benefit the entire organisation (OCBO) (Pickford & Joy, 2016). Tambe and Shanker (2014) consider altruism as voluntary behaviours wherein an employee provides assistance to his/her colleague(s) with a particular task or problem under unusual circumstances. For Özdemir and Ergun (2015), courtesy simply means the inclination to consult with others and combine perspectives before taking actions. Tamunomiebi and Onah (2019) postulate that conscientiousness is the type of behaviour exhibited by an employee, which exceeds the minimum job requirements. Sportsmanship is the willingness of

employees to tolerate less-than-ideal organisational circumstances without complaining and blowing problems out of proportion (Yildirim, 2014). Civic virtue refers to an employee's constructive involvement in the political process of the organisation by freely and frankly expressing opinions, attending meetings, discussing with colleagues the issues concerning the organisation and reading the organisation's communications such as mails for the wellbeing of the organisation (Tambe & Shanker, 2014).

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1. Research approach

The study was located within a post-positivism research paradigm to ensure that the results could be quantified and are measurable. The methodology applied in this study was quantitative in nature and a cross-sectional survey design was carried out to gather information at a single point in time and to explore the relationships among the constructs. A descriptive study was undertaken in order to provide a basis for quantification of the variables of interest (IO and OCB). Closed-response questions and five-point Likert-scales were used to measure the variables.

3.2. Participants and sampling

The target population included employees working in a selected UoT in South Africa. More specifically, it comprised individuals, both male and female academic staff who were on contract or permanently employed by the institution. All the staff members working in the different faculties and departments were represented in this study (N=405); ranging from the junior lecturers and laboratory technicians (job grade level 9), lecturers (job level 8), senior lecturers (job grade level 7), associate professors (job grade level 6), academic heads of departments (HoDs) and professors (job grade level 5), to the executive deans (EDs) (job grade level 4). The study made use of a non-probability and convenience sampling techniques. A total of 253 employees participated in the study. There were more males (n=151; 59.9%) than females (n=101; 40.1%) in the sample. The majority of respondents were between 30 and 39 years of age (n =90; 35.7%) followed by those who were aged between 50 and 59 years (n = 40; 15.9 %). With regard to respondents' work experience in terms of years, the results indicated that respondents predominantly had work experience of more than 10 years (n = 111; 44.4%). With reference to highest qualifications attained, the majority of respondents had a Master's degree (n = 123; 48.8%). In terms of the jobs grades levels, level 8 (lecturers) was in the majority (n = 163; 64.7%).

3.3. Measuring instrument

A structured questionnaire as the data collection method was used in this study. The first section aimed at gathering information related to the personal information of the participants. It recorded respondent details grouped into five sub-categories related to the gender, age, highest qualification, work experience and job grade levels and made use of a multiple-choice format. The second section measured OI with a six-item scale developed by Mael and Ashforth (1992). The third section measured OCB and used the scale developed by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman and Fetter (1990).

3.4. Data analysis

For the data entry and analysis, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) programme, version 25.0, was used. To summarise a data set and to describe sample units and variables of interest numerically, descriptive statistics were used. To describe the degree and the direction of potential relationships among variables, Spearman's Rho correlation was used. To examine the predictive relationships between the two variables (OI and OCB), multiple regression analysis was performed.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Correlation analysis

Partial correlations were used. Partial correlation is a measure of the strength and direction of a linear relationship between two continuous variables whilst controlling for the effect of one or more other continuous variables (also known as control variables). By statistically removing the influence of the confounding variable, a clearer indication of the relationship between the study constructs could be observed (Pallant, 2010). The results of the partial correlations are reported in Table 1.

Table 1: Correlations among study constructs

Variables	Means	SD	Cronbach α	OI	ALT	CON	SPO	COU	CIV
OI	3.67	1.05	.881	1					
ALT	3.96	.611	.810	.454**	1				
CON	4.13	0.545	.779	.411**	.591**	1			
SPO	4.29	0.661	.817	.249**	.044	.269**	1		
COU	4.29	0.661	.919	.164**	.135**	.454**	.249**	1	
CIV	3.59	0.697	.759	.400**	.310**	.429**	.085	.202**	1

Corr. Coef: Correlation Coefficient; Sig: significant; ** Sig at $p < 0.05$; OI: Organisation identification; ALT= altruism; CON= conscientiousness; SPO= sportsmanship; COU=courtesy; CIV= civic virtue.

With reference to the correlations between OI and the five dimensions of OCB, it appears that the correlation coefficients were statistically significant, ranging from $r=.164$ to $r= 0.454$ at $p < 0.05$ level of significance, suggesting that there are positive linear associations of OI with the five dimensions of OCB. Thus, convergent validity was ascertained through these significant and positive correlations between OI and OCB. In terms of the effect sizes, the correlations showed small to medium effects in terms of practical significance. It is concluded that OI has a positive relationship with altruism ($r=0.454$; medium effect size), conscientiousness ($r=0.411$; medium effect size), sportsmanship ($r=0.249$; small effect), courtesy ($r=0.164$; small effect) and civic virtue ($r=0.400$; medium effect). These results are congruent with the findings of Bacaksiz, Tuna and Seren (2017), Demir (2015), Hameed *et al.* (2013) and Gümüő, Hamarat, olak and Duran (2012), which established a positive relationship between OI and OCB

4.2. Regression analysis

The study made use of hierarchical regression analysis to show if variables of interest explain a statistically significant amount of variance on the dependent variable after controlling for all other variables (confounding variables). The demographic variables, namely gender, age and work experience were entered as control variables. Thus, the three control variables were entered into each model one by one with each dependent variable of OCB (altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy and civic virtue). Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, homoscedasticity (i.e. probability plots lie reasonably straight diagonal line from left to right on the probability plot and scatter plots are within 3.3 and -3.3 range) and

multicollinearity (at least some relationships with the dependent variable >0.30). Examinations were conducted with a view to corroborate the assumptions of linear regression models along with collinearity diagnostics checks. First, the correlation matrix was examined for existence of multi co-linearity, namely if the predictor variables correlate too highly ($r > 0.9$) with each other (Pallant, 2010). None of the correlations in Table 2 reached a value of $r > 0.9$ hence the data was considered suitable for linear regression analysis. Pallant (2010) further suggests that if the variance inflation factor (VIF) is greater than 10 then the predictor variables are correlated among themselves; hence, collinearity is a cause for concern. In this case, the regression model was deemed appropriate for the data as the VIF values ranged between 1.022 and 1.666. Moreover, tolerance levels that fall below 0.1 indicate serious collinearity problems whereas those tolerance values that are below 0.2 may potentially cause collinearity problems. The tolerance statistics for the predictor variables ranged from 1.000 to 1.471 indicating that there was no collinearity within the data set. Five models 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 are reported in Table 2.

Table 2: Regression analysis with gender, age, work experience, organisational identification and organisational citizenship behaviour

Model 1 Dependent variable: ALT		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.	R ²	Adj R ²	Collinearity Statistics	
		Beta					Tol	VIF
1	(Constant)		10.798	.000	.209	.196		
	Gender	.074	1.249	.213			.906	1.103
	Age	.019	.265	.791			.600	1.666
	Work experience	-.022	-.305	.760			.601	1.665
	OI	.459	8.028	.000**			.978	1.022
Model 2 Dependent variable: CON		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.	R ²	Adj R ²	Collinearity Statistics	
		Beta					Tol	VIF
2	(Constant)		13.916	.000	.180	.167		
	Gender	-.025	-.412	.680			.906	1.103
	Age	.017	.225	.822			.600	1.666
	Work experience	.071	.952	.342			.601	1.665

	OI	.413	7.110	.000**			.978	1.022
Model 3 Dependent variable: SPO	Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.	R²	Adj R²	Collinearity Statistics		
	Beta					Tol	VIF	
3	(Constant)		9.894	.000	.091	.076		
	Gender	.128	2.020	.045**			.906	1.103
	Age	.194	2.477	.014**			.600	1.666
	Work experience	-.072	-.917	.360			.601	1.665
	OI	.247	4.042	.000**			.978	1.022
Model 4 Dependent variable: COU	Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.	R²	Adj R²	Collinearity Statistics		
	Beta					Tol	VIF	
4	(Constant)		12.990	.000	.032	.016		
	Gender	.024	.367	.714			.906	1.103
	Age	.080	.996	.320			.600	1.666
	Work Experience	-.062	-.772	.441			.601	1.665
	OI	.165	2.614	.009**			.978	1.022
Model 5 Dependent variable: CIV	Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.	R²	Adj R²	Collinearity Statistics		
	Beta					Tol	VIF	
5	(Constant)		9.815	.000	.192	.179		
	Gender	-.042	-.694	.489			.906	1.103
	Age	.067	.916	.361			.600	1.666
	Work experience	-.192	-2.600	.010**			.601	1.665
	OI	.396	6.863	.000**			.978	1.022

a). Dependent variable: ALT (Altruism), CON (Conscientiousness), SPO (Sportsmanship), COU (Courtesy) and CIV (Civic virtue).

b). Predictors: (Constant): OI (Organisational identification).

c) ** significant at p<0.05

In model 1, gender, age, work experience and OI were entered into the regression model as independent variables and altruism was entered into the model as the dependent variable. Gender, age and work experience showed no statistical significance with altruism ($t=1.249$, $p=0.21$, $p>0.05$; $t=0.265$, $p=0.79$, $p>0.05$; $t=-0.305$, $p=0.76$; $p>0.05$). However, when OI was added into the regression equation, it seemed to have a significant influence on altruism ($t=8.028$, $p=0.00$, $p<0.05$) after controlling for the selected demographic variables. Overall, the adjusted $R^2 = 0.196$ ($\beta=0.459$) indicates that approximately 20% of the variance in altruism could be accounted for by OI within the university. Hence, H1: Organisational identification has a significant effect on altruism, is accepted.

In model 2, the demographic variables (gender, age and work experience) were entered again as control variables, alongside OI as an independent variable, while conscientiousness was entered as the dependant variable. Gender, age and work experience showed no statistical significance with conscientiousness ($t=-0.412$, $p=0.68$, $p>0.05$; $t=0.225$, $p=0.82$, $p>0.05$; $t=-0.952$, $p=0.34$; $p>0.05$), respectively. When OI was added into the regression equation, it seemed to have a significant influence on conscientiousness ($t=7.110$, $p=0.00$, $p<0.05$) after controlling for the selected demographic variables. Overall, the adjusted $R^2 = 0.167$ ($\beta=0.413$) indicates that approximately 17% of the variance in conscientiousness could be accounted for by OI within the university. Hence, H2: Organisational identification has a significant effect on conscientiousness, is accepted.

In model 3, the demographic variables, namely gender, age and work experience were entered again as control variables, together with OI, while sportsmanship was entered as the dependant variable. Work experience showed no statistical significance with sportsmanship ($t=-0.917$, $p=0.68>0.05$). On the other hand, gender and age displayed a statistical significance with sportsmanship ($t=2.020$, $p=0.04<0.05$; $t=2.477$, $p=0.01<0.05$). Moreover, when OI was added into the regression equation, it seemed to have a significant influence on sportsmanship ($t=4.042$, $p=0.00<0.05$) after controlling for the selected demographic variables. Overall, the adjusted $R^2 = 0.076$ ($\beta=0.247$) indicates that approximately 8% of the variance in sportsmanship could be accounted for by OI and the selected demographic variables within the university. Hence, H3: Organisational identification has a significant effect on sportsmanship, is accepted.

In model 4, the demographic variables (gender, age and work experience) were entered again as control variables, along with OI as the independent variable, while courtesy was entered as the dependant variable. Gender, age and work experience showed no statistical significance with courtesy ($t=-0.367$,

$p=0.71>0.05$; $t=0.996$, $p=0.32>0.05$; $t=-0.772$, $p=0.44>0.05$), respectively. Nevertheless, when OI was added into the regression equation, it seemed to have a significant influence on courtesy ($t=2.614$, $p=0.00$, $p<0.05$) after controlling for the selected demographic variables. Overall, the adjusted $R^2 = 0.016$ ($\beta=0.165$) indicates that approximately 2% of the variance in courtesy could be accounted for by OI within the university. Hence, H4: Organisational identification has a significant effect on courtesy, is accepted.

In model 5, the demographic variables, namely gender, age and work experience were entered again as control variables, together with OI as the independent variable, while civic virtue was entered as the dependant variable. Gender and age showed no statistical significance with civic virtue ($t=-0.694$, $p=0.48>0.05$; $t=0.916$, $p=0.36>0.05$). On the other hand, work experience presented a statistical significance with civic virtue ($t=-2.600$, $p=0.01<0.05$). Furthermore, when OI was added into the regression equation, it seemed to have a significant influence on civic virtue ($t=6.863$, $p=0.00<0.05$) after controlling for the selected demographic variables. Overall, the adjusted $R^2 = 0.179$ ($\beta=0.396$) indicates that approximately 18% of the variance in civic virtue could be accounted for by OI and the selected demographic variable within the university. Hence, H5: Organisational identification has a significant effect on civic virtue, is accepted.

These results are synchronous with previous studies. For instance, Demir (2015) stressed that the motivation for OCB may stem from the internalisation of the organisation's norms, values and goals. In line with the argument put forward by Demir (2015), Wu, Liu, Kwong and Lee (2016) reiterate that individuals can view the organisation as part of their self-conceptions through social identification and thereby possess an intrinsic reason to perform citizenship behaviours in the workplace. Kumar and Singh (2012) provide further affirmations that employees may exhibit OCB once they identify with their organisation. Başar and Basim (2015) conclude that when an employee has a strong sense of identification with his/her organisation, s/he tends to perform above and beyond expectations (by displaying OCB) and stand up to adversities, such as economic recessions, financial troubles and mismanagement. Additionally, Oktug (2013) comments that employees with high levels of OI are more energised, exert more effort (OCB), allocate more time for their work and stay longer with the organisation.

5. CONCLUSION

This study lends further credence to previous studies as it confirms that employees are more prone to exhibit citizenship behaviours when they strongly identify with a specific organisation. Synchronous with the studies of He and Brown (2013) and

Johnson and Morgeson (2012), which demonstrated that OI is an important antecedent of OCB; this study established that OI is a strong predictor of altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy and/or civic virtue. Theoretically and empirically, the findings of this study aim to contribute to the extant literature by providing insights to foster OI and aid managers in establishing a positive work environment that allows employees to exhibit all types of citizenship behaviours.

This study had some limitations that should be considered for future studies. Since this study applied a cross-sectional survey, future research can be in the form of longitudinal studies in which the influence of OI on OCB is examined over an extended period of time. Another limitation was that only one UoT and two of its campuses among many were sampled and this could have affected, to some extent, the generalisation of the study. Future research studies may include more universities/ campuses or may be conducted in company settings/different industries in South Africa or in any other sub-continental country to ensure that the results are more generalisable.

The findings of the study are a valuable contribution to the field of management as a whole and more specifically to human resources. They may also be used by the management of the sampled institution to strengthen their employees' sense of identification with the organisation to encourage them to display OCB in the workplace.

It was reported that OI was positively related to altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, civic virtue and courtesy. Employees categorise themselves and others as members of specific organisations, which later drives them to behave in its best interests by acting as good organisational citizens. To stay tuned in the marketplace, managers must be aware that among the other existing drivers of OCB, OI is also considered as an additional driver. Keeping in mind the positive consequences associated with having employees who are willing to go the extra mile and beyond the call of duty, managers of institutions of higher education in South Africa are advised to foster OI within their institutions continuously.

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