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ANNUAL REVIEWS

Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior

Organizational Citizenship Behavior: Recent Trends and Developments

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Abstract

For decades, the accepted view in organizational psychology was that job satisfaction and job performance were unrelated. However, recent years have found increasing evidence that satisfaction, while not strongly related to task productivity by individuals, is more closely related to a different kind of contribution, which is referred to as organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Furthermore, research in the past two decades has enriched the theoretical and empirical knowledge base of OCB, examining its relationship to culture, attitudes, personality, mood state, stress, and organizational performance.

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INTRODUCTION

By the early 1970s, the broad consensus among industrial and organizational psychologists was that job satisfaction, although worthy of empirical scrutiny for some purposes, had little to do with the productivity of individuals or work groups. The more "tough-minded" stance held that productivity on the job derived from skills and technology and the contingency of rewards on the level of performance. Empirical studies of satisfaction and productivity (e.g., Brayfield & Crockett 1955, Cherrington et al. 1971, Lawler & Porter 1967) supported that view.

However, Gannon & Noon's (1971) survey of beliefs taken by practicing managers and labor union officials found that both groups agreed that job satisfaction was a significant factor in the productivity of employees. The title of their work is "Management's Critical Deficiency," referring to the lack of awareness of empirical generalizations from rigorous research on management and organizational behavior.

The opposing views of academic researchers and managers and union officials presented me with a "raspberry seed in my wisdom tooth," to borrow a phrase from "The Music Man." On the one hand, I had respect for the scholars and researchers who could not find empirical support for the satisfaction-causes-productivity belief. On the other hand, I also have respect for managers and union officials whose experience in the factories and shops gives them some basis for inferences about possible links between job attitudes and contributions.

I decided to think through various means by which the testimonies of scholars and practitioner views could be somewhat reconciled. I focused on the terms performance and productivity, wondering if one or the other might be usefully considered as multidimensional. Quantitative productivity, such as sales volume, tonnage of physical output, and quality of craftsmanship, would certainly factor into what most observers would call performance. A different type of performance would, I suspected, represent more discretionary forms of contributions, such as stellar attendance, helping a colleague resolve a work problem, maintaining a neat and organized workplace, going the extra mile to help a customer, and providing encouragement to new hires.

I put some of these notions into a paper and submitted it to the *Academy of Management Review*. The paper was accepted and published. I thought I had said my piece and effected some sense of closure in my own mind by reconciling, to an extent, the perspectives of scholars and laymen. I decided to include the paper in the course materials of a doctoral seminar I taught. I had no plans beyond that.

However, several doctoral students over the next few years wanted to test what I had written with some empirical work for their dissertations. Tom Bateman was the first of these students, developing measures of what he termed quantitative performance (akin to what we usually think of as productivity) and qualitative performance (which sought to capture much of what we have in mind as citizenship behavior). Clare Ann Smith followed Bateman with the development of an organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) measure that included the factor she referred to as altruism, which mainly included items pertaining to one-on-one support to coworkers and the supervisor, and a second factor—generalized compliance—including the more impersonal dimensions, such as punctuality, use of work time, adherence to rules about use of organizational property, materials, and work breaks. Looking back, I now think compliance has the ring of servitude or weakness, which I did not wish to convey. Fortunately, we are more likely these days to see it referred to as conscientiousness, impersonal OCB, or OCB-O (OCB in reference to the formal organization). Regrettably, Smith did not live long enough to see her work published or to complete the full body of the dissertation. Smith's time was short given cancer, and she asked if we (myself and dissertation co-chair Janet Near) would take her work to completion and publication, which we did (Smith et al. 1983).

Other doctoral students, among them Larry Williams, Chun Hui, Mary Konovsky, Julie McFall, and Katherine Ryan, followed with added contributions to what by then had become a substantial, coherent body of work. Of course, many other doctoral students at other programs have also made major contributions as well. But those at Indiana University during the 1980s and beyond had much to do with building the momentum of interest in the subject.

THE FORESHADOWING OF ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR IN EARLIER THEORIES OF ORGANIZATION

Some concepts similar to OCB can now be discerned in the thinking of theorists from the six decades or so preceding what we now refer to as OCB.

Chester Barnard (1938), in *The Functions of the Executive*, referred to so-called informal modes of cooperation that are not part of the formal bureaucratic structure. Roethlisberger & Dickson's (1939) account of the Hawthorne studies referred to sentiments that arise within the informal organization and often—although not invariably—contribute to the functioning of the formal system. Katz & Kahn (1966, 1978), in their conception of organizations as open systems, referred to spontaneous contributions not explicit in job descriptions or managerial directives.

For the past three decades, the concepts that have come into currency to represent the basic notions described above have been labeled OCB (again, organizational citizenship behavior) and contextual performance (or CP). OCB represents the informal modes of cooperation and contributions that participants render as a function of job satisfaction and perceived fairness. CP refers to the spontaneous gestures that people offer toward sustaining a constructive interpersonal climate for group problem-solving and creativity. The concept, and much, if not most, of the research pertaining to it, took the path of demonstrating that CP, rather than productivity, was the dimension of performance in which personality had its effects. Of particular interest was the hypothesized connection between the traits delineated by the so-called Big Five dimensions of extraversion/introversion: emotional stability, conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness to experience (or intellectance), and CP (McCrae & Costa 1987).

Both streams of research began with the acknowledgment from a substantial body of evidence that measures of neither job satisfaction nor personality bore strong relationships with formal, valid measures of in-role productivity and effectiveness. Rather, satisfaction and personality found their expression and value in job behaviors that arose, and were sustained by, a sense of citizenship in the organization, or by personality traits and temperaments that facilitated efforts to shape a healthy and productive context in the work group.

The following discussion concentrates mainly on OCB, rather than CP. This in no way implies a lesser contribution of the work on CP. Rather, the two streams of contributions come from different approaches, methods, styles, and points of emphasis. Also, the reader will doubtless find other good sources for reviews of recent work on CP. The two respective streams of published work do overlap in terms of contributions to both theory and application, but each represents a distinctive paradigm.

Another construct that overlaps with OCB is prosocial behavior (Krebs 1970, Cialdini & Kenrick 1976, Cohen 1980), which is defined as "voluntary behavior intended to benefit another." The benefit in question could take the form of a monetary contribution, help with a task, providing physical care and comfort, offering information to a person who needs to make an important decision, as well as behaving according to general or abstract principles usually assumed to represent virtues in the collective order. In brief, prosocial behavior includes just about any act that, if practiced regularly by most, would promote a healthier and less stressful society.

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Much of the early conceptual and empirical work on prosocial behavior focused on the situational and personal factors that make someone more likely to behave in a prosocial manner. Although space does not permit a full account of those personal factors, they include a state of positive affect experienced when something good has happened to the individual—for example, learning that one has been promoted at work, won a lottery, made the Dean's list—when the person experiences a state of empathic arousal triggered by awareness of the needs of another person or group, or because of certain personality traits that predispose the individual to sensitivity toward others' needs. In other words, the nature, causes, and effects of prosocial behavior sound much like what I described above of OCB and CP. Indeed, another term used to describe OCB is prosocial organizational behavior (POB; Brief & Motowidlo 1986).

The most telling distinctions among and between the three constructs—POB, OCB, and CP—pertain to the breadth of their respective domains. Prosocial behavior obviously is the broadest of the three constructs; it seems open-ended in terms of the context and target. OCB pertains to the workplace environment. CP overlaps with OCB, but research on CP, as well as its apparent applications, appears to focus mainly on problem-solving groups or workplace teams. In that sense, CP stands out as representing a more bounded focus than does OCB. Thus, contributions that inhere in OCB or CP would qualify as prosocial behavior, but a vast domain of prosocial behavior would not have relevance to OCB or CP. For example, someone who votes in an election or helps a stranded motorist qualifies as having behaved prosocially, but we would not think of that as OCB or CP. Although we would regard superlative attendance on the job or rigorous adherence to workplace rules as OCB, it is less obvious that it should count as CP.

CP and OCB share a considerable portion of subject matter, however, with the major distinction in research between them being the somewhat greater emphasis thus far by CP theorists and researchers on personality factors as predictors as opposed to the OCB emphasis on job satisfaction.

Thus, although my focus here is on OCB, much of the commentary could draw from, as well as apply to, CP and prosocial behavior, and the reverse might be said as well. The reader will have no difficulty finding reviews and discussions of the voluminous published work on prosocial behavior. Here, I concentrate on what has been contributed to the OCB literature in the past approximately two decades, with occasional references to CP where appropriate.

ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR: 1983–2005

This could be regarded as the "breakout" period in which preliminary conceptualizations, measures, criteria, and contexts were explored, in both theory and methodology. Both OCB and CP arose from the sense that they "just had to count for something." For OCB, it had been suggested (Organ 1977) that the documented layman's belief that "satisfaction causes productivity," despite the dearth of research evidence to support that notion, might meet with more supportive evidence if the effects of satisfaction were sought in such forms as helping coworkers, stellar attendance, showing new hires "the ropes," and other such spontaneous forms of cooperation.

As noted earlier, empirical studies of OCB in the late 1970s and 1980s were initiated by doctoral dissertations, which consistently found that factor analyses of the various measures of OCB broke down into two factors—one, OCB-I, representing OCB rendered to an individual, colleague, or coworker, and another, OCB-O, a more general mode of conscientiousness with respect to the supervisor or the larger organization.

Also during this period, voice was added to the set of criteria included in measures of OCB, and we note below the prominence of this dependent variable in studies published in recent years. In retrospect, I confess to mixed feelings about that development. Jill Graham suggested that a particular type of organization—the covenantal organization—would require as well as foster

substantial amounts of OCB—including voice. In that context, adding that dimension of OCB made sense. Perhaps some smaller firms (somehow I think of Ben & Jerry's) and nonprofit groups would have covenantal properties.

However, my sense is that not very many industrial and economic organizations, especially those of substantial size, even pretend to have a covenantal character. I wondered if voice in "those" organizations might consist largely of complaints, expressions of dissatisfaction, and criticisms. Indeed, Maynes & Podsakoff (2014) found that voice took varied forms, including not only constructive feedback and suggestions, but also some that were self-serving, expressions of dissatisfaction, and criticisms of colleagues. Another important development that began during this era was testing the proposition that organization-wide OCB was a predictor of organizational performance, as defined by financial and efficiency measures.

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ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR: 2005–2016

Culture and Organizational Citizenship Behavior

J.L. Farh et al. (1997, 2002, 2004) initiated an ongoing program of research on OCB in the People's Republic of China (PRC), where the culture is generally regarded as distinctly different from that of the United States. Farh et al. developed a different measure of OCB from that typically used in the United States in order to capture the types of OCB—for example, self-development of relevant job skills, voluntary involvement in the larger community—that are viewed by management as virtuous behavior in PRC firms. The PRC continues to represent the most intensely studied venue for insights into cultural variations on the nature and correlates of OCB.

By the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, there were a sufficient number of studies (across 23 countries) to provide the basis for a meta-analysis of leader–member exchange and OCB (Rockstuhl et al. 2012). The results of this study indicate that perceptions of fairness, job satisfaction, turnover intention, and leader–member exchange are more closely linked in horizontal-individualistic cultures than in vertical-collectivist cultures. In societies characterized by steep power differences and an emphasis on the group as a whole rather than the individual, much of what we have regarded as OCB has a peer-group and hierarchical flavor.

We might soon see meta-analytic studies testing the strength and generalizability of connections between OCB and other factors, as well as the utility of moderator variables.

Another study, by Lam et al. (2015), based on 244 Chinese subjects, found the relationship between job insecurity and OCB to be curvilinear, and this connection was most pronounced among those with "guanxi"—a relationship the authors define as "good connections" or "reciprocal obligations and assurances" between subordinates and superiors. The zero-order correlation between OCB and guanxi was 0.38. Whether guanxi is the basis for OCB or OCB generates the guanxi in the dyadic relationships is not determinable from cross-sectional data. A time-lagged study of the two factors might provide some glimpse into the causal relationship between them.

Focused Research on Specific Forms of Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Although most of the early research on OCB was framed with the collective set of OCB dimensions, recently we have seen much attention focused on one of those dimensions: voice. Curiously, as noted above, that dimension was not mentioned in the original conceptual scheme. However, the idea does resonate in Katz & Kahn's (1978) description of spontaneous contributions, such as conveying positive aspects of the organization to people and agencies in the external environment and providing feedback to leaders of the organization about issues and potential problems within and outside the organization. The tone of some of the early discussions of OCB in the form

of voice seemed to imply challenge or even blowback, something that might resemble venting, griping, or, more generally, dissatisfaction.

In recent years, it appears that there is more attention paid to voice than to any other single dimension of the OCB framework. A major conceptual and empirical contribution to the voice literature, as noted above, appeared in Maynes & Podsakoff's (2014) study. They noted that voice could take various forms, not just as negative feedback or "challenge to what is," but also in supportive, defensive, or even destructive veins. They designed four five-item measures to capture different forms of voice and found that personality factors in the Big Five framework (McCrae & Costa 1987) differentially predicted specific patterns and breakdowns of the four types of voice.

Organizational Citizenship Behavior and Organizational Effectiveness

The early empirical work on OCB was cast at the level of the individual, seeking to document the effect of job satisfaction and/or perceived fairness on the individual's level of OCB. The assumption underlying these studies was that the total volume of OCB in the work force would have a relationship to the effectiveness of the organization as a whole. In other words, the greater the proportion of organization members who helped their colleagues and mentored new hires, went well beyond the merely acceptable levels of attendance and punctuality, and took pains to protect organizational assets, the more likely that the firm would experience greater operating efficiency, superior productivity, higher customer satisfaction, and better financial results, as compared to firms within which OCB occurred with less frequency and breadth across the work force. The rationale for this hypothesis was that OCB on the collective level served to provide additional resources (such as time, effort, knowledge) and it economized on resources already available, reduced turnover, and retained customers.

Putting such an assertion to empirical test, early studies (e.g., Walz & Niehoff 2000, Koys 2001) examined quasi-autonomous organizations that were members of larger chain-type firms. This research strategy enabled them to look at average levels of OCB within each unit and match that with the performance criteria of each single unit, while also providing a large enough sample size to provide at least a modest level of statistical power. Evidence from both studies supported the notion that unit-wide OCB was associated with better performance criteria.

As noted earlier, the volume of research literature has reached the point at which meta-analytic tools can be used to address the confidence with which OCB correlates can be inferred. Such is the case now, even with OCB relationships at the organizational level. Podsakoff et al. (2009) conducted such an analysis and found substantial reason to believe that the connection between OCB and individual outcomes, such as higher ratings in performance appraisals and rewards in the form of pay and promotion, were accompanied by correlations between organization-wide OCB and organizational performance criteria. Moreover, these connections were stronger when the individual- and firm-level performance measures were time-lagged from the OCB measures—suggesting that the causal effect of OCB on firm criteria was stronger than the effect of outcomes on OCB.

Another study (Edmons 2012) is pertinent to the macro relationship between OCB and firm performance, even though OCB is not mentioned therein. Edmons, a professor of finance at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania and Faculty Research Fellow at the National Bureau of Economic Research, examined data from the January issues of *Fortune* magazine each year from 1984 to 2011. These issues presented the lists of the "100 Best Companies to Work For in America." The rankings are based on a "Trust Index" survey of employees' ratings of "credibility, respect, and fairness" attributed to their employer. Edmons found that the 100 Best Companies to Work For generated 2.3 to 3.8% higher stock returns than their peers during the 28-year study.

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Obviously, there is an alternate explanation of this finding. These firms, because they made good products, rendered competent service, and had sound strategies, could generate a strong influx of revenue, and thus could provide resources for employees that generated high levels of satisfaction with the company. Nonetheless, the finding is at least consistent with a causal chain that job satisfaction—reflecting fairness of treatment, respect, and attribution of credibility on the part of top management—drives OCB, which in turn contributes to organizational performance.

Job Satisfaction Versus Personality

As noted above, the stream of early research under the rubric of OCB regarded it as the form of performance—as opposed to productivity—that resulted from job satisfaction. Meanwhile, the program of research on CP—a construct having much in common with OCB—supported the view that personality (as defined and measured in terms of the Big Five framework) predicted contributions in the form of CP rather than productivity or in-role performance. In other words, personality dimensions such as agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability were positive factors in the creation and maintenance of favorable contexts, especially within groups that had to work together on projects, problem-solving, and work strategies. Research supported this argument.

One could argue that personality has a nontrivial connection to job satisfaction, especially with respect to the three personality dimensions noted above. An early meta-analysis (Organ & Ryan 1995) based on 28 studies found stronger connections between job satisfaction and OCB than between the Big Five dimensions and OCB, although the conscientiousness factor in the Big Five model had a significantly positive relationship with the OCB factor of the same name.

A more recent meta-analysis (Chiaburu et al. 2011), based on a much larger set of studies (87 samples), found that emotional stability, extraversion, and openness accounted for incremental validity beyond the variance explained by job satisfaction.

In the near future, we can expect to see additional research on this issue. Disentangling the causal connections among personality, job satisfaction, and OCB poses a major challenge, because some of the Big Five factors imply the kinds of behaviors that we associate with conscientiousness and helpfulness to others.

The Justice Motif

Once the idea of job satisfaction as a determinant of OCB took hold, the question was raised as to what factors "within" or "reflected by" measures of job satisfaction accounted for the correlation between those measures and OCB. In particular, does the correlation arise from affective states, or from cognitions or beliefs about the workplace environment? If the latter is the case, are the relevant cognitions mainly about the fairness of work? Organ & Konovsky (1989) asked subjects to indicate their typical mood state while at work and rated the fairness of pay and other aspects of their work experiences, while supervisors rated the subjects' level of OCB. The results indicated that cognitions or beliefs about fairness accounted for more unique variance in OCB than did mood state.

However, a more recent meta-analysis (Colquitt et al. 2013), based on 493 independent samples, found evidence that beliefs about distributive justice and procedural justice were significantly related to OCB, but some of that effect was mediated by positive and negative affect states. Procedural justice had a direct effect on OCB as well as a mediated effect. The same pattern was observed with respect to informational justice. The combined effects were greater for OCB than for task performance. To the extent that beliefs about fairness lead to satisfaction, which in turn leads to OCB, beliefs obviously matter. Moreover, other kinds of beliefs, based on seeing managers and coworkers display various forms of OCB (Masterson 2011, Yaffee & Kark 2011), might be important.

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We should, however, exercise caution in contemplating models of OCB that take the form of moderated and/or mediated causal structures. Kenny (2008) strongly supports the contributions that mediated and moderated (Kenny prefers the term interactive to moderated) causal models can provide when we pose questions about phenomena that do not ordinarily allow for experimental manipulation, and many, if not most, of the important questions that we raise about human behavior in organizations seldom provide the luxury of practicable manipulations. The reader is well advised to consult his paper for further consideration in this area.

What is the "Downside" of Organizational Citizenship Behavior?

Although much can be said in favor of OCB as a contributor to more salubrious organizational climates and more efficacious organizational practices and outcomes, as well as redounding to the benefits of those individuals who practice it (see Podsakoff et al. 2011), some observers have raised the issue of whether there might be some offsetting unfortunate effects.

Aguinis (2013) has noted that too often we take positive correlations between some variable, *X*, that managers can initiate, and some desired outcome, *Y*, that managers hope to improve upon, as support for increasing, expanding, and intensifying what they would like to do with *X*. However, Aguinis provides several examples in which firms, encouraged by early evidence, took pet projects to extremes, apparently assuming that more of *X* is better, only to find they have done "too much of a good thing" (TMGT).

The problem with extrapolating early encouraging results from positive correlations is that we often do not know how to interpret the range of variation captured by the measures used. Frequently those measures are rating scales, such as five-point or seven-point ranges, and even then those responses are often skewed to one end or the other.

With respect to the concern about OCB becoming TMGT, we should pose the question of whether the effort and time involved in OCB might, at some level, come at the expense of core job performance and productivity, or the cultivation of more skill and craftsmanship on the job. Whether this is due to a particular personality trait or perhaps because some OCB directed toward colleagues is in some sense more interesting than some in-role tasks, the eventual effect might lead to negligence in core job duties, with resultant lower productivity and consequent effects on pay, promotion, and some perquisites.

Early in the development of the OCB literature, Morrison (1994) suggested that OCB could be regarded as part of an expanded role definition by the individual, i.e., "stretching" the conception of the formal role to include much of what might otherwise be more discretionary contributions. Alternatively, perhaps given the passage of time in performing the job, incidents of "extra" efforts in the form of OCB come to represent "precedents" of a sort—what one had done one is expected by others to continue doing.

At some point, the effort to maintain a satisfactory or superior level of effectiveness in core job functions, while continuing to be the "go-to" supplier of assistance and support, could create undue job stress on the individual, with fallout not only on work satisfaction, but also with respect to the quality of family relationships.

Recent studies using a time-sampling method—e.g., having subjects rate their levels of OCB at multiple intervals over a period of weeks—indicate that the variation in reported occasions of OCB reveals about as much variation within individuals as it does across persons (Dalal et al. 2009). Conceivably the periods of drop-off in OCB occur as a function of fatigue or the need to catch up on core job duties. Trougakos et al. (2015), also using time-sampling methodology, found substantial within-person variation in OCB, and also attributed this to fatigue. Bolino

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et al. (2015) concluded that fatigue from high levels of OCB depended on the levels of perceived organizational support, quality of team–member exchange and the pressure exerted for OCB.

On a more encouraging note, Rapp et al. (2013) found that time management skills help individuals cope with the combined demands of in-role, core job requirements plus the accretion of expectations related to OCB.

Bolino (1999) had suggested that OCB in some contexts and instances might be intended as a form of ingratiation and "impression management," practiced by "good actors" rather than "good soldiers." One would imagine that those for whom OCB is a strategy for ingratiation would exhibit some degree of selectivity in just how and when the good actors would ply their trade—e.g., engaging in OCB when the supervisor would witness or learn of it. Peers who interact most frequently with such good actors would perhaps render more valid opinions about the OCB of those good actors.

Ten years later, Grant & Mayer (2009) found evidence from two field studies that some individuals qualify as both good soldiers and good actors. However, they concluded that only those who were good soldiers were likely to engage in voice as a form of OCB, because voice can sometimes be regarded as a challenging form of OCB, and therefore often not the most likely manner in which to curry favor.

Finally, Yam et al. (2017) report findings indicating that as some individuals increase the time and effort they expend in some forms of OCB, especially when under pressure from supervision, they tend also to feel a sense of entitlement, perhaps reasoning that they have something like credits that allow them to violate some rules and regulations without worrying about sanctions.

The "Good Citizen" as Identity

For the most part, theory and research have examined OCB over brief, short-run periods of time. The relatively few studies that used a longitudinal design have been done over a few months, mainly to sort out patterns of causality—e.g., whether earlier satisfaction predicts later OCB, or vice versa; does present OCB predict later organizational performance or the other way around?

Methot et al. (2017) cite research indicating that individuals actively process information based on what they know and experience about themselves and how coworkers and supervisors seem to regard them. Those who proactively contribute in the form of OCB come to be identified as good soldiers, and such models of OCB come to think of themselves in the same light. Such an attribution might persist for long periods, but it could also happen that such good soldiers might come to regard such an identity as a burden, particularly if they have the experience that such a role leads to overload, but no long-term benefits or collegial respect.

We might well anticipate that more studies will look at the causes and effects of changes in the identities that individuals attribute to themselves with respect to OCB.

What Directions Will Organizational Citizenship Behavior Take in the Near Future?

We might well expect to see more published empirical studies based in non–North American workplaces. Doctoral programs in organizational and industrial psychology in the United States currently witness a growing stream of students from Europe, Asia, and South America. Many of these doctoral candidates have become interested in testing the generalizability of current OCB notions to the workplaces of their native lands and cultures. Among the questions they might pose are the following: Are there important dimensions of OCB in their organizations that do not seem accounted for in the measures most often used in North American studies? Is OCB more or

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less related to organizational effectiveness in specific cultures other than in the United States? Is OCB best understood as a group rather than an individual phenomenon? Do the correlates and antecedents of OCB—job satisfaction, perceived fairness, personality dimensions—most frequently found in Western countries matter nearly as much in Asian and European settings?

Alternative Conceptual Frameworks

Thus far, the major heuristic frameworks that have guided OCB research are job satisfaction, workplace justice, and personality. What conceptual frameworks from other disciplines, whatever their origins, might add more generality and explain more variance than those currently in use? For example, some (Husted & Folger 2004, Organ et al. 2006) have suggested that transaction cost analysis (Williamson 1975, 1993), a model of economic organization, contains much that could inform the way we think about OCB, as well as contribute to how OCB fits within such a framework. Others find much to appreciate in theories of social exchange (e.g., Blau 1964, Homans 1961).

Methodology

We might do well to encourage more studies using time-sampling studies such as those described above. That approach could perhaps tell us something about characteristic curves of OCB among individuals over time. For example, over periods of time, do some individuals maintain a generally high level of OCB, despite occasional lapses? Does the form or manner of OCB change with job tenure? Do individuals come to specialize in the form of OCB that they render?

One type of methodology we certainly do NOT need more of is the variety that we refer to as same time, same source, self-report measures. I refer here to studies in which individuals report their impressions about their work environment and also their levels of OCB contributions. The problem with such studies is that the response bias of the individuals can lead to artificial correlations in their response patterns. We are long past the time when we could expect these types of studies to contribute much to knowledge of how the organizational environment affects member behavior.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The author is not aware of any affiliations, memberships, funding, or financial holdings that might be perceived as affecting the objectivity of this review.

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Contents

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