

Rethinking Organizational Citizenship Behavior: Challenges, Critiques, and Ethical Frontiers

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Abstract

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) is a crucial component of organizational behavior. This concerns the extra effort employees put forth outside their designated job duties. This study investigates OCB by analyzing its intricacies, difficulties, and perspectives. It aims to promote discussions and contribute significantly to advancing practice and research. The literature describes OCB as a complex concept involving voluntary activities, including assisting coworkers, contributing ideas, and enhancing the workplace. Studies prove its benefits in numerous aspects. It improves teamwork, employee happiness, and efficiency while reducing turnover. As a result, this nurtures a favorable organizational atmosphere and enhances employee welfare. This study explored the benefits and challenges of OCB. It highlights the lack of clarity in defining and categorizing OCB, the possible negative consequences of providing incentives, and the dangers of employee exhaustion. This necessitates re-evaluating the understanding, evaluation, and moral decisions of OCB. Further investigation into OCB should consider the influence of cultural variances, individual motivations, and contextual elements on both OCB and the overall welfare of employees. Future studies should investigate the impact of organizational culture, leadership approaches, and industry factors on OCB and the overall welfare of employees.

Keywords: Organizational Citizenship Behavior, Well-being, Incentivization, Dark Side of OCB, Burnout

Örgütsel Vatandaşlık Davranışını Yeniden Düşünmek: Zorluklar, Eleştiriler ve Etik Sınırlar

Öz

Örgütsel Vatandaşlık Davranışı (ÖVD), örgütsel davranışın önemli bir bileşenidir ve çalışanların belirlenen iş görevleri dışında gösterdikleri ekstra çabaları kapsar. Bu araştırma, ÖVD'nin karmaşıklıklarını, zorluklarını ve farklı bakış açılarını analiz ederek tartışmaları teşvik etmeyi ve uygulama ile araştırmaların ilerlemesine önemli ölçüde katkıda bulunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Literatürde, ÖVD, iş arkadaşlarına yardım etmek, fikirlere katkıda bulunmak ve işyerini geliştirmek gibi gönüllü faaliyetleri içeren karmaşık bir kavram olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Çalışmalar, ÖVD'nin birçok açıdan faydalı olduğunu göstermektedir. ÖVD, ekip çalışmasını, çalışan mutluluğunu ve verimliliği artırırken çalışan devrini azaltır. Sonuç olarak, bu durum olumlu bir örgütsel atmosferi besler ve çalışanların refahını artırır. Bu çalışma, ÖVD'nin faydalarını, zorluklarını, tanımlanması ve kategorize edilmesindeki netlik eksikliğini, teşvik sağlamanın olası olumsuz sonuçlarını ve çalışanların tükenmesinin tehlikelerini vurgulamaktadır. Bu durum ÖVD kavramının anlayış ve ahlaki açıdan yeniden değerlendirilmesini gerektirmektedir. Gelecekteki çalışmalarda, kültürel farklılıkların, bireysel motivasyonların ve bağlamsal unsurların hem ÖVD hem de çalışanların genel refahı üzerindeki etkisi dikkate alınmalıdır. Ayrıca, örgüt kültürünün, liderlik yaklaşımlarının ve sektör faktörlerinin ÖVD ve çalışanların genel refahı üzerindeki etkisi de araştırılmalıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Örgütsel Vatandaşlık Davranışı, İyilik hali, Teşvik, ÖVD'nin Karanlık Yüzü, Tükenmişlik

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1. Introduction

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) is the term used to describe voluntary actions exhibited by employees in the workplace (Jahangir et al., 2004). These behaviors include a range of actions beyond formal job requirements. These activities, such as supporting coworkers, engaging in social engagement, and enhancing an organization's productivity, are crucial (Zabel & Baltes, 2015). OCB has attracted much interest in organizational behavior, primarily due to its notable impact on workplace dynamics.

Although OCB has received recognition for its beneficial impact on work settings, organizational performance, and employee contentment (Bolino et al., 2002; Hamid et al., 2022; Organ, 1988; Organ et al., 2006), it is crucial to conduct a comprehensive analysis of this widely embraced notion. Performing a comprehensive examination to recognize possible constraints, difficulties, and prospects for future advancement is crucial.

OCB is significant in organizational behavior as it provides a valuable understanding of workplace conduct beyond formal job responsibilities. Organizations can optimize their potential by thoroughly examining the underlying elements, results, and intricacies of OCB. Simultaneously, researchers can improve their understanding of employee involvement and the dynamics of the workplace.

This research offers a thorough analysis of OCB, delving into its intricacies and tackling the difficulties and uncertainties linked to this notion. Moreover, our objective is to promote the practice of thoughtful examination and assessment of established conventions and viewpoints to foster intellectual conversation within the field. We aim to investigate alternative paths to improve our understanding of OCB and its significance in contemporary business environments and inspire innovative paths for future scholarly investigations.

In the forthcoming sections, we will commence on this exploratory voyage. Our inquiry commences with a thorough analysis of current scholarly publications on OCB. This involves a comprehensive examination of its various conceptualizations and widely recognized viewpoints. In the upcoming conversation, we will explore the critiques and obstacles surrounding the concept and the possible drawbacks of promoting OCB. Our discourse encourages thought-provoking perspectives and promotes discussions that challenge and critique common norms. In summary, we will synthesize our findings, evaluate their implications for scholarly inquiry and practical applications, and determine research-friendly domains. This study aimed to provide a nuanced understanding of the

complex nature of OCB without diminishing its significance. It seeks to shed light on OCB for organizations and academics.

2. Literature Review

To fully understand OCB, we must explore the extensive scholarly literature shaping and defining this concept. OCB, or organizational citizenship behavior, has long been a central focus of organizational behavior research. Organizational behavior research is constantly evolving and progressing, reflecting its dynamic nature.

OCB refers to employees' voluntary actions within an organizational context (Khan & Khan, 2022). These behaviors extend beyond formal job descriptions and encompass helping colleagues, providing constructive suggestions, willingly taking on extra work, and actively participating in activities that foster a positive organizational atmosphere (Atan et al., 2022). Over time, researchers have made significant progress in understanding and explaining the different aspects and definitions of OCB. Altruism, courtesy, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, and civic virtue are dimensions identified in the literature (Organ, 1988; Organ & Ryan, 1995; Podsakoff et al., 1990; Smith et al., 1983). These dimensions encompass different OCB-related behaviors.

The significance of OCB in organizational behavior cannot be sufficiently emphasized. Numerous studies have identified the relationship between the application of this phenomenon and diverse favorable results. These factors include enhanced collaboration (Foote et al., 2008; Wulandari & Mila, 2023), heightened contentment with work (Fatimah et al., 2011; Lestari & Ghaby, 2018), improved job performance (Albloush et al., 2020; Basu et al., 2017), and reduced employee turnover (Chen et al., 1998; Coyne & Ong, 2007). OCB has been found to positively affect a company's overall health (Davila & Finkelstein, 2013; Eisele & D'Amato, 2011). Since Smith et al. (1983), many well-regarded viewpoints have arisen in the literature. These viewpoints highlight the importance of OCB as a driver of organizational achievement and the requirement for organizations to foster an environment that encourages and supports these actions. In organizational management, OCB is widely recognized as crucial for success. Numerous studies have consistently shown the considerable advantages of OCB, including higher employee involvement, improved team unity, and overall company effectiveness (Albloush et al., 2020; Basu et al., 2017; Foote et al., 2008; Wulandari & Mila, 2023). However, increasing academic research questions the traditional interpretation of OCB. The upcoming sections will explore essential and stimulating viewpoints that shed light on OCB's restrictions, uncertainties, and possible

drawbacks. Through a thorough examination of these viewpoints, we aimed to present a more intricate understanding of OCB, thereby promoting a comprehensive analysis of its importance in present-day enterprises.

3. Challenges and Critiques of OCB

Although OCB has been recognized for its beneficial impact on organizational performance (Albloush et al., 2020; Basu et al., 2017; Foote et al., 2008; Wulandari & Mila, 2023), it is not impervious to challenges and criticism. Upon deeper analysis, it became evident that the concept, previously perceived as a universal remedy for improving the workplace, is complex and demands thoughtful deliberation.

3.1. The Ambiguity Around Definition and Classification

The lack of clarity exhibited by OCB is a significant issue. The interpretation of criteria and categories related to OCB is inherently subjective, potentially resulting in variations in research findings. The conceptualization of OCB varies across organizations. The existence of ambiguity poses challenges for identifying and quantifying OCB (Campbell Pickford & Joy, 2016). Podsakoff et al. (2000) shed light on the uncertainty surrounding the differentiation of OCBs from in-role behaviors as they delve into the disputes and challenges associated with this distinction. The authors observed that employees and supervisors have difficulties in discerning this differentiation, indicating that the definition and classification of these behaviors are ambiguous. Furthermore, the complexity of the issue is implicitly highlighted by the need for a more precise methodology to determine whether a behavior qualifies as OCB and, thus, the uncertainty inherent in the classification (Campbell Pickford & Joy, 2016; Podsakoff et al., 2000).

3.2. The Influence of Incentivization

Many organizational settings employ OCB through rewards, recognition, or performance assessments. However, this methodology may yield unexpected repercussions. Scholars argue that the authenticity of OCB is compromised when employees are driven primarily by external rewards (George & Jones, 1997; Morrison, 1996; Wright et al., 1993). The question arises as to whether rewarded activities genuinely contribute to the enhancement of the company or if they are solely executed for individual benefits. External rewards can diminish an individual's drive to engage in prosocial actions (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Lane, 1991). According to Wright et al (1993), individuals incentivized to complete tasks displayed lower levels of spontaneous helping behavior. The crowding-out effect, as

described by Frey & Oberholzer-Gee (1997), can negatively impact the quality and viability of OCB. The motivation of employees who exhibit OCB may be negatively affected by a lack of reward or reciprocity. Promoting exceptional employees may inadvertently decrease OCB, primarily if the promotion is driven by personal gain rather than cultivating a positive workplace. Hui et al. (2000) and Kim et al. (2013) discovered that OCBs declines following a promotion, particularly among individuals who perceive limited or no opportunities for future promotion. The impact of external rewards on employees' motivation to engage in OCB is based on exchange and rewards. Social Exchange Theory (SET) proposes that individuals participate in social interactions, especially those within an organization, expecting reciprocity and mutual benefits (Mitchell et al., 2012). Therefore, we consider the examination of incentives and their potential impact on the authenticity of OCB consistent with the principles of SET.

3.3. Potential Employee Burnout

Engaging in OCB typically involves dedicating extra time and effort to work beyond regular job responsibilities. According to He and Morrison (2019), it has been argued that a significant level of OCB could lead to employees feeling compelled to go above and beyond their designated responsibilities, ultimately leading to exhaustion and stress. The presence of OCB in the workplace has been linked to various negative consequences, including stress, work-life conflict, burnout, and deviant behavior (Jung & Yoon, 2012; Yam et al., 2017). If demand for OCB becomes too high, it could exhaust workplace resources and negatively affect employee productivity. Moreover, excessive OCB involvement may adversely affect performance and future career opportunities, particularly if individuals demonstrate higher levels of this conduct than their peers (Bergeron, 2007; Rapp et al., 2013; Rubin et al., 2013). Engaging in OCB could adversely affect one's happiness and raise doubts about its ability to be maintained in the long run. The JD-R Model, a well-known theoretical framework, elucidates the correlation between job demands, resources, and employee well-being (Bakker et al., 2014). This viewpoint aligns with the JD-R Model, which explores the impact of job demands on employee well-being and stress levels on OCB. Psychological Contract Theory examines the unspoken anticipations and responsibilities of workers and their companies (Rousseau, 2011). This study investigates the impact of an abundance of OCB on employees' views of their relationships with the organization. Conversation delves into the adverse outcomes of excessive OCB, such as employee exhaustion, and connects it to the framework of psychological agreement.

3.4. The Dark Side of OCB

Although OCB is commonly linked to favorable actions, a critical viewpoint proposes a potential downside to OCB (Bolino et al., 2013). Certain workers may tactically participate in OCB to acquire approval from superiors, influence coworkers, or promote personal interests, potentially compromising the authentic essence of these actions (Salamon & Deutsch, 2006). Another possible downside that can be explored is the notion of "mandatory civic duties." This pertains to scenarios in which supervisors hold elevated anticipation for their staff members and require them to surpass their assigned duties (Van Dyne & Ellis, 2004; Vigoda-Gadot, 2006). Bolino and colleagues (2010) proposed the idea of "civic obligation stress," which pertains to a unique work requirement that motivates workers to participate in OCBs. The research discovered a correlation between societal expectations and the extent of OCB. Moreover, this connection was particularly noticeable among unmarried workers who had lower levels of conscientiousness. The research discovered a noteworthy connection between the pressure of being a good citizen and various results, such as conflicts between work and family, work and leisure, stress at work, and intentions to quit.

4. Implications for Theory

The issues and criticisms surrounding OCB include significant theoretical consequences that influence our comprehension of OCB and might require modifications or enhancements in current Human Resource Development (HRD) theories. The lack of clarity in the definition and categorization of OCB creates concerns regarding the accuracy and consistency of assessment instruments and conceptual frameworks used to assess OCB (Campbell Pickford & Joy, 2016; Podsakoff et al., 2000). This questions the widely held belief that OCB has well-defined boundaries. Theoretical frameworks in HRD that utilize OCB as a singular and uncomplicated indicator of employee success may warrant reassessment. In order to strengthen the theoretical basis of HRD, researchers may need to refine and establish more precise definitions and universally acknowledged criteria for OCB.

The influence of extrinsic incentives on OCB prompts inquiries into the intrinsic motivation of employees who partake in such behaviors (Jahangir et al., 2004; Widarko & Anwarodin, 2022). This questions the prevailing belief that selfless motives solely drive OCB. HRD theories that emphasize utilizing rewards and recognition as a means to encourage OCB should consider the potential negative consequences of compromising the

genuineness of these behaviors. Theoretical frameworks may benefit from incorporating a more sophisticated understanding of the dynamic relationship between extrinsic and intrinsic motivations in promoting OCB.

The relationship between an excessive display of OCB and employee burnout underscores the possible adverse outcomes associated with the promotion of OCB without considering its effects on employee well-being (Koopman et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2021). HRD theories prioritizing the promotion of OCB may necessitate integrating protective measures to mitigate the risk of burnout. This may entail the examination of job demands and resources, as proposed by the JD-R Model (Bakker et al., 2014), and reassessing the equilibrium between OCB and the general well-being of employees.

Acknowledging the negative aspects of OCB (Jung & Yoon, 2012; Yam et al., 2017) challenges the positive perception of these behaviors. This observation underscores the possibility of employing strategic manipulation and coercion when participating in OCB. HRD theories that advocating for OCB as a universal solution for achieving organizational performance should consider the potential negative repercussions linked to certain forms of OCB. This may entail differentiating between authentic OCB and coerced or strategically motivated OCB within theoretical frameworks.

5. Implications for Research

The ambiguities encompassing the description and assessment of OCB necessitate re-evaluating how OCB is perceived and appraised in scholarly investigations (LePine et al., 2002; Organ, 2014). To thoroughly assess OCB, it is essential to consider the diversity of cultures and distinct qualities within organizations (Becton & Field, 2009; Turnipseed & Murkison, 2000). This could entail investigating different methods or adopting a more tailored approach. This method has the potential to generate results that are both highly precise and meaningful.

It is imperative to undertake meticulous and exhaustive inquiry to comprehensively examine the factors that drive OCB. This inquiry should consider intrinsic and extrinsic factors influencing motivation (Jahangir et al., 2004; Widarko & Anwarodin, 2022). Further investigation is required to explore the intricacies of OCB motivations, considering the interaction between internal and external stimuli. Gaining insight into the elements that motivate employees to participate in OCB can provide valuable knowledge for developing efficient reward systems and implementing successful management strategies.

6. Implications for Practice

Organizations must strike a delicate balance between recognizing and promoting OCB while maintaining their unique identities. To achieve this goal, managers must establish recognition and reward systems that appreciate and prioritize OCB initiatives without relying too heavily on external incentives. By adopting a deliberate and reflective approach, individuals have the potential to cultivate intrinsic motivation and engage in OCB.

The potential for employee burnout resulting from engaging in OCB necessitates the adoption of a comprehensive approach to promoting employee well-being (Koopman et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2021). Organizations should prioritize their employees' well-being by implementing wellness programs, promoting a healthy work-life balance, and fostering a supportive work environment. It is essential to prioritize employees' health when encouraging them to engage in OCB.

Recognizing the potential negative aspects of OCB raises important ethical considerations in its application. Managers and leaders must prioritize the ethical aspects of OCB, cultivating a culture that values integrity and transparency (Beeri et al., 2013; Zacarias & Flores, 2023). Monitoring and addressing unethical uses of OCB should be incorporated into the organizational governance framework. Addressing ethical issues connected to OCB places significant emphasis on ethical theories, particularly deontology (Alexander & Moore, 2007; Leung, 2008) and consequentialism (Driver, 2011; Weaver, 2015). In this study, we endeavored to discern and confront the unethical activities of OCB, focusing on the principles of honesty and transparency. These ethical theories facilitate a comprehensive analysis of the ethical aspects of OCB within the organizational governance framework.

7. Conclusion

OCB has been widely acknowledged as a fundamental aspect of organizational behavior. It encompasses voluntary and discretionary behaviors that surpass the requirements outlined in job descriptions (Van Dyne & Ellis, 2004; Vigoda-Gadot, 2006), ultimately positively impact organizations (Bolino et al., 2002; Hamid et al., 2022; Organ, 1988; Organ et al., 2006). This article has endeavored to thoroughly analyze OCB to reveal obstacles and thought-provoking perspectives that question commonly accepted beliefs.

Several challenges need to be addressed in the study of OCB. One of the issues that researchers face in studying OCB is the lack of clarity and consistency in its definition and measurement (Campbell Pickford & Joy, 2016; Podsakoff et al., 2000). In order to conduct

a comprehensive and accurate analysis of the influence of OCB, it is imperative to possess a well-defined and cohesive comprehension of its conceptual boundaries. Furthermore, the impact of incentives on the genuineness of OCB is a subject of considerable interest. Incentives have the potential to motivate employees to engage in OCB; however, it is essential to acknowledge the potential drawbacks of compromising the authenticity of their acts (Frey & Oberholzer-Gee, 1997; Hui et al., 2000; Kim et al., 2013; Wright et al., 1993). In addition, it is imperative to consider the well-being and burnout of employees while when examining OCB. It is imperative to ensure that employees are not excessively taxed or subjected to adverse outcomes due to OCB (Jung & Yoon, 2012; Yam et al., 2017). Finally, it is imperative to acknowledge the potential adverse implications of OCB, commonly known as the "dark side" of OCB. This encompasses activities that can potentially be excessively or detrimentally impactful to the organization or its personnel. The obstacles underscore the intricate nature and subtleties involved in examining and comprehending OCB, as Bolino et al. (2013) discussed.

Our study aimed to offer a thorough assortment of OCB concepts through the facilitation of discussions centered around divergent viewpoints, the underlying rationales behind these viewpoints, the importance of OCB in addressing structural inequalities, potential effects on employee welfare, and ethical considerations.

In summary, it is imperative to acknowledge that OCB is a multifaceted subject requiring thorough comprehension. This study's critiques and alternative perspectives provide compelling catalysts for scholars and practitioners to take action. Thoroughly analyzing OCB is paramount, necessitating a detailed examination of diverse conditions and cultural nuances. Conducting a thorough investigation would enhance the understanding of OCB and its significance in corporate settings. Furthermore, this research underscores the importance of effectively managing the promotion of OCB in conjunction with prioritizing the well-being of employees, all while considering ethical considerations. Organizations, must foster a culture that is deeply anchored in ethical principles, prioritize the well-being of their employees, and recognize a wide array of reasons that influence OCB.

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