

The Influence of Spirituality in the Workplace and Perceived Organizational Support on Organizational Citizenship Behaviors for Strategic Success

Sharon E. Norris

Spring Arbor University, USA

Tracey H. Porter

Cleveland State University, USA

INTRODUCTION

In today's competitive organizational environment, strategic leaders depend upon employees with the capacity to continually change, innovate and improve, making highly engaged workers more valuable than ever (Norris, 2013). These changing conditions require the strategic cultivation of a workforce willing to contribute to the effective functioning of the organization through discretionary organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs). Organ, Podsakoff, and MacKenzie (2006) define OCB as "Individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and in the aggregate promotes the efficient and effective functioning of the organization" (p. 8). Organ (1988) conceptualized OCB as a five-dimension taxonomy and Williams and Anderson (1991) categorized OCBs as citizenry behaviors that are targeted at the organization (OCB-O) or targeted at other individuals (OCB-I) (Spitzmuller, Van Dyne, & Ilies, 2008). For this study, sportsmanship and civic virtue represent citizenry behaviors directed toward the organization; altruism, conscientiousness, and courtesy are organizational citizenship behaviors directed toward individuals.

Good organizational citizens preserve and enhance the social and psychological contexts that sustain task performance (Organ, 1988; Organ 1997). Sensitivity to the needs of others, showing courtesy by informing others of decisions or policies that have an effect on them (Tepper, 2003), making proactive suggestions at meetings (Farrell & Finkelstein 2011), offering ideas to improve the functioning of the organization (Lloyd, Boer, Keller, & Voelpel, 2015; Smith, Organ, & Near, 1983, Williams & Anderson, 1991), and providing encouragement to colleagues are the types of citizenry behaviors that positively contribute to the overall development of a healthy social and psychological organizational context (Tepper, 2003). Strategic leaders have long recognized the benefits of OCBs on organizational effectiveness (Dick, Grojean, Christ, & Wieseke, 2006; Joireman, Daniels, George-Falvy, & Kamdar, 2006; Lai, Simon, & Chow, 2015; Naeem, Malik, & Bano, 2014; Yen & Neihoff, 2004) as well as the negative consequences that can result in the absence of OCBs (Lamude, 1994; Motowidlo, 2003; Pablo Zoghbi-Manrique, 2008).

Discretionary OCBs hold the potential to function as a strategic competitive advantage in today's organizations (Barabasz & Chwalibog, 2014; Goswami, McMahan, & Wright, 2006; Wright, Dunford, & Snell, 2001). Yet, it is important to acknowledge that eliciting employee displays of OCBs can be challenging, especially when the workforce is faced with complexity and increasing work demands. Employees

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may begin to think and feel as though extra-role behaviors are expected and even required for continued employment or advancement. When cognitive, emotional, and physical resources are scarce, there is a personal costs and internal fatigue associated with citizenry behaviors (Bergeron, 2007; Bolino, Hsiung, Harvey, & LePine, 2015; Bolino, Klotz, Turnley, & Harvey, 2013; Bolino & Turnley, 2005; Halbesleben, Harvey, & Bolino, 2009; Van Dyne & Ellis, 2004; Vigoda-Gadot, 2006). Erden and Tekarslan (2014) explain, “the personal cost of going the extra mile for the organization could be stress and lower job performance instead of wellbeing and effectiveness” (p. 9). In order to better understand how to foster a healthy balance and expression of OCBs in the workplace (Arthaud-Day, Rode, & Turnley, 2012), researchers have examined various antecedents that motivate interpersonally directed OCBs (Bambale, Shamsudin, & Subramaniam, 2015) and organizationally directed OCBs (Naeem et al., 2014) as well as positive and negative consequences of OCBs (Erden & Tekarslan, 2014; Spector, 2012).

Affective states as well as cognitive appraisals are known to influence the extent to which employees will engage in discretionary organizational citizenship behaviors (Organ & Konovsky, 1989). Affective experiences and cognitive construal shapes the formation of intentions and influence behaviors (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Antecedents of organizational citizenship behaviors have been categorized as individual differences, work attitudes, and contextual variables. Mayfield and Tabor (2010) explain, “Work attitudes are emotions and cognitions that are based on an individual’s perception of the work environment” (p. 742). Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) explain, “it has long been recognized that attitudes have affective and cognitive correlates” (p. 2). In this study, we postulate organizational citizenship behaviors are influenced by work attitudes associated with perceived organizational support and spirituality in the workplace.

Affective experiences in the workplace trigger responses where employees either open up or close down. When social interactions among employees are charged with positivity, such as what has been reported with spirituality in the workplace, positive affective experiences follow (Milliman, Ferguson, Trickett, & Condemi, 1999). Marques (2007) defined spirituality at work as “an experience of interconnectedness and belonging in a work environment that elicits greater satisfaction and a sense of meaning among those involved, and has a positive effect on organizational performance” (p. 93). Researchers have extensively examined OCBs in an effort to understand what encourages, inspires, and motivates employees to engage in positive discretionary behaviors. Spirituality in the workplace represents an emerging construct that has been theoretically connected with organizational citizenship behaviors, but only recently has the empirical relationship between workplace spirituality and OCBs been investigated (Kazemipour & Amin, 2012; Kazemipour, Amin, & Pourseidi, 2012; Nasurdin, Nejati, & Mei, 2013). We contend that spirituality in the workplace elicits positive affective experiences and holds the potential to motivate employees to display altruism, conscientiousness, and courtesy, which are the interpersonally directed dimensions of OCB.

Because cognitive construal shapes the formation of intentions and influences behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), we believe cognitive appraisals of perceived organizational support are powerful determinants of judgment-based OCBs (Organ & Konovsky, 1989). An employee’s perception of organizational support represents “global beliefs concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being” (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, & Sowa, 1986, p. 501). When employees are humiliated, belittled, or treated derisively by their supervisors, they cognitively judge the organizational environment as nonsupportive, are less likely to exhibit OCBs, but more likely to engage in counterproductive behaviors (Shoss, Eisenberger, Restubog, & Zagenczyk, 2013). Chen, Eisenberger, Johnson, Sucharski, and Aselage (2009) report perceived organizational support is positively associated with extra-role behavior; therefore, it stands to reason that perceived organizational support holds the potential to motivate employees to engage in OCBs.

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