

Chapter 14

Organizational Arrogance and a Theory-Based Instrument

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ABSTRACT

Prior studies provided insight on arrogance at the individual level and how arrogant individuals express superiority through (1) overconfidence in capabilities, (2) dismissiveness, (3) and disparagement, and how these behaviors may negatively impact those employees in and around their work teams, yet did not indicate how these behaviors impact organizational culture. Organizational arrogance represents an emerging concept that describes arrogance at the organizational level. Organizational arrogance provides the body of knowledge with a comprehensive and inclusive definition that led to the development and validation of the Organizational Arrogance Scale with a Cronbach Alpha of .922 that accurately measures the presence of organizational arrogance.

INTRODUCTION

Organizational arrogance explains arrogance at the organizational level and how a leader's arrogant behavior shapes organizational culture and organizational members' acceptable behaviors. The theoretical and conceptual foundation consists of narcissistic leadership theory, Machiavellian leadership theory, psychopathy leadership theory, autocratic leadership theory, organizational identity, and arrogance. This chapter shows the origin of the organizational arrogance concept and demonstrates how it impacts organizational behavior and culture. Organizational arrogance introduces a comprehensive and inclusive definition that helps the reader recognize this phenomenon's intricacies. It also explains how organizational arrogance contains three behavioral components: Overconfidence in Organizational Capabilities, Dismissiveness Towards Internal and External Organizational Matters, and Disparagement Towards Intra-organizational and Interorganizational Members. Finally, this chapter presents the validation process for the 5-Item Organizational Arrogance Scale that measures organizational arrogance in the workplace.

Learning Objectives

After studying this chapter, one should be able to:

- Understand the historical evolution of studies on arrogance
- Recognize how leader behavior can influence arrogant behaviors in the workplace
- Theoretical and conceptual influences that build organizational arrogance
- Define organizational arrogance
- Understand the three organizational arrogance behavioral components
- Understand the development of the Organizational Arrogance Scale
- Recognize the five indicators that measure organizational arrogance
- Identify future research opportunities on organizational arrogance

BACKGROUND

Arrogance represents a collection of thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors that demonstrate an individual's superiority level. The term "sense of superiority" reflects a consistent theme identified throughout the literature and pertinent to the definition of arrogance. Whether one perceives "the sense of superiority" as realistic or not, it serves as the foundational premise for understanding arrogance. Tiberius and Walker (1998) claimed that arrogant people possess an actual or perceived belief in their considerable talents and abilities, creating opportunities for them to infer their above-average superiority to most other people. Arrogance also describes an essential human trait whereby individuals feel inclined to publicly convey their individual qualities and value over others (Lewis, 2000). Brown (2012) strengthens the definition as a "chronic belief of superiority and exaggerated self-importance that is demonstrated through excessive and presumptuous claims" (p. 555). Arrogance also describes a specific type of pride that leads one to believe that they hold power over other individuals (Poggi & D'Errico, 2011). Additionally, Tiberius and Walker (1998) submit a critical assertion that previous studies mistakenly focused arrogance on the person instead of recognizing arrogance as an interpersonal matter that illustrates how individuals engage with one another.

Before developing the organizational arrogance construct, arrogance was only evident at the individual level and described how an individual's self-perception of superiority manifests itself within the organizational environment. Arrogance harvests self-perceptions that an individual possesses invincibility and omnipotence (Ma & Karri, 2005). Maintaining this excessive belief in oneself establishes an attitude and behavior that distinguishes an arrogant individual from other individuals and contributes to a sense of overconfidence and overestimation of their capabilities. Similarly, arrogant people dismiss internal or external contributing factors and instead attribute their success to their high intellect and other noncontrollable, internal, stable, or desirable causes (Hareli & Weiner, 2000). Arrogance also depicts an extreme belief in an individual's superiority and exaggerated self-importance that reveals itself through excessive and presumptuous claims (Brown H., 2012). Most notably and more emotionally detrimental, arrogance describes an assortment of attitudes, behaviors, and thoughts that portrays one's exaggerated sense of superiority achieved through disparaging others (Johnson et al., 2010).

Johnson et al. (2010) further declared that organizational scholars rarely study arrogance due to the limited empirical evidence involving arrogance and the inability to measure how arrogant behaviors

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