

Chapter 72

Critical Examination of Tokenism and Demands of Organizational Citizenship Behavior Among Faculty Women of Color

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ABSTRACT

Women of color in academia are a double minority who face extreme challenges in attaining tenure and promotion. Common challenges faculty of color experience encompass characterization of inferiority, expectations of work products that are often undefined or beyond that of peers, exposure to tokenism, and denial of access to power or authority. Faculty of color are often excessively recruited or assigned to institutional committees and projects because of their minority membership, and are also frequently sought out by students and peers of color for mentoring. These forms of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) often go unnoticed and can be undervalued in promotional proceedings. This chapter critically examines how women of color in academia experience tokenism and how this manifests through unrealistic demands and undervalue of organizational citizenship behavior.

INTRODUCTION

Women of color in academia are a double minority who face extreme challenges in attaining tenure and promotion. Common challenges faculty of color experience encompass characterization as inferior and expectations of work products that are often undefined or higher than their peers. Faculty of color face

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challenges, such as exposure to tokenism and denial of access to power or authority. Tokenism is psychologically, physically, and professionally taxing and damaging, and is marked by microaggressions. Examples of microaggressions include comments regarding qualifications, undervaluing scholarship or an over-display of a minority faculty person. These markers deny the intelligence and merit of the individual's work. Faculty of color become just a number or a box to be checked. These challenges produce a hostile work environment; in which faculty of color must constantly defend their competence and capabilities to no avail.

Faculty of color are often excessively recruited or assigned to institutional committees and projects because of their minority membership, and are also frequently sought out by students and peers of color for mentoring. Taking time for such assignments taxes their availability and capability to fulfill pedagogical and research requirements. These forms of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) often go unnoticed and can be undervalued in promotional proceedings.

With continued exposure to microaggressions, such as tokenism and an environment that is hostile, how do faculty women of color positively engage and experience OCB? This dynamic flux results in an excessive taxation of human capital among women faculty of color. In addition to the issue of excessive taxation, this chapter critically examines how women of color experience tokenism in academia. Academic tokenism manifests through unrealistic demands and undervaluing organizational citizenship behavior.

WHAT IS TOKENISM?

Theoretical Approaches to Tokenism

This section reviews theoretical approaches to tokenism and how that characterizes the professional experiences of faculty women of color. Since the passage of landmark civil rights legislation in the 1960s, scholars from a variety of disciplines have examined the workplace experiences of underrepresented groups. Rosabeth Moss Kanter is often described as opening the door for women in this line of inquiry. In the groundbreaking book *Men and Women of the Corporation*, Kanter (1977) defined tokenism as the negative experiences that women managers face in a Fortune 500 Company. Kanter saw the organizational structure of the workplace causing women's negative experiences at work, which resulted from tokenism—which she recognized in organizations where women comprise less than 15% of their respective work groups—in corporate positions. Her work inspired more attention to the effects of numbers and proportions in the overall workforce on workers' experiences and job satisfaction.

To Kanter, men in an industry with a small proportion of women workers construct and maintain an organizational culture that is hostile to these women. This ethos yields three primary negative experiences that underrepresented women typically confront:

- First, despite the low numbers of token women in this business setting, they face great visibility, which often corresponds with male colleagues using greater and different standards to evaluate women's work than they used to evaluate men's job performances.
- Second, tokens reported feelings of social isolation, which contributed to difficulties connecting with their male colleagues.
- Third, men frequently consigned their token coworkers to roles that paralleled gender stereotypes (Kanter, 1977; Young & James, 2002; King et al., 2010).

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