



ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR: AN EXAMINATION OF THE DIMENSIONS OF CIVIC VIRTUE AND SELF DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to examine the Civic Virtue and Self-Development dimensions of Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB). Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) has been defined as individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization (Organ, 1988). There has been a great deal of disagreement as to how many dimensions should comprise OCB and what they should be. The dimension used in this study are Helping Behavior, Sportsmanship, Organizational Loyalty, Organizational Compliance, Individual Initiative, Civic Virtue, and Self-Development. Through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), it was revealed that the dimensions of Civic Virtue and Self-Development are measuring the same behavior and should be treated as one single dimension. This paper offers explanations of the findings, as well as a new set of dimensions to measure OCB.

Keywords

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), OCB Dimensions, Exploratory Factor Analysis, Organizational Behavior

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) has been defined as individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization (Organ, 1988). Organizations have a vested interest in the psychological aspect of individuals. Employees who demonstrate OCBs can help the organization improve its overall effectiveness (Koys, 2001).

This leads to an important question of what exactly makes up OCB and how are they measured. There has been a great deal of disagreement as to how many dimensions should comprise OCB and what they should be. Since OCB entails an employee doing more than is expected, Smith et al. (1983) first identified two discrete dimensions within OCB, which deal with these extra-role behaviors. The first is Altruism, which entails situational helping behaviors that one employee exhibits towards others. The second is Generalized Compliance, in which the employee's priority is to perform for the benefit of the organization, rather than his or her own benefit.

The dimensions of OCB have evolved over the past thirty years. There have been many modifications, additions, and enhancements, as well as overlapping and redundancy among the definitions. Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Paine, and Bachrach (2000) have identified a plethora of OCB dimensions used in different studies. These dimensions have been analyzed, combined, and divided in such a way that the authors believe this enhanced list is the most improved, most accurate, and considers the similarities and differences of various scholarly opinions. Organ, Podsakoff, and Mackenzie (2005) also believe that any

area of OCB will fall into one of these seven categories. These constructs are of Helping Behavior, Sportsmanship, Organizational Loyalty, Organizational Compliance, Individual Initiative, Civic Virtue, and Self-Development. In a recent study, these seven dimensions were used to comprise OCB and determine the relationship with Leader-Member Exchange, Union Commitment, and Employee Performance.

This study will focus on two dimensions. Civic Virtue, which can be defined as “the responsible participation in the political process of the organization” (Schnake & Dumler, 2003, p. 284). Participating in organizational events, attending meetings, vocalizing opinions, reading internal mail, talking about work issues on personal time, and becoming involved in organizational issues would be considered Civic Virtue. The second dimension is Self-Development, which consists of “engaging in activity to improve one’s skills and experience so as to benefit the organization” (Burton, 2003, p. 26). Most organizations provide professional development opportunities for employees including workshops and conferences to foster development of new skills. George and Brief (1992) labeled this dimension “developing oneself” in their study about organizational spontaneity.

This study was conducted at a major healthcare organization located in New York City. The primary focus of this study was to determine the antecedents and consequences of organizational behavior. Data was collected through managerially assessed methods. The sample consisted of 40 managers who measured 262 employees.

A questionnaire was used that measured OCB according to these seven dimensions. A seven point Likert scale was used for each dimension, ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” with a midpoint labeled “neither agree nor disagree”. Podsakoff and Mackenzie’s three-item scale measuring Civic Virtue was used and Self Development was measured using a three-item scale measuring the characteristics defined by George and Jones (1997). In total, a 29-item questionnaire, capturing the characteristics of each of the seven dimensions of OCB, was used to give an accurate measurement of overall OCB.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was used to test the raw data. This was used to eliminate any data that did not load highly (> 0.60), as well as to determine whether any patterns exist from collecting data via the survey instruments. EFA was conducted on each of the survey scales separately to help establish convergent and discriminant validity across all of the measures. Previous organizational studies employing factor analysis have eliminated any scale items that did not load >0.40 (Garmon, 2004). The minimum limit of 0.60 was chosen for use in this study for certainty that the factors loaded highly and the data measurement was reliable.

SPSS was used to conduct the factor analysis using a Principal Component extraction. This type of extraction has been used in previous OCB studies (Burton, 2003), as well as in other organizational studies (Garmon, 2004). An Equamax rotation with Kaiser Normalization was also chosen to interpret the data because clear patterns emerged during rotation. To ensure validity of the data being used, it was decided that only items loading highly would be used in the remainder of the study.

The factor analysis of Civic Virtue and Self Development, produced interesting results. All items measuring both constructs loaded >0.60 . However, these items each loaded for the same principal component when rotated. This finding suggests that the items used to measure Civic Virtue and Self Development may actually be measuring the same construct. The items used to measure each of these dimensions do have some similarities. They each deal with actions the employee makes outside of his or her immediate department. One item that was used to measure Civic Virtue is “Attends training information sessions that agents are encouraged, but not required to attend”, while one item used to measure Self Development is “ Seeks out and takes advantage of advanced training courses.” Both of these items are similar because they deal with the employee seeking and training to learn something new. The other items used to measure Civic Virtue deal with the employee attending meetings that are not required, while the other items used to measure Self Development pertain to the employee learning new things that are not required. Therefore, in the remainder of this study, the constructs of Civic Virtue and Self Development were treated as one single dimension. This newly emerged construct was entitled “Civic Virtue/Self Development”.

There is also previous literature that supports the similarities between Civic Virtue and Self Development. Organ (1988) described Civic Virtue as “keeping abreast of larger issues involving the organization”, while George and Brief (1992) and George and Jones (1997) describe Self Development as “keeping abreast of the latest developments in one’s field or area”. Both descriptions deal with an employee being involved with issues going on in order to help the organization.

There are few studies that use both Civic Virtue and Self Development. Most studies use Civic Virtue and not Self Development. Therefore, it is proposed that Civic Virtue be used as a dimension of OCB, and not Self Development.

One of the major theoretical contributions of this study comes on the highly disputed topic of the construct of OCB. The question of how many, and which, dimensions comprise overall OCB has been discussed, and disagreed upon, by many researchers.

Although the findings in this study are most closely associated with the dimensions recommended by Podsakoff et al. (2000), new theoretical findings have emerged via EFA. Podsakoff et al. recommended seven constructs: Helping Behavior, Organizational Compliance, Sportsmanship, Organizational Loyalty, Individual Initiative, Civic Virtue, and Self Development. This study provides evidence that Civic Virtue and Self Development are measuring the same type of dimension and should not be treated as two distinct dimensions. Therefore, this study contributes to the reconstruction of OCB with a new array of dimensions, eliminating Self-Development.

While the primary focus of this study was to answer certain questions and contribute to the theory and knowledge of the antecedents and consequences of OCB, a new opportunity for future research has emerged concerning this new set of dimensions used to measure OCB.

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