

ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR – EVOLVING DIMENSIONS AND ANTECEDENTS

Vanaja N¹, Rajeswari P S²

Research Scholar, College of Management, SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Kattankulathur, Tamil Nadu 603203, India.

Associate Professor, College of Management, SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Kattankulathur, Tamil Nadu 603203, India.

ABSTRACT

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) is a concept that has expanded in recent years. OCB is an evolving concept concerning why and how employees contribute positively to their organization, beyond formal job requirements. OCBs are individualized, self-motivated actions initiated and exhibited by employees, resulting in optimistic influence on individual, group, organization and society. Understanding organizational behavior is increasingly necessary, as strict traditional hierarchical work environment is replaced by autonomous and team based work culture. The study of organizational citizenship behavior becomes inevitable due to its vital contribution to the effective functioning of organizations. Organizational Citizenship Behaviors have a greater positive impact on individual and organization leading to improved efficiency and effectiveness in the organization. The focal point of this literature is to discuss the various definitions, dimensions and antecedents of Organizational Citizenship behavior.

Key Words: Altruism, Courtesy, Conscientiousness, Sportsmanship, Civic Virtue, individual characteristics, Task characteristics.

INTRODUCTION

Emerging in 1980s, organization citizenship describes employee behavior within different organizations' social systems. Understanding OCB is increasingly necessary, as autonomous and team based work culture replaces the strict traditional hierarchical work environment. As a result of changing work culture, organizations tend to become more dependent on individual employees who are willing to contribute over and beyond their formal work roles.

MEANING AND DEFINITIONS

Organizational Citizenship Behavior is a discretionary individual behavior which is not formally recognized by the reward system that aids in promoting the effective functioning of the organization. Organ again updated his definition and redefined it as “the contributions to the maintenance and enhancement of the social and psychological context that supports task performance” Hence OCB is discretionary and cannot be made compulsory. It is considered as an individual trait exhibited willingly in the work place, without expecting any formal reward. If an employee is performing formal job duties, it is not considered as OCB. OCB should be over and beyond the individuals’ formal role within the organization, which is not monetarily rewarded. OCB may be performed towards co workers or organization, as demanded by the situation.

For Example; OCB towards co workers include, helping in official work, giving lifts to home, offering suggestions to improve a task, extending moral support both in personal and official matters etc.

OCB towards organization include, voluntary involvement in common organizational tasks, giving suggestions to upgrade work, extending a helping hand at times of organizational needs, participating in decision making, willingly working extra time without payment etc.

Similarly when two individuals exhibit the same form of OCB, it does not indicate that they both have same motivation. One may be motivated by self image building and the other may be motivated to improve the quality of work environment.

Organizational Citizenship Behavior is a person’s voluntary commitment apart from his or her formal tasks which is exhibited at his or her discretion.

OCB have three critical aspects 1) Discretionary Behavior displayed as a personal choice and not a part of personal choice, 2 OCB go above and beyond formal requirements of job description. 3) Not rewarded but contribute positively to promote overall effective functioning.

CONCEPTUAL SIMILARITIES

Contextual Performance: Contextual Performances are non-task oriented behaviours and activities, the outcome of which will positively contribute to the social and psychological well-being of an organization. CB is not an extra role but a non task role. The reward may be indirect or uncertain.

Pro Social Organizational Behavior: It is a behavior exhibited within an organization aims at enhancing the individual, group and organizational welfare. It need not be a work related behavior. Helping a co-worker with personal matter is a PSOB

Extra Role Behavior: As the term denotes, it is a behavior which goes beyond the existing role expectations that benefits an organization. Extra Role Behavior includes two important concepts which are not a part of OCB, namely, Whistle Blowing and Principled Defiance. Whistle blowing is reporting on any unethical or illegal practices, to the management, by an employee. Principled defiance is protesting fairly against any kind of injustice in the organization.

DIMENSIONS OF OCB

Katz (1964) initially identified five aspects of OCB, which was earlier denoted as “innovative and spontaneous behavior”. These five aspects were (1) cooperation, (2) protection of organization, (3) maintaining a favorable attitude toward the company, (4) volunteering constructive ideas and (5) self-training.

Smith, Organ, and Near (1983) conceptualized two main elements of OCB, namely, altruism, and Organizational compliance.

Organ (1988) enunciated five key behaviors of OCB, namely Altruism, Courtesy, Conscientiousness, Sportsmanship and Civic virtue which are widely accepted by social scientists and the researchers.

Williams and Anderson (1991) classified all behaviors related to OCB into two categories namely, OCB displayed towards individuals (OCBI) and OCB displayed towards the organization (OCBO).

In Graham's (1991) viewpoint, OCB comprises of three substantive categories – namely, obedience, loyalty, and participation.

Podsakoff et al (2000), in their meta-analysis of OCB, recognized 30 behaviors, which are broadly classified into seven dimensions or categories of OCB. These behaviors are categorized as 1) Altruistic Behaviors, 2) Compliance, 3) Sportsmanship, 4) Loyalty, 5) Civic virtue, 6) Individual initiative, and 7) Self-Improvement.

Altruism

Altruism in simple words means kindness or helpfulness. Altruism means rendering a helping hand to other employees of the organization in their works. Altruism constitutes behaviors such as extending voluntary help to new employees, helping co-workers to complete overloaded work, assisting absentee workers and providing guidance to workers to execute difficult tasks.

According to Smith, Organ, and Near (1983) Altruistic behaviors are voluntary behaviors exhibited by an employee by providing assistance to coworkers, to complete his or her task under problematic /unusual circumstances.

Podsakoff et al. (2000) had established that altruistic behaviors are significantly and positively related to performance appraisals.

Conscientiousness

The simple meaning of conscientiousness is dutifulness or scrupulousness

Organ (1988), explained conscientiousness as that level of dedication to the job, which goes beyond the formal work obligations, such as extended working hours, and volunteering extra jobs apart from formal commitments.

MacKenzie et al, (1993) defined it as “Conscientiousness is a discretionary behavior, such as obeying rules and regulations, not taking extra breaks, working extra-long days that go well beyond the minimum role requirement level of the organization”.

According to Podsakoff and MacKenzie (1997), the dimension of conscientiousness implicates that an employee with a high conscientiousness, is highly responsible and needs less supervision. Conscientiousness is an indication that an individual is dutiful, honest, upright, industrious and self-disciplined.

Sportsmanship

“The willingness to bear with the inevitable irritations and impositions in work place, without complaining” is termed as Sportsmanship.

Organ (1988), viewed sportsmanship as a behavior of genially tolerating the minor and unavoidable inconveniences which are an integral part of every organizational environment.

Organ (1990), also explained that, practicing sportsmanship is an employee's preference that he decides not to express dissatisfaction while experiencing unavoidable problems in the course of

performing his duties. It is a desire to stay positive and tolerant towards inconveniences encountered in the work spot, by avoiding unnecessary complaints about minor hurdles generated in the workplace.

Organ and Ryan (1995), established that sportsmanship as a behavior and desire to bear trivial and temporary personnel troubles and problems experienced in workplace, without complaints, appeals, grievances, accusations, or protest. This behavior, to a larger extent helps to effectively accomplish organizational goals by conserving organizational resources and relieving unnecessary stress of the superiors.

Podsakoff et al (1997) demonstrated that good sportsmanship would elevate the morale of the workers and as a result, minimize workers' attrition.

Courtesy

According to Organ (1990), Courtesy refers to the behavior that aids in preventing occurrence of interpersonal problems. For Example: giving prior notice of the work schedule to whoever needs it, consulting other workers prior to taking any actions, informing the colleagues' leave to be taken etc.

Organ (1997), mentioned Courtesy as gestures that are exhibited in the concern of averting creations of problems for co-workers.

Podsakoff et al (1997), opined that an employee who exhibits the behavior of courteousness, makes a sincere attempt to avert creating problems to the fellow workers and thereby minimizes the burden of crisis management to the superiors.

Courteous behaviors include not only preventing problems but also taking necessary steps and timely actions in order to reduce the consequences of problems in future.

In other words, courtesy means the encouragement given by an employee to other employee/sof the organization when they feel demotivated or discouraged or demoralized about their opportunities of professional development.

Podsakoff et al., (2000), demonstrated that employees who exhibit courtesy would avert interpersonal conflicts and thereby reducing the time and efforts spent on conflict management activities.

The main focus of courtesy is to refrain from activities that needlessly make colleagues' work harder. It also includes giving them sufficient notice to get prepared when there is an addition to their existing work load.

Civic Virtue

Civic virtue is a standard of righteous behavior related to an employee's involvement in organization.

Civic virtue denotes the constructive involvement and contribution of the employees in the operations of the organization, by honestly voicing opinions, attending meetings, discussing the issues affecting the organization with coworkers etc.

According to Organ (1988), Civic virtue refers to the responsibility of an employee to actively and voluntarily participate in the activities of the organization such as attending proceedings and meetings which are not made compulsory by the organization and keeping abreast of the changes in the organization.

According to Podsakoff et al, (1990), Civic virtue is behavior that forms a part of an individual which indicates that the employees' dutiful participation, active involvement and concern about the life of the company.

Civic Virtue is an aspect of OCB, which is actually evolved by Graham, (1991). He stated that an employee should have the inclination of becoming a virtuous member of the organization.

Deluga (1998), demonstrated Civic virtue as Employee's contribution to maintain the political stability of the firm and to support actively the administrative activities of the firm.

Podsakoff et al, (2000), established that Civic Virtue is the readiness to actively take part in organization's events, to observe the threats and opportunities in the business environment, and to plan and decide the best alternative for the organization.

These behaviors are displayed when an employee considers himself/herself as a part of the concern and willfully bear the responsibilities which warrant as a result of being a good citizen of the concern.

ANTECEDENTS OF OCB

Antecedents are preceding circumstances or phenomenon which can largely influence the magnitude of an employee's Organizational Citizenship Behaviors.

Bateman& Organ(1983); Smith et al., (1983), Organ (1988);in their initialresearches on antecedents of OCB, focused mainly on employees' traits,temperaments, and leader supportiveness.Initially, Age, Personal dispositions, Perception of Fairness, Perception of Role, Job satisfaction, organizational commitment of the employees, Attitudes and Behaviors of Leaders, and Leader-member exchange,were considered to be the antecedents of Organizational Citizenship Behaviors.Recent Pragmatic researches had established,four main classificationsof antecedents; namely, Individual (or employee) Behaviors, Job characteristics, Leadership Behaviors and Organizational characteristics.

Individual Behaviors are determined with attributes such asPersonal Attitudes, Dispositional Variables, Role Perceptions, Demographic characteristics, Individual Abilities and Differences.Personal attitudes are measured in terms of Satisfaction,Fairness,Institutional Commitment and Trust in Leadership. Dispositional Variables comprisesAgreeableness, Conscientiousness, Positive and Negative Affectivity.Employee Role Perceptions include Role Clarity, Role Ambiguity and Role Conflict. Demographic Characteristics include tenure and gender of the employee.Individual Abilities and Differencesconsist of Knowledge, Skill, Ability, Experience, Training and Development, professional Inclination, Independency and Apathy towards Rewards.

Job Characteristics involvesJob Feedback, JobRegularity and Job Satisfaction

Organizational Characteristics consist of OrganizationalValidation, Organizational flexibility,Personnel Assistance and Support,Group Cohesiveness, Rewardsbeyond the Leader's Authority,Perceptive distance between Leader and Member and Perceived Organizational Support.

Leadership BehaviorscomprisesInspirational Leadership,Articulating a Vision,Setting an Appropriate Role Model,Nurturing the Group Goals, High Performance Standards,Intellectual Motivation, Contingent& Non contingent Rewards and Punishments,Role Clarity, Procedural Specifications, Supportive and Empathetic Behaviors, Leader-Member Exchange and Leadership behaviors.

CONCLUSION

Organizations could sustain or expand only with their employees behave as good citizens by engaging in and exhibiting positive behaviors. No one can force an employee to exhibit positive behavior too. OCB has been gaining momentum and has become the focus of researchers for more than three decades. Various scholars have brought out different dimensions of OCB and also various motives for performing OCB. Significant researches are being done on OCB performed towards an individual and an organization too. Several scales are also developed and tested regularly to measure various aspects of OCB. This paper presents the concepts, dimensions and antecedents of Organizational Citizenship Behaviors as discussed by various scholars.

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