

CONFIRMING THE VALIDITY OF OCB SCALES IN THE CONTEXT OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES NOT IN DIRECT CONTACT WITH CITIZENS

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Extended Abstract:

The topic of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) has been approached from many perspectives, since it is a critical factor to consider when designing motivation and commitment policies, because of their easing the social relationships in the company (Podsakoff et al. 2000).

Public sector organizations are by nature service organizations as well, but not all the public employees have the opportunity to interact with their customers/ citizens, so that the effects on the overall performance of the firm are more indirect. However, most research on this subject has been centred in customer-service positions (Bettercourt & Brown, 1997), because of the direct effect that having a positive disposition has on customers' satisfaction. Specifically, public employees such as teachers (Rahman et al. 2013; Mahembe et al., 2015), health-service employees (Vigoda-Gadot & Beeri, 2011) and local employees in general (Jepsen & Rodwell, 2006) have been common subjects for OCB research. The purpose of this paper is to explore the significant validity of OCB specifically in the behaviour of public employees not in direct contact with citizens/customers, whose effects on the overall performance of the firm are indirect. To do so, a survey was carried out aiming to find evidence on whether a traditional OCB scale can be of application to this type of public employees. Our contribution, therefore, is an academic one, looking to establish the bases to bridge a research gap within the important topic of OCB.

Since construct validity means whether a test measures the intended construct (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955) in order to conceptualize the latent variable, OCB in this case, we should start by defining said latent variable. Some of definitions of OCB are the following:

- Behaviors that are discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that aggregate promote organizational functioning (Organ, 1988).
- Additional things that employees do that are beneficial to the organization, although these things are not required as part of their job (Huang et al., 2004)
- For Bettercourt & Brown (1997, p.41), "service oriented OCB describes the discretionary behaviors of contact employees in servicing customers that extend beyond formal role requirements".

The next step in our research will be to test discriminant validity using AMOS software to perform a final confirmatory analysis. Predictive validity will be also be part of the future research model, which will assess the correlations of OCB with organisational commitment, job satisfaction, perceived support from organisation and manager, perceived organizational justice, reward, and work and its conditions. This will help us build a theoretical model of how OCB can be deployed in public management.

Two groups of public employees were chosen as research subjects: the administration personnel of two Polish public universities, and employees from several Polish local governments. They all had the common feature that they did not deal directly with the public in their jobs. Even though OCB is usually measured through self-evaluation as well as peer evaluations (Tillman et al., 2014) or supervisor-employee dyads (McCook, 2002) to avoid any social desirability effect and common method variance errors, in order to limit resistance from our respondents, this survey was carried out with a single-person perspective. Out of 300 questionnaires launched, a total of 280 valid questionnaires were

retrieved, 138 from University employees and 143 from local councils (response rate: 93,3%). A non-response bias test (first vs late respondents) was carried out to ensure that the data are sound. The items in the scale used in this paper were obtained from the original questionnaire of Williams and Anderson (1991), taking into account the opinion of McCook (2002) and Vigoda & Beerli, (2011), who carried out a similar research but not with back-office public employees and who included also items from other proved scales such as Organ & Konovsky (1989) and Morrison (1994). In-role performance has not been included as part of the scale since it refers to “task-performance” more than “contextual performance” (Bowman & Motowidlo, 1993) and therefore it was not pertinent to this research. The final questionnaire was translated into Polish by a member of the team and delivered on paper, to ensure anonymity. SPSS 19 software was used to analyze the existence of factors and their validity (Factor Analysis with Varimax Rotation). Those cases with missing values were excluded from the final analysis, and a non-response bias test (first vs late respondents) was carried out to eliminate errors.

After carrying out a FACP analysis, we found out that the results did not validate the OCB scale as posited by Williams & Anderson (1991), The questionable items were those that reflected negative perceptions of OCB and the latter two having been questioned on reversed. Once the most conflictive items were removed, we were with a tool that is useful in such a particular environment as is the back-office public employees, where social desirability seems to be a very important factor to consider, since public appreciation of their work is not directly reaching them, but that of their colleagues is. Since the limitations in the scale come from the organizational side of OCB, it would seem that this type of employees are not as willing to stretch their effort for the sake of the organization, instead showing a more personal side of OCB (Smith et al, 1983).

The next step in our research will be to test discriminant validity using AMOS software to perform a final confirmatory analysis. Predictive validity will be also be part of the future research model, which will assess the correlations of OCB with organisational commitment, job satisfaction, perceived support from organisation and manager, perceived organizational justice, reward, and work and its conditions. This will help us build a theoretical model of how OCB can be deployed in public management

Keywords: Organizational Citizenship Behavior, Public Employees, Job satisfaction, Public Sector Motivation, Validity of a Scale

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