

MEANINGFULNESS OF WORK AND PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL PRESTIGE AS PRECURSORS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR

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Abstract

Purpose of the study: The present study explores the impact of meaningfulness of work and perceived organizational prestige on organizational citizenship behavior of managerial employees.

Methodology: The study was conducted on 75 mid-level managerial employees working in various organizations in India with the help of convenient sampling method. Standardized questionnaires were used to complete this research. Bivariate Correlation analysis was performed to assess the relationship between meaningfulness of work, perceived organizational prestige, and organizational citizenship behavior. Linear Regression analysis was used to determine the direct contribution of meaningfulness of work and perceived organizational prestige in organizational citizenship behavior of managerial employees.

Main findings: The results showed that the meaningfulness of work and perceived organizational prestige were positively correlated. The outcomes explained the significant positive variance in organizational citizenship behavior and described how important it is to focus on these two constructs.

The originality of the study: The results contribute to the concerned literature by explaining and emphasizing the importance of meaningfulness of work and perceived organizational prestige and facilitate a reflection on the links that motivate employees to work beyond their prescribed duties. Organizations and management should focus on and align their policies to create and maintain conditions responsible for nurturing the habit of organizational citizenship behavior among their employees.

Keywords: *Meaningfulness of Work, Perceived Organizational Prestige, Organizational Citizenship Behavior, Managerial Employees*

INTRODUCTION

In the current competitive world, all organizations are looking at different ways to stay tuned in the marketplace and are continuously exploring various means to perform optimally. When it comes to performance, it is the employees who perform rather than other organizational resources. Consequently, the organizations capable of motivating their employees to engage in spontaneous and pro-social behaviors to meet the demands of unexpected contingencies are likely to perform better. Additional contribution of employees is important for the extraordinary performance of any organization. The extra contribution of employees, which is beyond the call of duty, is termed as organizational citizenship behavior (OCB).

The specific term of OCB was coined by [Smith and colleagues \(1983\)](#). However, its foundations are rooted in [Barnard's \(1938\)](#) notion regarding the crucial and indispensable importance of individuals' willingness to cooperate at work. Literally speaking, an employee who displays OCB is behaving like a "citizen" of the organization. OCB means going the extra mile to help the organization or the colleagues and doing things that are not included in the formal job description. It is observed that irrespective of the type of organization (public or private), some employees are exceedingly devoted to their jobs beyond their role description. OCB includes all such behavior of employees in general, which would benefit co-workers in general and the organization in particular.

Organizations are struggling to find practical solutions for developing and maintaining OCB among employees. Since OCB depends upon the initiative and will of employees, their work experience becomes important. Employees' feelings and their evaluative perceptions about their jobs and organization play an important role in their behavior and in their involvement in additional work. Considering the importance of employees' feelings and perceptions in today's work context and theoretical assumptions of the Job Characteristics Theory, the meaningfulness of work and perceived organizational prestige (POP) becomes crucial to influence OCB.

Work plays a pivotal role in shaping how we define ourselves. Thus, it is inevitable that people will look at their jobs as a source of meaningfulness. Meaningful work has been continuously acknowledged as a critical driver of positive job attitude by various researches, including SHRM's 2016 Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement Report (SHRM, 2016).

Meaningfulness of work is the intrinsically satisfying work experience that depends on the availability of opportunities to develop and use a variety of skills and talent, becoming part of the whole process of identifying and completing the task with visible outcomes instead of being responsible for only a part of the work, and feel acknowledged and appreciated for the exclusive and valuable contribution.

Employees receive and interpret different messages from various external parties, including customers, agents, suppliers, competitors, other organizations, etc., and these messages aid employees to develop an opinion about how outsiders perceive their organization. POP is the conclusive opinion and beliefs of an employee about the reputation and status held by the organization (Carmeli & Freund, 2002). Smidts et al. (2001) also defined POP as "an employee's beliefs about how organizational outsiders view the organization." POP is an individual employee's perception and interpretation, which is based on exposure to organization-related information, and is therefore considered as an individual level variable (Smidts et al., 2001).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)

Organ (1988) defines OCB as an "individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization." On the other side, Andrade, Cost and Lengler (2017) reported that recent researches (Marinova, Moon & Van Dyne, 2010; Podsakoff et al., 2009; Podsakoff et al., 2014) indicate the potential benefits of a more subtle approach considering its conceptualization in two different aspects. First, employees differ in the way they perceive OCB as a part of their role or extra role in organizations (Van Dyne, Ang & Koh, 2008). Second, OCB is sometimes perceived as rewarded by organizations through performance evaluations, promotions, or recognition (Marinova et al., 2010).

Right from its conception, OCB has been considered multidimensional. The most popular model of OCB proposed by Organ (1988) is also multidimensional (five-factor model) consisting of altruism, courtesy, conscientiousness, civic virtue, and sportsmanship. Further, William and Anderson (1991) considered the five dimensions of Organ (1988) and suggested its classification into two: organizational citizenship behavior oriented to other individuals (OCB-I) comprising of courtesy and altruism and organizational citizenship behavior oriented to organization (OCB-O) consisting of sportsmanship, conscientiousness, and civic virtue.

OCB-I includes the efforts and concerns to assist co-workers and new colleagues in doing their work well, providing help to colleagues in solving work-related problems, and doing things that indirectly influences organizational effectiveness (Lee & Allen, 2002; Williams & Anderson, 1991). On the other side, OCB-O motivates employees to participate and contribute directly and particularly for the benefit and betterment of the organization. OCB-O includes being proactive and implementing innovative ways that can provide direct benefits, offering ideas to save resources, and improve the functioning of the organization (Williams & Anderson, 1991).

Multiple studies and meta-analyses have been conducted to look at the relationship between OCB and organizational performance and success. Empirical research regarding the consequences of OCBs has focused on two main areas: organizational performance and success and managerial evaluations of performance and reward allocation. OCB has been linked to overall organizational effectiveness. Thus, such types of employee behaviors have significant consequences in the workplace (Organ, Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 2006; Podsakoff, Blume, Whiting & Podsakoff, 2009; Nielsen, Hrivnak & Shaw, 2009).

Meaningfulness of Work and OCB

The focus on meaning in life extended itself to the workplace, since a large part of human life is spent in employment (Maharaj & Schlechter, 2007). Work meaningfulness is the extent to which employees feel that their job/work/role is useful or significant. When employees believe that their work role serves some actual purpose, it has a considerable contribution to the organizational and societal goals and leads to enhance the perception of meaning in work (Asik-Dizdar & Esen, 2016; Ahmed, Majid & Zin, 2016).

There is empirical evidence to the two-fold significance of meaningful work, first, as an important job resource that can boost employees' work motivation and involvement and, second, maximizing the use of other available resources to further employee engagement levels. When an employee considers the work as meaningful, then he/she is likely to spend more time and effort on the job. People become more committed to the organization they work for and have a higher drive for producing results when they have a sense of meaning in their work (Burrin, 2018).

Considerable evidence also suggests that meaningful work is associated with a series of desirable consequences for organizations, including increased job performance (Grant, 2008) and OCB (Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006; Purvanova, Bono & Dziewieczynski, 2006). Diefendorff, Brown, Kamin & Lord (2002) have shown that individuals who are highly involved in their work are more likely to exhibit OCB. Other researchers also concluded that organizations could improve OCB among employees by providing them meaningful work that would give them a sense of worthy contribution (Bolino & Turnley, 2003; Bolino, Turnley & Niehoff, 2004).

Perceived Organizational Prestige and OCB

POP is different from organizational reputation or organizational image. POP refers to the subjective perception and beliefs of employees about the image or reputation held by outsiders for their organization, whereas organizational reputation or organizational image is the real impression held by outsiders about any organization.

Ashforth and Mael (1989) first argued that POP facilitates the process of organizational identification and thus lead to positive work outcomes. Researchers concluded that employees who report high POP are likely to exhibit positive workplace attitudes, such as affective commitment, job satisfaction, OCB, as well as employees' overall affective well-being (Carmeli & Freund, 2002; Herrbach & Mignonac, 2004; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch & Topolnytsky, 2002). When employees believe that outsiders see the organization in a positive light, they "bask in the reflected glory" (Cialdini et al., 1976), which translates into desirable outcomes, such as intra-organizational cooperation and citizenship behaviors (Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994).

Rodell, Booth, Lynch, and Zipay (2017) expressed that positive feelings associated with corporate volunteering are shared among employees and organizational pride captures this shared affective experience among employees. The researchers further said that such pride in the organization provides employees with a rationale for engaging in OCB. Im and Chung (2018) found the important contribution of organizational pride, which mediated the relationship between meaningfulness of work and OCB.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

A research gap exists in spite of progress being made in understanding OCB and developing OCB is still an issue for human resource managers. POP has been linked with attracting and retaining top performers, but its role in developing OCB among those who joined the organization is still not clear. Keeping in mind the proven beneficial outcomes associated with the positive perceptions of organizational prestige, managers should wish to influence POP in an attempt to obtain great levels of OCB among their employees.

Meaningfulness of work has been recognized as an important individual experience at work, influencing satisfaction and motivation, and improving performance. However, the impact of meaningfulness of work on intra-organizational cooperation and extra-role behavior is not discovered much. Limited research has examined the relationship between an employee's perception and the conditions that organizations can influence.

Based on the above arguments, the researcher proposes that examining how and why POP and meaningfulness of work affect OCB among employees is not only of significant theoretical value for literature, but also has important practical implications for developing and maintaining OCB in organizations.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The purpose of the proposed study was twofold. The first purpose was to examine the nature and strength of the relationship between POP and OCB. The second purpose was to examine the nature and strength of the relationship between the meaningfulness of work and OCB.

According to the above statements, the researcher raised the following hypotheses:

- Hypothesis 1: Perceived organizational prestige is significantly related to organizational citizenship behavior among employees.

- Hypothesis 2: Meaningfulness of work is significantly related to organizational citizenship behavior among employees.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

In this study, the population of interest is composed of individuals working for different organizations in the capacity of midlevel managers with a minimum of three years of work experience. The researcher utilized purposive sampling and the participants were selected on the basis of convenience. The participants included 75 managerial employees (response rate 75%) spanning the industries of manufacturing, services, retail, banking, and others. The average age of the participants was 37 years. Most of the participants were graduates (72%), 24% of them had master degrees, and 4% had education above the master's degree. Among the respondents, 15% were single and 85% were married.

Variables

Independent (Predictor) Variables - Meaningfulness of work; Perceived organizational prestige

Dependent (Criterion) Variable - Organizational citizenship behavior

Measures used for data collection

A demographic questionnaire was created to obtain information regarding employer, organization, participants' tenure with the organization, total work experience, annual income, gender, age, marital status, and education level.

Organizational citizenship behavior: The modified items of the OCB scale by [Huang and You \(2011\)](#) were used for this study. These items were based on the research works of [Smith et al. \(1983\)](#) and [Williams and Anderson \(1991\)](#). [Huang and You \(2011\)](#) reported good reliability of OCB dimensions ($\alpha = 0.76, 0.66$).

Meaningfulness of work: Organizational climate survey (OCS) developed by [Vähälummukka \(2012\)](#) was partially used in this study. OCS is a 31-item scale, which assesses a total of 11 dimensions of organizational climate with high internal consistency, $\alpha = 0.86$. Specific questions (three items) related to the dimension of meaningfulness of work were selected and used for the present study.

Perceived organizational prestige: Three items related to public evaluation were selected from the group identity scale developed by [Heere and James \(2007\)](#). These items were also used by [Priscila \(2012\)](#) in her study, wherein high reliability ($\alpha = 0.84$) was reported.

All items, except for the demography-related questions, were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale anchored by strongly disagree and strongly agree. All demographic questions were included at the beginning of the questionnaire, while the questions related to the variables of interest were randomly distributed to avoid respondents' fatigue bias (as suggested by [Johnson & Christensen, 2004](#)).

DATA ANALYSIS

In order to test the appropriateness of data reliability, the analysis was performed on the responses collected on individual items of different scales used in the study. [Osterlind \(2006\)](#) suggested that the item-to-total correlation values above 0.50 can be regarded as evidence that the data collected on that particular item of the scale is reliable.

After collecting the final data and performing basic checks, the researcher calculated the item-to-total correlation for all variables under study and found that all items were significantly and positively correlated with the total score of their respective scale and had a correlation value of more than 0.50. For the second level verification, the researcher calculated Cronbach's alpha (α) for all variables under study and found satisfactory values (presented below), indicating the reliability of data. Cronbach's alpha ≥ 0.8 is considered as good internal consistency ([DeVellis, 2012](#)).

Table 1: Reliability of scales (based on data collected in the present study)

Variable	α	Internal consistency
OCB	0.81	Good
Meaningfulness of work	0.81	Good
Perceived organizational prestige	0.82	Good

In order to test the stated hypothesized patterns of relationship among the variables under study, the data were analyzed with the help of different quantitative procedures. The statistical package used for the data analysis was SPSS version 20. Pearson's correlation and regression analysis were carried out to test the research hypothesis.

RESULTS

The Pearson product-moment correlation was calculated to test the hypotheses regarding the relationship between the variables under study. The results of the correlation analysis are presented in Table 2, which reveals that meaningfulness of work and POP were significantly and positively correlated to OCB.

Table 2: Correlation among variables under study

Variable	OCB
Meaningfulness of work	.379**
Perceived organizational prestige	.359**

**P < .01.

Table 3 presents the results of regression analysis performed (separate models) by utilizing OCB as the criterion and meaningfulness of work and POP as predictors. The results of the analysis were found to be statistically significant indicating that meaningfulness of work and POP are good predictors of OCB (explained 14.4 % and 12.9 % of the total variance respectively), as indexed by the R² statistic.

Table 3: Regression analysis of meaningfulness of work and POP with OCB among managerial employees (N=75)

Predictor Variable	R	R sq.	R Sq. change	beta Coefficient	t ratio
Meaningfulness of work	.379	.144	.144	.379	3.503**
Perceived organizational prestige	.359	.129	.129	.359	3.286**

**P < .01

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore and understand the nature and extent of the relationship between meaningfulness of work, perceived organizational prestige, and organizational citizenship behavior among managerial employees. The results of correlation analysis and subsequently regression analysis indicated the expected patterns and thus, hypotheses one and two were supported. The results revealed that both meaningfulness of work and POP were significantly correlated with OCB and also significantly predicted variance in OCB.

Meaningfulness of work emerged as a more significant predictor of OCB, suggesting the common social understanding that humans are meaning-makers by nature. Work plays a pivotal role in shaping how we define ourselves. Thus, it is inevitable that people will look at their jobs as a source of meaningfulness. When an employee considers the work as meaningful, he/she is likely to spend more time and efforts on the job and feels good in doing the additional work. In other words, he/she might become more committed to the organizational goals and develops a higher drive for producing results with a sense of meaning in the work (Burrin, 2018). Employees experience positive feelings while performing tasks which are “worth doing”. When employees feel that their role is serving some real purpose, it has a significant contribution to the broader organizational and societal goals and it leads to an increase of meaningfulness of work. The sense of significant contribution and positive feeling energizes them to go for the extra mile and help others. The present findings are as per the theoretical assumptions and are similar to the earlier findings, suggesting that meaningful work is associated with a series of desirable outcomes including OCB (Purvanova, Bono & Dziewieczynski, 2006)

The results indicated that POP also contributes significantly to OCB. Employees’ feelings about a brand, image, and status of the organization develop the understanding that big organizations are created by the involvement and commitment of employees. Every employee needs to work more than stipulated in the job description to maintain and uplift the organizational image and prestige. Similar findings were reported by other researchers studying organizational pride, prestige, and OCB (Andreoni, 1990; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch & Topolnysky, 2002; Peloza & Hassay, 2006).

According to the job demand-resource model, POP serves the purpose of organizational resource. An employee who feels resourced is ready to help and cooperate with other members for the efficient and effective functioning of the organization. It is a form of intrinsic motivation that guides the subsequent behavior. In an application of social identity theory to organizations, Mael and Ashforth (1992) proposed that individuals tend to identify with organizations that are perceived by outsiders as prestigious. More prestigious is the organization, greater is the enhancement of an individual’s self-esteem through social identification (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). This increased identification also leads to more involvement in organizational goals due to the extra commitment and helpfulness.

After combining the results of the present research, a broader mindset and perception may be constructed. If employees perceive and feel good about their organization and job roles, then they will feel good, resourced, and energized, and

possess a sense of completeness in the professional sphere of their lives. This overall good feeling of professional membership is a source of high motivation and contribution, including working beyond duties and helping others.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The results of the present study indicate that meaningfulness of work is competent as a construct, indirectly influencing OCB among employees and indirectly affecting the effectiveness and performance of the organization. The school of positive organizational behavior also emphasizes that positive constructs may provide diverse benefits to employees and organizations. Therefore, enhancing positive characteristics of work and work environment should be given priority. Meaningfulness of work is a positive job characteristic and organizations can routinely make certain policy changes to raise the levels of meaningfulness of work. Employees should be given autonomy to find meaningfulness at their work. Opportunities should be given to utilize the employees' experience and skills to optimally perform the job and feel good about being able to do it. Managers should ensure that employees observe the positive outcomes of their work and contribution. A long-term strategy of developing a culture of recognition and appreciation for employees' contribution towards a greater whole may be adapted to cultivate a sense of importance and meaningfulness.

Organizations should try to influence prestige in an attempt to obtain great levels of OCB. There are various ways in which organizations can influence and improve POP, which include media campaigns and advertisements for communicating organizational and employee achievements, increasing the visibility of the organization, celebrating the success of organizational goal achievement, assuming the relevant CSR initiatives, etc., as well as providing opportunities of interaction and exposure about these activities to employees and develop a positive perception about organizational prestige.

In today's competitive and demanding workplace, every organization needs employees who can perform more than their job requirements. Improvement in the overall functioning of any organization requires their employees to engage in OCB and perform more than the minimal, prescribed, and routine mechanical aspects of their jobs. Extra contribution of employees is becoming important for the extraordinary performance of any organization. Organizations and management should focus on and align their policies to create and maintain the conditions responsible for nurturing the habit of OCB among their employees.

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