

## **Organizational Citizenship and Student Achievement**

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### *Abstract*

*Educated and competent citizens who possess the knowledge, skills, and disposition necessary to participate effectively in civic life add value to our democracy, supporting the common good and ensuring that posterity benefits from their labors. This is the essence of the political science view of citizenship. There are many notable examples of individuals espousing the ideal traits of citizenship throughout our brief history as a nation. The following analysis examines the concept of organizational citizenship behavior through the lenses of social-psychology within the dominion of elementary and secondary education. Leadership style and trust between leader and followers are highlighted as significant factors in promoting organizational citizenship behavior. Finally, the implications for school change and student achievement are put forth.*

### **Societal Citizenship**

When one conjures up thoughts of citizenship and the ideal actions that are neither prescribed nor required of a citizen, one may be inclined to think of civic virtue and, quite possibly, the civic knowledge learned in middle and high school government courses related to the duties and responsibilities of a citizen. Civic virtue is but one of the many dispositions of political citizenship. We define civic virtue as the degree of moral obligation translated into prosocial political and social participation that serve the greater interests of culture and society. Traditionally, interest in the concept of citizenship has been reserved for the fields of American history, philosophy, government and political science due in large part to the implications of an active citizenry in promoting and preserving our republican form of American democracy. In fact, many schools and school divisions tend to include an outcome phrase in their mission statements related to the civic participation of students upon graduation. Citizenship has important implications for history and political science. Citizenship also has important implications for the workplace. The following analysis examines the concept of organizational citizenship behavior through the lenses of social-psychology within the dominion of elementary and secondary education. Leadership style and trust between leader and followers are highlighted as significant factors in

promoting organizational citizenship behavior. Finally, the implications for school change and student achievement are put forth.

Educated and competent citizens who possess the knowledge, skills, and disposition necessary to participate effectively in civic life add value to our democracy, supporting the common good and ensuring that posterity benefits from their labors. This is the essence of the political science view of citizenship. There are many notable examples of individuals espousing the ideal traits of citizenship throughout our brief history as a nation: The steadfast determination of George Washington to remove the chains of tyranny and build a nation in a time of uncertainty; the inspiring vision and calm of Franklin Roosevelt during a time of economic hardship; the courageous commitment of Susan B. Anthony and Lucretia Mott to the pursuit of liberty and equality for women; and the remarkable spirit of sacrifice embodied by Martin Luther King during a time of political and social injustice. Each of these exceptional and courageous Americans possessed extraordinary talents during difficult periods in our history. Ordinary citizens are also able to exhibit citizenship behaviors that contribute to the common good. In general, citizens are able to exhibit citizenship in our democratic society in a variety of ways, including but not limited to, abiding by legal statutes, volunteering, writing letters to government officials, and running

for political office. It is the cumulative citizenship behaviors of individuals that truly add value to our democratic society. But, can prosocial citizenship behavior manifest itself in other ways, specifically within organizations with a bureaucratic and/or corporate structure, and if so, how? More importantly, can the collective citizenship behaviors of workers, specifically teachers and school officials, add value to the lives of individuals and the organization? The answers to these questions are at the core of this analysis.

### **Organizational Citizenship Behavior**

Citizenship is much more than a political construct. Citizenship is very much a psychological and sociological construct. That is to say, citizenship behavior has human and social components, especially when examined under the pretexts of leader-follower relationships and worker productivity. Relationships and productivity are central to the success and evolution of corporate and public sector organizations. Consequently, understanding citizenship behaviors in terms of human resource management and leadership is critical. However, it is worthy to note that citizenship within the private and public sectors is much more complex than political citizenship, which tends to be grounded in the concept of civic virtue, citizenship duties and responsibilities, and lofty notions of heroic citizenship. The complexities we speak of are a consequence of individual and group dynamics, which form the core of social-psychology research and the unique nature of relationships between individuals and groups within disparate organizations. In fact, interest in the topic of organizational citizenship behavior has increased significantly over the years in the fields of sociology, psychology, business, and education.

Organizational citizenship behavior refers to "individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and in the aggregate promotes the efficient and effective functioning of the organization" (Organ, 1988, p.4). Organizational citizenship behavior is "going beyond minimum expected performance" (Tschannen-Moran, 2003,

159). Both definitions adequately capture the essence of our subject. To all intents and purposes we aim to answer the following questions through our review of the literature: What are organizational citizenship behaviors predicated on? And, what are the implications of organization citizenship behaviors for organizational efficiency and effectiveness? From the perspective of researchers in the fields of education and social-psychology, the answer has a great deal to do with relationships. Relationships are central to understanding organizational citizenship behavior and its positive consequences. In this analysis, we contend that leadership style and trust are two of the most important factors in building relationships and contributing to the efficient and effective day-to-day operations of a school. We explore these concepts later in our analysis.

### **Dimensions of OCB**

Organ (1988) conceptualizes organizational citizenship behavior with five dimensions: Altruism, Civic Virtue, Conscientiousness, Courtesy, and Sportsmanship. Table 1 outlines Organ's five dimensions of organizational citizenship behavior.

Altruism may be defined as behaviors of a discretionary nature that are targeted at helping individuals achieve organizationally assigned tasks. As a factory worker, Organ developed his initial thoughts on organizational citizenship behavior when a coworker exhibited altruism by assisting him with the operation of an unfamiliar piece of machinery equipment. This single act of altruism inspired Organ to explore the concept of organizational citizenship later in his academic career and, consequently, Organ's efforts have served to encourage further research on the subject throughout the world, and in other disciplines, such as education.

Civic virtue, similar to the definition articulated earlier under the guise of political citizenship, refers to the degree of employee participation within the political elements of the organization. Interestingly enough, political participation is very much a part of organizational

dynamics. Volunteering to serve on a school improvement team, attending parent-teacher association meetings, and contributing to the dialogue of faculty meetings are some of the many ways that teachers may exhibit civic virtue.

Courtesy refers to discretionary behaviors of a respectful and polite nature such as giving advance notice prior to taking personal leave and providing detailed lesson plans for substitute teachers. The basic premise behind courtesy is that the worker strives to prevent creating problems for individuals and the organization. Courtesy is very similar to conscientiousness. Conscientiousness is the act of doing more than required in terms of executing or carrying out assigned tasks. Sometimes going the extra mile prevents future problems from arising. And, finally, sportsmanship refers to the act of preventing negativity or negative actions, such as complaining and rumor-mongering. Again, none of the behaviors enumerated by Organ are “directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system” and as a whole they “promote the effective functioning of the organization” (1988, p. 4).

Though Organ’s work forms the foundation of our understanding of the topic, there is very little consensus among scholars in terms of the dimensions of organizational citizenship behavior. An earlier work by Organ, Smith, and Near (1983) suggested only

two dimensions of organizational citizenship behavior: Altruism and Compliance. Another study by Williams (1986) identified helping individuals and helping the organization as the two primary dimensions of organizational citizenship. Williams’ approach seems to reduce the complexity associated with having multiple dimensions of organizational citizenship behavior. Though each of these studies differs significantly in terms of indicators of organizational citizenship behavior, they do share a common thread. That is to say, each of the enumerated studies conceptualize organizational citizenship behavior within the context of business and human resource management. Much of the literature on organizational citizenship behavior to date has dealt primarily with relationships in the

corporate sector. Literature on organizational citizenship behavior in the educational setting is relatively recent.

Organizational citizenship behavior when applied to schools is a one-dimensional construct (Tschannen-Moran & DiPaola, 2001). Tschannen-Moran and DiPaola argued that definition and measurement of behavioral dimensions are critical to understanding organizational citizenship behavior in schools. Multiple dimensions of organizational citizenship behavior have the potential to confuse our understanding of the subject when applied to schools. While Williams (1986) noted that organizational citizenship has two dimensions: Benefits to individuals and benefits to organization, Tschannen-Moran and DiPaola (2001) do not separate the constructs. Both scholars contend that organizational citizenship behavior is a one-dimensional construct when applied to elementary and secondary education. That is to say, a benefit to the individual is a benefit to the organization and vice-versa. In addition, Hoffman, Blair, Meriac, and Woehr (2007) demonstrated through statistical analysis that the items of organizational citizenship behavior varied as one.

### **Manifestations of OCB and Negative Norms**

The behaviors exhibited in organizations are not simply a function of formal expectations and individual needs and motivation; the relationships among these elements are dynamic and interdependent with that of other actors within a social network (Hoy & Miskel, 2005, Felmlie, 2003). The fundamental principle of the network perspective is that cases are not independent, that is, one network member’s behavior is dependent on the others’ behavior (Felmlie, 2003). It is in this context that one can see the many manifestations of organizational citizenship behavior as well as the opposite negative norms that can be exhibited by the actors involved in the social structure present in educational settings.

Organ (1988) identified categories of behaviors and how these behaviors helped organizations reach maximum efficiency. The first category, altruism, is directed towards others and

enhances the individual's performance. The second category, conscientiousness, contributes to the group and individual's effectiveness. Sportsmanship, the third category, increases the time spent on constructive endeavors in the organization. The fourth category, courtesy, helps prevent antagonistic behaviors and maximizes the use of time by all involved in the organization. The last construct, civic virtue, serves the interests of the organization. These categories encompass many positive behaviors that manifest themselves in the form of employee pride and the input of extra hours to help new and/or struggling teachers and students. Teachers display organizational citizenship behaviors through mentoring teachers, sponsoring clubs, participating in school activities, serving on committees, passing on accurate information, providing others with advance notice and the many other countless examples of behaviors that exceed the contractual obligations set forth by schools. These behaviors significantly increase when healthy organizations exhibit a strong sense of culture and positive climate.

Educational organizations that exhibit a strong culture of efficacy seem to promote high student achievement by encouraging the acceptance of challenging goals, strong organizational effort, and a persistence that leads to better performance (Hoy & Miskel, 2005). In organizations that do not exhibit these qualities negative norms develop and permeate throughout the organization. Such negative behaviors include gossip, self serving behaviors, acting in isolation, nonparticipation in activities, and a general lack of helping others.

### **Leadership style and OCB**

Because citizenship behaviors contribute to the organization's effectiveness, it is imperative that leaders better understand this construct and how to evoke these behaviors. These behaviors provide an effective means of managing the interdependencies between members of a unit which ultimately increase collective outcomes (Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Smith, Organ, and Near, 1983). DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2001) confirmed a strong link between collegial leadership style of educational

leaders and organizational citizenship. Tschannen-Moran (2003) found that though transformational leadership behaviors are presumed to result in greater organizational citizenship, her analysis suggested that trust was a more powerful explanatory variable. Other authors make similar conclusions regarding how transformational, collegial, and supportive leadership styles intertwine with trust to help produce the most effective work environments (Hoy and Miskel, 2001; Hoy, Sabo, and Barnes, 1996).

According to Daniel Goleman's research (2000) there are six distinctive leadership styles that can affect the climate of an educational setting: coercive, authoritative, affiliative, democratic, pacesetter, and coaching. Each of these styles has the ability to positively or negatively impact the outcomes of various issues that arise and the organizational citizenship behaviors of the faculty and staff. The coercive style is associated with negativity in these organizations. Most high performing workers are motivated by more than money; they are striving to achieve satisfaction from a job well done (Goleman, 2000). The authoritative style has a strong positive affect and is characterized by visionary leadership that enables the stakeholders to better understand how their performance fits into the organization as a whole; they are motivated due to clarity of purpose (Goleman). Individuals that work for a leader using the affiliative style show strong loyalty and impact the environment by communicating, inspiring, and sharing with one another. Through constructive and positive feedback these leaders enable the necessary risk taking and trusting to flourish in education (Goleman, 2000). With morale and trust at the forefront of an organization, the democratic leader asks for peoples' ideas and buy-in, thus increasing commitment. The pacesetter leader evokes negativity; morale is lowered due to the excessively high demand for excellence and overwhelming array of tasks that arise in this situation. Though used less often according to Goleman, the coaching approach helps individuals identify their strengths and weaknesses. These individuals are more likely to reach goals and career aspirations, thus

improving organizational citizenship behaviors through the implementation of attainable development plans.

Educational organizations thrive as leaders better understand how to flexibly interchange between all the styles discussed. Leaders who have mastered four or more-- especially the authoritative, democratic, affiliative, and coaching styles-- have the best climate and professional performance (Goleman, 2000). Because leaders must constantly change their leadership style to fit the needs of the organization, it is important to make sure that trust is embedded in the organization's style so as to increase organizational citizenship behaviors. The researchers found that trust played an implicit role in the transformational leadership process (Tschannen-Moran).

### **Trust and OCB**

Educational organizations are dependent upon social structures and relationships, therefore it is important to stress the interdependence of the actors involved and address the issues surrounding the construct of trust. Trust is an important factor in developing cooperation (Tschannen-Moran, 2001). The interests of one party cannot be fully realized without reliance upon another (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1988). There are five common facets of trust regarding leadership: benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty, and openness; when the faculty has a high level of trust towards the leader they feel as though the leader exhibits these qualities (Hoy and Tschannen-Moran, 1999; Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 2000; Hoy and Tschannen-Moran, 2003). Transformational leaders need the trust of their constituents in order to be successful; in fact, Yukl (1989) stated that one of the main reasons employees perform beyond the normal contract guidelines is due to the trust and respect that they held for their leaders (Tschannen-Moran, 2003). Sergiovanni (1992) argued that trust is indispensable for moral leadership to exist. Tschannen-Moran (2003) conducted studies concerning trust and organizational citizenship and found that trust was a more important factor than leadership style for increasing teacher citizenship

behaviors. When trust was delinked there was unlikely to be increased organizational citizenship behaviors.

### **Implications for Student Achievement and Change**

Organizational citizenship behaviors that extend beyond routine contractual obligations have "long been recognized as an essential component of effective organizational performance" (DiPaola, 2001, p. 36). In fact, much of the research on the subject supports Organ's (1988) claim that organizational citizenship behavior positively influences organizational effectiveness (Organ & Ryan, 1995, Tschannen-Moran, 2003, DiPaola & Hoy, 2005, Tschannen-Moran, Parish & DiPaola, 2006). In educational settings school effectiveness is typically evaluated in terms of student performance on achievement tests. Is there a link between organizational citizenship behavior and student achievement? Research by DiPaola and Hoy (2005) discovered a strong correlation between organizational citizenship behavior and student achievement in high school settings. Further studies by Hoy and DiPaola support the linkage between organizational citizenship behaviors and student achievement in elementary and middle schools (Hoy & DiPaola, 2005).

The topic of organizational citizenship behavior has generated a significant amount of attention in the field of education. Interest in the topic stems from the fact that organizational citizenship behaviors can improve school effectiveness, specifically in terms of student achievement (DiPaola & Hoy, 2005). But, can organizational citizenship behaviors be beneficial in terms of school change? How can organizational citizenship behaviors influence change? We conclude that understanding organizational citizenship behaviors within elementary and secondary education environments has tremendous implications for bringing about meaningful change and sustaining it.

Leadership style is important to bringing about change in a school organization. School leaders should be cognizant of their leadership style

as they are agents of change and the success and survival of any organization is more often than not contingent upon their ability to bring about change and manage it. School leaders certainly have their work cut for them. It is a basic tenet of human behavior to resist change. Fear, loss of power, close-mindedness, and the desire for predictability are some of the many reasons why people resist change. School leaders who understand the importance of relationships are more likely to be successful in facilitating a culture where change is accepted.

Bringing about change begins with building relationships. For Kouzes and Posner (2002), trust and credibility are key ingredients to building positive relationships. In fact, they contend that follower perceptions of change are secondary to follower perceptions of a leader's credibility. That is, followers are more likely set aside their preconceived notions of change, if they trust their leader. Trust in the leader more often than not trumps leadership style (Tschannen-Moran, 2003). Leaders who are honest, forward-looking, competent, and inspiring are more likely to establish trusting relationships (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 32). These are important variables in transformational leadership. However, without trust, follower outputs are likely to be diminished; organizational citizenship behaviors are likely to be reduced significantly. Trust in the leadership permits followers to cope with change, take risks, and go beyond minimal expectations. Empirical analysis confirms that transformational leadership without trust is not a strong predictor of organizational citizenship behavior (Tschannen-Moran, 2003).

For school leaders, credibility and trust should be synonymous. Tschannen-Moran defines trust "as the willingness to be vulnerable to another based on our confidence in the other person's benevolence, honesty, openness, reliability, and competence (Tschannen-Moran, 2005, p. 1)." She also contends that trust improves the functionality and efficiency of school organizations. That is to say, when followers trust the leaders and when the leader trusts the followers, energy monitoring

behavior and speculating on motivations does not have to be expended by the organizational participants (Tschannen-Moran, 2005). School principals and teachers can focus on working toward a shared vision by changing the way things are done. We are not referring to change for the sake of change. We are referring to positive changes that move the school toward the vision. More emphasis can be placed on meaningful professional development activities, aligning curriculum and instruction, researching and integrating new instructional strategies in the classroom, and a plethora of other activities that can impact student achievement in a positive manner. Leadership in any organization is about getting followers to accept change. Once followers stop focusing their energies on change avoidance, efforts can be directed towards constructive behavior and organizational goals.

### **Conclusion**

As educational practitioners and researchers we are convinced that focusing on organizational citizenship behaviors, the contributions of the individual teacher in terms of helping individuals and helping the school organization, is an effective use of a school leader's time. The individual teacher is without a doubt the most significant teaching and learning resource in the classroom. Without the curriculum knowledge and instructional expertise of the classroom teacher, learning though not impossible would be a difficult enterprise. However, it is the prosocial behavior of teachers in a given school that extend beyond traditional and contractual expectations that "supports the social and psychological environment in which task performance takes place" (Organ, 1997, p. 95). These prosocial behaviors can be powerful tools in promoting student achievement and positive change initiatives. A school leader who understands the power of leadership style and trust is likely to have more success in bringing about positive change that enhances the quality of educational programs and student achievement.

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