

# Impact of Organizational Citizenship Behavior on Organizational Performance: A Review and Suggestions for Future Research

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Despite the widespread interest in the topic of organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs), little empirical research has tested the fundamental assumption that these forms of behavior improve the effectiveness of work groups or organizations. This article examines the assumption that OCBs improve the effectiveness of work groups or organizations in which they are exhibited. First, several theoretical/conceptual explanations of why OCBs may improve organizational effectiveness are provided. Following this, a review of the available empirical evidence is provided. The results of this review indicate that OCBs make important contributions to the variance in organizational effectiveness, although helping behavior tends to have more systematic effects than either sportsmanship or civic virtue. Finally, the implications of these findings for future research are discussed.

One of the most widely studied topics in organizational behavior research in recent years is organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs; cf. Bateman & Organ, 1983; Borman & Motowidlo, 1993; Brief & Motowidlo, 1986; George & Bettenhausen, 1990; Moorman, 1991; Munene, 1995; Niehoff & Moorman, 1993; Organ, 1988,

1990; Organ & Konovsky, 1989; Organ & Ryan, 1995; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Bommer, 1996a, 1996b; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Fetter, 1993; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990; Puffer, 1987; Skarlicki & Latham, 1996; Smith, Organ, & Near, 1983; Williams & Anderson, 1991). Although a number of conceptually distinct dimensions of OCBs have been identified (Organ, 1988, 1990), including altruism, courtesy, cheerleading, peacekeeping, sportsmanship, civic virtue, and conscientiousness, recent empirical research (cf. MacKenzie, Podsakoff, & Fetter, 1991, 1993; Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1994) indicates that managers often have difficulty recognizing some of these fine distinctions and tend to lump altruism, courtesy, cheerleading, and peacekeeping into a single "helping" behavior dimension. Conceptually, helping behavior is a second-order latent construct, consisting of Organ's (1988, 1990) altruism, courtesy, peacekeeping, and some aspects of his cheerleading dimensions. The first three of these dimensions clearly involve helping others with, or preventing the occurrence of, work-related problems. In addition, cheerleading can also be viewed as helping behavior when an employee encourages a coworker who is discouraged about his or her accomplishments or professional development. Thus, all four of these forms of citizenship involve aspects of helping behavior.

The widespread interest in organizational citizenship stems primarily from the belief that these behaviors enhance organizational effectiveness. Because of this, a great deal of research (cf. Ball, Trevino, & Sims, 1994; Bateman & Organ, 1983; Brief & Motowidlo, 1986; Farh, Podsakoff, & Organ, 1990; George, 1990; George & Bettenhausen, 1990; Moorman, 1991; Munene, 1995; Niehoff & Moorman, 1993; Organ & Konovsky, 1989; Organ & Ryan, 1995; Podsakoff et al., 1996a, 1996b; Podsakoff et al., 1993; Podsakoff et al., 1990; Podsakoff, Niehoff, MacKenzie, & Williams, 1993; Puffer, 1987; Schnake, 1991; Smith et al., 1983; Williams & Anderson, 1991) has attempted to identify those subordinate characteristics (e.g., conscientiousness, agreeableness, positive and negative affectivity, etc.), task characteristics (task scope, task feedback, intrinsically satisfying tasks, etc.), organizational characteristics (e.g., formalization, inflexibility, spatial distance, etc.), and/or leader behaviors (e.g., leader supportiveness, contingent reward behavior, transformational leadership behaviors, etc.) that encourage employees to exhibit OCBs. In view of all of this activity, it is therefore surprising that more research has not attempted to empirically test whether OCBs really do influence organizational effectiveness. Indeed, as noted by Organ and Konovsky (1989),

OCB derives its practical importance from the premise that it represents contributions that do not inhere in formal role obligations. The presumption is that many of these contributions, aggregated over time and persons, enhance organizational effectiveness. [However], this presumption rests more on its plausibility than direct empirical support. (p. 157)

Similarly, Borman and Motowidlo (1993) noted that the “link between organizational effectiveness and performance ... [is] typically logical and conceptual rather than empirical” (p. 88). Within this context, the purpose of this article is to examine the relation between OCB and organizational effectiveness. First, several theoretical/conceptual explanations of why OCBs might influence organizational or work group effectiveness are explored. Following this, the empirical evidence of the effects of OCBs on organizational and work group performance is reviewed. Finally, the article closes with a discussion of the implications of these findings and suggestions for future research.

### REASONS FOR THE IMPACT OF OCBs ON WORK GROUP AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

There are several possible reasons why helping, sportsmanship, and civic virtue might be positively related to work group or organizational effectiveness (cf. Borman & Motowidlo, 1993; George & Bettenhausen, 1991; Karambayya, 1990; MacKenzie et al., 1991, 1993; Organ, 1988, 1990; Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1994; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Hui, 1993; Smith et al., 1983). In general, it has been argued (cf. Borman & Motowidlo, 1993; Organ, 1988; Smith et al., 1983) that citizenship behaviors may enhance performance by “lubricating” the social machinery of the organization, reducing friction, and/or increasing efficiency. Table 1 summarizes some of the ways in which this may happen.

One way that OCBs may increase the efficiency of an organization is by enhancing coworker or managerial productivity (cf. MacKenzie et al., 1991, 1993; Organ, 1988; Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1994). For example, when more experienced employees voluntarily help new coworkers “learn the ropes,” it helps the new workers to become productive employees faster, thus enhancing the efficiency of the work group or unit. Similarly, over time, helping behavior can be the mechanism through which “best practices” are spread throughout a work unit or group. Managerial productivity may also increase when employees (a) provide valuable suggestions for improving unit performance or feedback on his or her ideas (civic virtue) and (b) avoid creating problems for coworkers (courtesy), which allows the manager to escape the trap of falling into a pattern of “crisis” management.

Another way that OCBs may enhance the efficiency of an organization is by freeing up various types of resources for more productive purposes (cf. Borman & Motowidlo, 1993; MacKenzie et al., 1991, 1993; Organ, 1988; Podsakoff et al., 1993). For example, employees who help each other with work-related problems allow the manager to spend more time on productive tasks (e.g., strategic planning, improving business processes, securing valuable resources, etc.). Likewise, when employees are conscientious it frees up a manager’s time because the manager can delegate more responsibility to them and they require less supervision. In a similar

**TABLE 1**  
**Summary of Reasons Why OCBs Might Influence Organizational Effectiveness**

<i>Potential Reasons Why OCBs Influence Work Group and/or Organizational Performance</i>	<i>Examples</i>
OCBs may enhance coworker productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees who help another coworker “learn the ropes” may help them to become more productive employees faster.</li> <li>• Over time, helping behavior can help to spread “best practices” throughout the work unit or group.</li> </ul>
OCBs may enhance managerial productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If employees engage in civic virtue, the manager may receive valuable suggestions and/or feedback on his or her ideas for improving unit effectiveness.</li> <li>• Courteous employees, who avoid creating problems for coworkers, allow the manager to avoid falling into a pattern of “crisis” management.</li> </ul>
OCBs may free resources up for more productive purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If employees help each other with work-related problems, then the manager doesn’t have too; consequently, the manager can spend more time on productive tasks, such as planning.</li> <li>• Employees that exhibit conscientiousness require less managerial supervision and permit the manager to delegate more responsibility to them.</li> <li>• To the extent that experienced employees help in the training and orienting of new employees, it reduces the need to devote organizational resources to these activities.</li> <li>• If employees exhibit sportsmanship, it frees the manager from having to spend too much of his or her time dealing with petty complaints.</li> </ul>
OCBs may reduce the need to devote scarce resources to purely maintenance functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A natural by-product of helping behavior is that it enhances team spirit, morale, and cohesiveness, thus reducing the need for group members (or managers) to spend energy and time on group maintenance functions.</li> <li>• Employees that exhibit courtesy toward others reduce intergroup conflict; thereby diminishing the time spent on conflict management activities.</li> </ul>
OCBs may serve as an effective means of coordinating activities between team members and across work groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exhibiting civic virtue by voluntarily attending and actively participating in work unit meetings would help the coordination of effort among team members, thus potentially increasing the group’s effectiveness and efficiency.</li> <li>• Exhibiting courtesy by “touching base” with other team members or members of other functional groups in the organization reduces the likelihood of the occurrence of problems that would otherwise take time and effort to resolve.</li> </ul>

TABLE 1 (Continued)

<i>Potential Reasons Why OCBs Influence Work Group and/or Organizational Performance</i>	<i>Examples</i>
OCBs may enhance the organization's ability to attract and retain the best people by making it a more attractive place to work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helping behaviors may enhance morale, group cohesiveness, and the sense of belonging to a team, all of which may enhance performance and help the organization to attract and retain better employees.</li> <li>• Demonstrating sportsmanship by being willing to "roll with the punches" and not complaining about trivial matters sets an example for others, and thereby develops a sense of loyalty and commitment to the organization that may enhance employee retention.</li> </ul>
OCBs may enhance the stability of organizational performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Picking up the slack for others that are absent, or who have heavy workloads, can help to enhance the stability (reduce the variability) of the work unit's performance.</li> <li>• Conscientious employees are more likely to maintain a consistently high level of output, thus reducing variability in a work unit's performance.</li> </ul>
OCBs may enhance an organization's ability to adapt to environmental changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees who are in close contact with the marketplace volunteer information about changes in the environment and make suggestions about how to respond to them; it helps an organization to adapt.</li> <li>• Employees who attend and actively participate in meetings may aid the dissemination of information in an organization, thus enhancing its responsiveness.</li> <li>• Employees who exhibit sportsmanship, by demonstrating a willingness to take on new responsibilities or learn new skills, enhance the organization's ability to adapt to changes in its environment.</li> </ul>

*Note.* OCB = organizational citizenship behavior.

manner, when employees exhibit sportsmanship, a manager's time is not wasted dealing with petty complaints. Perhaps more generally, and to the extent that experienced employees help in the training and orienting of new employees, it reduces the resources the organization must devote to these activities.

Citizenship behaviors may also improve organizational performance by (a) reducing the need to devote scarce resources to purely maintenance functions (Organ, 1988) and (b) helping to coordinate the activities of work groups (cf. Karambayya, 1990; Smith et al., 1983). A natural by-product of helping behavior is that it enhances team spirit, morale, and cohesiveness, thus reducing the need for group members (or managers) to spend energy and time on group maintenance functions. Likewise, not creating problems for others (exhibiting courtesy) reduces intergroup conflict and diminishes the need to spend time on conflict management

activities. The coordination of activities among group members and between work groups may also be enhanced when employees voluntarily attend and actively participate in work unit meetings (civic virtue) and/or "touch base" with other team members or members of other groups to avoid creating problems for them (courtesy).

OCB may also improve performance by enhancing the organization's ability to attract and retain the best people (cf. George & Bettenhausen, 1990; Organ, 1988). Many of the best employees and job candidates enjoy working in a positive environment with a closely knit group of coworkers. Helping behaviors may directly contribute to such an environment by enhancing morale and fostering group cohesiveness and a sense of belonging to a team, thus making the organization a more attractive place to work. Related to this, when employees exhibit sportsmanship by being willing to "roll with the punches," and refrain from complaining about trivial matters, it sets an example of putting the interests of the work unit or group ahead of one's own interests; thus enhancing a sense of loyalty and commitment to the organization.

It is also possible that OCBs benefit an organization by reducing the variability in its performance. Minimizing variability is important because it allows managers to more easily plan and allocate scarce resources. There are several things employees may do to reduce the variability in a work unit's performance, including voluntary acts such as (a) picking up the slack for others that are absent or who have heavy workloads (helping), (b) coming in early or staying late to finish important projects (conscientiousness), and/or (c) going "above and beyond the call of duty" in performing one's work responsibilities (conscientiousness). Individually, these behaviors may all be trivial, but collectively they may significantly enhance the performance of an organization.

Finally, OCBs may help to enhance an organization's ability to adapt to changing environments in several ways. For example, when employees who are in close contact with the marketplace volunteer information about changes in the environment and make suggestions about how to respond to them, it helps an organization to adapt. Similarly, when employees voluntarily attend and actively participate in meetings (civic virtue), it may enhance an organization's responsiveness by aiding the dissemination of valuable information. In addition, when employees exhibit sportsmanship by demonstrating a willingness to take on new responsibilities or learn new skills, it may enhance an organization's ability to adapt to changes in its environment.

Thus, OCBs may contribute to organizational success by (a) enhancing coworker and managerial productivity, (b) freeing up resources so they can be used for more productive purposes, (c) reducing the need to devote scarce resources to purely maintenance functions, (d) helping to coordinate the activities both within and across work groups, (e) strengthening the organization's ability to attract and retain the best employees, (f) increasing the stability of the organization's performance,

and (g) enabling the organization to more effectively adapt to environmental changes.

### EVIDENCE OF THE EFFECTS OF OCBs ON WORK GROUP AND ORGANIZATIONAL SUCCESS

The assumption that OCBs contribute to the effectiveness of work teams and organizations has only recently been tested empirically. Perhaps the first person to explore this issue was Karambayya (1990), who examined the relation between work unit performance and satisfaction and unit members' citizenship behaviors in a sample of 18 intact work groups, comprised primarily of white-collar and professional employees from 12 different organizations. In her study, she obtained performance ratings for the work units from key division and department heads, employee OCB ratings from supervisors, and self-reports of satisfaction from employees. Consistent with her expectations, she found that employees in high-performing work units were more satisfied and exhibited more citizenship behaviors than employees in low-performing work units.

However, despite Karambayya's (1990) relatively encouraging findings, there are some limitations to her study. First, Karambayya's (1990) measures were subjective ratings provided by key informants in each of 12 different organizations, rather than quantitative indices of work unit or organizational success. Thus, although she observed a relation between OCBs and subjective ratings of unit performance, the question of whether OCBs influence objective unit performance remains unanswered. For example, the strength of the relation between citizenship behavior and performance may be influenced by the key informants' implicit theories (cf. Berman & Kenny, 1976; Bruner & Tagiuri, 1954) of the relation between these two constructs. Second, because Karambayya had different raters evaluating performance in each of the 12 organizations in her sample, we do not know whether the measurement metric used by all of the raters was the same. Because it is likely that the organizations differed in their products, services, corporate cultures, and standards, it seems questionable that the same measurement metric would have been used by all raters. Third, as noted by Bagozzi, Yi, and Phillips (1991), measurement error can sometimes be quite high in key informant reports. Finally, although Karambayya (1990) identified two groups of work units and labelled 11 of them as "high" and 7 of them as "low" performing units, there is really no assurance that the two groups did not differ on other factors as well. Thus, although Karambayya's (1990) results were promising, they were far from conclusive.

A series of recent studies (cf. Podsakoff, Ahearne, & MacKenzie, in press; Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1994; MacKenzie, Podsakoff, & Ahearne, 1996; Walz & Niehoff, 1996) addressed many of the limitations of Karambayya's research.

Unlike Karambayya's study, these studies all used objective measures of unit performance and held variations due to industry factors constant by sampling multiple units within the same company. Thus, any observed relations between citizenship behavior and performance are less likely to be affected by implicit theories, different measurement metrics, or measurement error. In addition, there was a great deal of consistency in the manner in which OCBs were measured across the studies, thus making it easier to compare their results.

A summary of these four studies is provided in Table 2. As indicated in this table, four different organizational contexts have been examined. Podsakoff and MacKenzie (1994) examined 116 insurance agency units, Podsakoff et al. (in press) examined 40 paper mill work crews, MacKenzie et al. (1996) examined 306 pharmaceutical sales teams, and Walz and Niehoff (1996) examined 30 limited-menu restaurants. In addition, aspects of both the quantity and quality of performance were examined in these studies.

In the first study, Podsakoff and MacKenzie (1994) examined the impact of helping behavior, sportsmanship, and civic virtue on a composite index of unit performance. This composite index was developed by the company for the purpose of assessing unit success, and was the index on which units compete for sales incentives (i.e., awards, trips, prizes, etc.). This index was comprised of a weighted average of four measures, including the (a) amount of "new business" brought in by the agents, (b) amount the agents exceeded the previous year's median agent production level for the company, (c) average number of policies sold per agent weeks worked, and (d) total number of policies sold by the agents. Podsakoff and MacKenzie found that all three forms of citizenship behaviors had significant effects on unit-level performance, and together accounted for approximately 17% of the variance. However, contrary to their expectations, they found that helping behavior was negatively (rather than positively) related to unit performance.

In the second study, Podsakoff et al. (in press) examined the effects of helping behavior, sportsmanship, and civic virtue on both the quantity and quality of the paper produced by 40 work crews at a paper mill. Compensation for each crew member was based on a combination of hourly wages and gain-sharing based on the quantity and quality of the paper that each crew produced. Podsakoff et al. (1996) found that helping behavior and sportsmanship were positively related to the quantity of paper produced, and that helping behavior reduced the percentage of paper rejected, which means that it was positively related to production quality. These predictors accounted for nearly 26% of the variance in production quantity, and almost 17% in production quality.

In the third study, MacKenzie et al. (1996) examined the effects of helping behavior, sportsmanship, and civic virtue on the effectiveness of 306 pharmaceutical sales teams. The teams were responsible for marketing four product lines directly to physicians, as opposed to managed-care, government organizations, or hospitals. Members of the sales teams were compensated based on the team's



TABLE 2  
Summary of Results Across Studies

Description	Podsakoff & MacKenzie (1994) <sup>a</sup>	Podsakoff et al. (1996) <sup>b</sup>	MacKenzie et al. (1996) <sup>c</sup>	Walz & Niehoff (1996) <sup>d</sup>						
	Index of Sales Performance	Quantity Produced <sup>e</sup>	Product Quality <sup>f</sup>	% of Team Sales Quota	Food Cost %	Revenue FTE	Operating Efficiency	Customer Complaints	Customer Satisfaction	Quality of Performance
Helping Behavior → Organizational Performance	-.494*	.397*	-.424*	.18*	-.46*	4581.6*	3.56*	—	.42***	.13*
Civic Virtue → Organizational Performance	.529*	-.318	.044	.18*	—	—	—	-.76**	—	—
Sportsmanship → Organizational Performance	.325*	.393*	-.028	.07	-.29*	—	—	.47+	—	—
R <sup>2</sup>	17%	25.7%	16.7%	15%	43%	18%	15%	37%	39%	20%

Note. With the exception of Walz and Niehoff (1996), coefficients reported are standardized parameter estimates.

<sup>a</sup>N = 116 insurance agency units. <sup>b</sup>N = 40 paper mill work crews. <sup>c</sup>N = 306 pharmaceutical sales teams. <sup>d</sup>N = 30 limited-menu restaurants. <sup>e</sup>Percentage of maximum production. <sup>f</sup>Percentage of paper rejected.

\*p < .05. \*\*p < .01. \*\*\*p < .001. +p < .06.

overall performance, rather than on the basis of their individual performance. As indicated in Table 2, MacKenzie et al. found that both helping behavior and sportsmanship were positively related to sales team effectiveness, and together accounted for approximately 15% of the variance in this criterion variable.

In the final study, Walz and Niehoff (1996) tested the relations between OCBs and a variety of performance measures in limited-menu restaurants. They measured OCBs using slightly modified versions of MacKenzie et al.'s (1993) and Podsakoff and MacKenzie's (1994) OCB scales. They found that helping behavior was related to overall operating efficiency, revenue to full-time-equivalent, customer satisfaction, and quality of performance, in addition to reduced food cost percentage (which represents the percentage of food and ingredients wasted). Sportsmanship was negatively associated with the percentage of wasted food and customer complaints. Civic virtue correlated negatively with the number of customer complaints. Overall, one of the most impressive aspects of their findings is that the combination of helping, sportsmanship, and civic virtue accounted for an average of about 29% of the variance in these six objective criterion variables, with the proportion of variance accounted for as high as 37% to 43% for some of these variables.

Taken together, the overall pattern of results provide general support for the hypothesis that OCBs are related to organizational effectiveness. Across four diverse samples, OCBs accounted for an average of approximately 19% of the variance in performance quantity, over 18% of the variance in the quality of performance, about 25% of the variance in financial efficiency indicators (operating efficiency, food cost percentage, and revenue full-time-equivalent), and about 38% of the variance in customer service indicators (customer satisfaction and customer complaints). Helping behavior had significant effects on every indicator of performance, except customer complaints in the Walz and Niehoff (1996) study. Generally speaking, helping behavior was found to enhance performance. The only exception was that helping behavior had a negative impact on the quantity of performance in the sample of insurance agency units examined by Podsakoff and MacKenzie (1994). Sportsmanship had more limited effects. It enhanced the quantity of performance in two of the three samples where it was studied (insurance agency units and paper mill work crews) and increased some aspects of financial efficiency and customer service in the limited-menu restaurant sample. Finally, civic virtue was found to enhance the quantity of performance in the insurance and pharmaceutical sales samples and to reduce customer complaints in the limited-menu restaurant sample. Thus, the available empirical research clearly supports Organ's (1988) fundamental assumption that OCB is related to performance—although the evidence is stronger for some forms of citizenship behavior (i.e., helping) than for others (i.e., sportsmanship and civic virtue).

## IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In view of the fact that OCBs have been found to be related to organizational effectiveness, there are a number of important issues future research should address. Four major types of issues are discussed in the following sections: potential moderators of the relation between OCBs and unit effectiveness, the need to more accurately assess the direction of causality between OCBs and organizational success, the need to examine additional forms of extra-role behavior, and the need to broaden the measures of organizational performance examined.

### Potential Moderators of the OCB–Quantity of Performance Relation

Two interesting aspects of the empirical findings shown in Table 2 are that (a) helping behavior sometimes increased, and sometimes decreased, the quantity of performance and (b) sportsmanship and civic virtue seem to have had an impact on this criterion variable in some samples, but not in others. This suggests that there may be factors that moderate the impact of OCBs on the quantity of performance.

There are a number of potential reasons why the relation between helping behavior and the quantity of performance was negative in one sample (Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1994) and positive in the others (MacKenzie et al., 1996; Podsakoff et al., in press). One relates to the nature of the samples in the three studies. For example, in the life insurance sample studied by Podsakoff and MacKenzie (1994), turnover was extremely high (45% in their first year of employment and over 80% within the first 5 years) and the average tenure of the agents with the company was only 5.29 years. This led Podsakoff and MacKenzie (1994) to speculate that although inexperienced agents may sell more with the help of experienced agents, many of the inexperienced agents may not stay with the company very long. Thus, the increase in their sales productivity resulting from the help they receive from the experienced agents may not offset the corresponding decrease in the experienced agents' sales caused by their taking time out to help inexperienced agents. In contrast, the average tenure of the crew members in the sample of paper mill employees studied by Podsakoff et al. (in press) was over 18 years, and the average tenure among the pharmaceutical sales people studied by MacKenzie et al. (1996) was also quite long. As a result, it is likely that helping behavior provided by crew members or pharmaceutical sales team members actually paid off in terms of increased productivity.

Another potential reason for the differences in the findings relates to the compensation systems in the three samples. In the insurance sales sample, agents were compensated on the basis of their individual sales performance. Indeed, no part of their pay was related to their agency's performance. Under such individu-

alistic compensation systems, agents might be less willing to provide help to their peers, or might be less concerned with the quality of their suggestions, because there are no personal consequences for them. On the other hand, in the pharmaceutical sales sample, compensation was completely determined by team performance, and in the sample of paper mill work crews, compensation was based partially on team performance and partially on the basis of job responsibilities and tenure. Thus, one could argue that when a portion of one's pay is determined by group effort, OCBs might be expected to be directed at helping and supporting one's peers.

Still another potential moderator of the helping behavior → quantity of performance relation is the technological requirements of the job. For example, Organ (1988) noted that,

Using Thompson's (1967) taxonomy, one would expect OCB to have more importance in connection with intensive than with mediating or long-linked technologies, because intensive technologies give rise to mutual dependence among members and require spontaneous give-and-take, accommodating gestures among the parties in order to achieve effective coordination of their respective efforts. (p. 109)

Similarly, one would expect OCBs to be more critical to organizational and work group success when long-linked technologies, as opposed to mediating technologies, are employed. Unlike the mediating technologies employed in the insurance industry, which require virtually no cooperative effort or mutual dependence among the agents, the long-linked technologies used in the paper industry require what Thompson (1967) called serial interdependence among the crew members. This type of interdependence demands a considerable amount of joint or cooperative effort by the work group to accomplish the task. Thus, differences in the relation obtained between helping behavior and work unit performance in the two studies may, in part, reflect differences in the nature of the dependency relations required in the two different types of jobs included in the two studies.

In addition to the potential moderators of the relation between helping behavior and the quantity of performance, the results suggest that there may also be some potential moderators of the relation between civic virtue and the quantity of performance. Table 2 shows that civic virtue had a positive impact on performance for the two sales samples, but not for the paper mill sample. At the risk of overinterpreting the findings of only three studies, it is possible that this pattern of findings results from the nature of the job included in the samples. Sales people are boundary spanners, who are one of the primary points of contact between a company and its customers, competitors, and the environment in general. As such, they often possess information regarding customers, the competitive environment, and/or business trends that others in the organization do not possess, and which may be critical for allowing the organization to adapt to changes in its environment. Thus, to the extent that salespeople actively participate in meetings, provide constructive

suggestions about how to improve the way in which the organization does its business, and are willing to risk disapproval to express their beliefs about what is best for the organization, they may enhance the organization's performance. Future research should explore this possibility in greater detail.

Another possibility noted by Podsakoff et al. (in press) is that the differential impact of civic virtue on the quantity of performance across the settings may be a result of the differential quality of suggestions or the nature of participation by work group members. It is possible that suggestions are not helpful or that participation does not result in useful discourse for some organizations. In such cases, high civic virtue would not translate into high organizational effectiveness.

Taken together, the previous discussion suggests that future research examining the relation between OCBs and organizational effectiveness could benefit from examining the moderating effects of organizational characteristics (i.e., the level of turnover, the nature of the compensation system, etc.) and task and technological requirements (i.e., the nature of the technology and/or tasks that employees perform, the amount of team work required across jobs, etc.). In addition, future research might also investigate the potential moderating effects of individual differences such as ability, experience, training, and knowledge. It seems plausible that an OCB like helping behavior might have different effects on performance in units where employees are low in ability, experience, training, or knowledge than in units where employees have high levels of ability, experience, training, or knowledge.

### Investigation of Causality

Another important topic for future research to investigate is the question of whether (a) OCBs cause organizational performance, (b) organizational performance causes OCBs, or (c) the relation between OCBs and performance is spurious due to a common cause (the third variable). Although throughout this article, and indeed throughout all OCB research, the fundamental assumption is that OCBs cause unit effectiveness, there has never been a direct test of this assumption. All of the evidence summarized in this article is correlational in nature, and thus is not capable of clearly distinguishing the direction of causality. For example, the positive relations observed between OCBs and unit performance have been interpreted as an indication that OCBs cause performance to increase. However, it is also possible that units that perform well have more time, are under less pressure, and/or have members who are more satisfied than units that are not performing well; therefore they are more willing to engage in extra-role behaviors like helping, sportsmanship, and civic virtue. This suggests it is a unit's level of performance that causes citizenship behavior rather than vice versa. Or, it is possible that the positive relation between OCBs and unit effectiveness is spurious. For example, high-performing

groups might report that they engage in a great deal of citizenship behavior not because they really do, but because their implicit theories of performance suggest that high-performing groups help each other, are good sports, and exhibit civic virtue. This would be consistent with Staw's (1975) finding that groups who were told that their performance was high rated themselves as more cohesive than groups who were told that their performance was low—even though the feedback was unrelated to the groups' actual performance. Thus, future research designed to more clearly establish the causal direction of relations between these variables is needed.

### Other Forms of Extra-Role Behavior

*Anticitizenship behaviors.* Another interesting direction for future research would be to examine additional forms of extra-role behavior and their impact on unit effectiveness. Fisher and Locke (1992) identified several forms of "anticitizenship behaviors" (ACBs), which might also be expected to influence unit effectiveness. According to Fisher and Locke, ACBs include defiance and resistance to authority (e.g., deliberately ignoring rules, regulations, and/or supervisor's instructions; talking back to the supervisor; purposely interfering with someone else doing his or her job; etc.); revenge/retaliation (e.g., selling company information to competitors; leaking detrimental information to the press; stealing supplies, tools, or company merchandise; etc.); and avoidance from the work itself (e.g., doing as little work as possible; trying to look busy doing nothing; conducting personal business when supposed to be working; etc.). Ball et al. (1994) examined certain antecedents of anticitizenship behavior, but no one has examined the impact of these behaviors on unit effectiveness, even though one would expect many of them to have a negative impact. Thus, future research should investigate this possibility.

*Customer-oriented behaviors.* In addition to examining the impact of extra-role behaviors that are not necessarily functional for the organization (e.g., ACBs), future research might also examine the impact of extra-role behaviors that are more "customer-oriented" (COBs) as well. Figure 1 identifies four main classes of behaviors that differ based on whether the behavior is in the job description, explicitly rewarded/punished, trained, and so forth, and whether the behavior primarily benefits the organization (or people within the organization) or the organization's customers. As shown in the figure, "in-role" behaviors directed at the "company/organization" are called "work-oriented" behaviors; "in-role" behaviors directed at "customers" are "sales/service-oriented"; "extra-role" behaviors directed at the "company/organization" are "organizational citizenship behaviors"; and "extra-role" behaviors directed at "customers" are "customer-oriented" behav-

	<b>Company-Directed</b>	<b>Customer-Directed</b>
<b>In-Role</b>	<b>Work-Oriented Behaviors (WOB)</b>	<b>Sales/Service Oriented Behaviors (SOB)</b>
<b>Extra-Role</b>	<b>Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (OCB)</b> <b>Anti-Citizenship Behaviors (ACB)</b>	<b>Customer Oriented Behaviors (COB)</b>

FIGURE 1 Employee behavior typology.

iors. All four of these forms of behavior might be expected to influence unit effectiveness. The in-role forms of behavior (i.e., work-directed and sales/service-oriented behaviors) would be expected to influence unit effectiveness for obvious reasons because they relate to the performance of essential job responsibilities; we have already reviewed evidence documenting the impact of OCBs on organizational performance. However, evidence of the impact of customer-oriented behavior is only just beginning to accumulate.

For example, a recent study by George and Bettenhausen (1990) examined the relation between pooled unit-level ratings of customer-oriented prosocial behavior and several objective sales performance in a chain of national retail stores. The customer-oriented behavior measures tapped aspects of customer service and the extent to which the sales associates exhibited helpful behaviors directed toward customers. George and Bettenhausen found that customer-oriented behavior was correlated .33 with unit sales performance, and  $-.29$  with voluntary turnover.

In another study, Narver and Slater (1990) examined the relation between customer orientation and several measures of business performance, among 113 strategic business units in a forest products division of a major corporation. Their

measure of customer orientation captured customer commitment, in the process creating customer value, understanding customer needs, and after-sales service. Narver and Slater found that customer orientation was positively related to return on assets ( $r = .30$ ), low cost-based competitive advantage ( $r = .27$ ), and differentiation-based competitive advantage ( $r = .44$ ).

More recently, Kizilos and Cummings (1996) examined the extent to which prosocial organizational behavior mediates the impact of employee involvement on organizational performance in a sample 143 units of large consumer products company. One aspect of each unit's prosocial organizational behavior was called "customer-centered behavior" and reflected anticipating and adapting to customer needs, exceeding customer expectations, and resolving customer problems. They found that customer-centered behavior was positively related ( $r = .31$ ) to a measure of unit sales volume.

Taken together, the empirical evidence from these three studies (George & Bettenhausen, 1990; Kizilos & Cummings, 1996; Narver & Slater, 1990) indicates that customer-oriented behavior may have important effects on unit performance. Although this evidence is far from conclusive, it suggests several priorities for future research. First, because each of these studies defined customer-oriented behavior in different ways, future research needs to focus on identifying the dimensions of COB and more clearly articulate the difference between this type of behavior and "sales/service-oriented" behavior. Second, the impact of COBs on performance should be examined in the context of the effects of in-role behavior and OCB, in order to gain a better understanding of their relative contribution to organizational success. Third, because the evidence reviewed earlier is all correlational in nature, future COB research should attempt to obtain better evidence of the direction of causality between COBs and unit performance, perhaps through experimental or longitudinal research. Finally, future research should attempt to identify moderators of the relation between COB and unit performance.

### Other Criterion Variables

A final interesting direction for future research would be to examine the impact of OCB on a broader range of criterion variables. The study by Walz and Niehoff (1996) took an important step in this direction. However, much more research is needed. It might be particularly interesting to examine relations between OCB and employee turnover/retention, customer satisfaction, customer complaints, customer retention, the cost of producing goods/services, return on investment, profitability, innovativeness, adaptability, and so forth. In principle, the synergies created by OCB may have widespread consequences for organizations.

One could argue the same point for other forms of extra-role behavior such as ACBs and COBs. After all, Narver and Slater (1990) have already reported that a



form of COB (their “customer-orientation” construct) is positively related to a construct called *human resources management effectiveness* ( $r = .44$ ), and it would not be too surprising if ACBs like “defiance and resistance to authority” or “revenge/retaliation” were found to be negatively related to this construct. Similarly, it might be reasonable to expect that COBs would influence customer satisfaction, customer complaints, customer retention, sales volume, profitability, return on investment, and so on. Thus, although the specific consequences of COBs and ACBs may be somewhat different than the consequences of OCBs, the possibility that other forms of extra-role behavior may have important consequences for organizations is intriguing.

## CONCLUSION

The widespread interest in the topic of OCB has been predicated on the assumption that OCBs influence organizational success. Our review of the literature indicates that this assumption has generally been confirmed by empirical data. However, it is important to note that (a) the impact helping behavior on organizational effectiveness appears to be stronger and more consistent than the effects of other forms of citizenship behavior and (b) research on this aspect of citizenship behavior is still in its infancy and the available evidence comes primarily from only four studies. In view of this, additional research is needed to further clarify the impact of OCBs on organizational success and to investigate the other research issues discussed.

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