

DETERMINANTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIORS: AN ATTEMPT AT SYSTEMATIZATION AND A CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Dorota GREGO-PLANER^{1*}, Monika CHODOREK²

¹ Nicolaus Copernicus University, Toruń; dgp@umk.pl, ORCID: 0000-0002-7569-1526

² WSB University in Toruń, Toruń; monika.chodorek@torun.merito.pl, ORCID: 0000-0002-1956-0003

* Correspondence author

Purpose: The main purpose of this article is to systematize knowledge about the determinants of Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB). The publication provides a synthetic overview of the main research streams on OCB antecedents, organizes the factors influencing these behaviors into three primary categories, and presents them in the form of a conceptual model.

Design/methodology/approach: To organize the existing knowledge on OCB determinants, a critical literature review was conducted. In searching for motivational mechanisms underlying OCB, the analysis draws on the following interpretative perspectives: social exchange theory, identification mechanism, impression management, and the concept of positive interpersonal relationships.

Findings: Based on the literature review, an original conceptual model of OCB determinants is proposed. The model integrates three groups of factors: (1) Personality factors – stable individual dispositions influencing the propensity for prosocial actions; (2) Work-related attitudes – cognitive–emotional evaluations of the organization, work, and supervisors; (3) Environmental factors – elements of the organizational context that create conditions conducive to citizenship behavior.

Practical implications: From a managerial perspective, the model of OCB determinants is highly valuable for designing HR policies and organizational culture. If citizenship behaviors result from the interaction of traits, attitudes, and context, this means organizations can actively shape environments that reinforce such behaviors. In practice, the model suggests that effective OCB management requires coordinated actions at three levels: (1) recruitment and selection (individual level), (2) motivation and appraisal (attitudinal level), (3) shaping organizational climate and leadership (environmental level).

Originality/value: The added value of this article has an integrative and organizing character. It not only reviews existing research but also proposes a new interpretative structure that may serve as a basis for future empirical studies. The analysis indicates that effectively explaining OCB requires considering multiple levels of antecedents simultaneously—individual dispositions, psychological processes, and organizational context—each of which may play a different role depending on the situation.

Keywords: Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), OCB determinants, personality traits, work-related attitudes, work environment.

Category of the paper: Literature review.

1. Introduction

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) has for more than three decades been one of the key areas of interest within human resource management, organizational psychology, and organizational theory. Despite the vast number of publications and the growing practical importance of the phenomenon in management, the literature remains highly heterogeneous. This is particularly true for the determinants of citizenship behaviors, which are described in a fragmented, often inconsistent, and sometimes mutually contradictory manner (Organ, 1988; Podsakoff et al., 2000). Differences in how OCB is defined, the diversity of theoretical perspectives, and the absence of a clear classification of factors contribute to significant conceptual and methodological chaos in research on OCB antecedents.

Originally, the concept of OCB was introduced as an attempt to answer the question of why employees engage in activities that lie outside their formal job duties while simultaneously providing meaningful benefits to the organization. Organ (1988) defined OCB as voluntary activities not included in the formal reward system, yet conducive to the effective functioning of the organization. Over time, the scope of the concept expanded—from altruism and helping coworkers to organizational initiative, loyalty, and adherence to norms (Podsakoff et al., 2000). At the same time, alternative approaches emerged, such as the concept of “contextual performance” (Borman, Motowidlo, 1993), leading to further interpretative divergences.

The greatest challenge, however, concerns the determinants of OCB. The literature includes numerous studies emphasizing the role of personality traits (Chiaburu et al., 2011; Organ, Ryan, 1995), while others focus on the influence of the work environment, leadership style, or perceptions of fairness (Podsakoff et al., 2000; Walumbwa et al., 2008). Yet another stream highlights employee attitudes as the key explanatory mechanism for citizenship behaviors (Cropanzano et al., 2007; Kamdar, Van Dyne, 2007). As a result, the literature resembles a “patchwork” composed of many well-researched components that, however, are rarely integrated into coherent theoretical frameworks.

This lack of integration has tangible consequences: it hinders the comparison of research findings, complicates the interpretation of conflicting conclusions, and limits the possibility of building more general theories concerning OCB. Moreover, many studies focus on selected industries or specific samples, which further complicates the generalization of results. In response to these discrepancies, calls for organizing and synthesizing knowledge about the determinants of OCB have become increasingly common (Organ et al., 2006), encompassing individual, attitudinal, and contextual perspectives.

The aim of this article is to organize this fragmented literature by:

1. providing a synthetic overview of the main research streams on the determinants of OCB,
2. classifying the factors influencing OCB into three complementary groups: personality traits, work-related attitudes, and environmental factors,
3. presenting a conceptual model that frames OCB as the outcome of the co-occurrence of these three categories of determinants, taking into account their potential interrelations and interactions.

The added value of the article is primarily organizational in nature. The proposed systematization enables a coherent understanding of previously scattered findings, while the presented model offers an interpretative framework that can be used both in empirical research and organizational practice. The analysis indicates that effectively explaining OCB requires considering several levels of determinants simultaneously—individual dispositions, psychological processes, and the organizational context—each of which may play a different role depending on the situation.

The significance of this issue extends beyond the academic context. Contemporary organizations, operating under conditions of increasing complexity and competitive pressure, increasingly rely on employees' voluntary, informal behaviors that enhance adaptability, cooperation, and team effectiveness. Understanding the determinants of citizenship behaviors thus becomes crucial for effective human capital management. The structure of the article includes: an outline of the theoretical foundations, a synthetic review of OCB determinants, a proposed conceptual model, and a discussion of findings along with directions for future research.

2. Theoretical Foundations of Citizenship Behaviors

Organizational citizenship behavior is a multidimensional phenomenon that can be interpreted from various theoretical perspectives. The literature distinguishes four dominant interpretative approaches: social exchange theory, the identification mechanism, impression management, and the concept of positive interpersonal relationships. Each of these approaches emphasizes a different motivational mechanism leading to the display of citizenship behaviors.

The most frequently referenced theoretical approach to explaining OCB is Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano, Mitchell, 2005). It assumes that the relationship between the employee and the organization is based on the principle of reciprocity. When employees perceive that the organization treats them fairly, supports their development, and appreciates their contributions, they develop a psychological obligation to reciprocate with behaviors that benefit the organization (Organ, 1988). In this way, OCB becomes a form of “social compensation” for the organizational support experienced (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

In practice, social exchange theory explains why factors such as perceived organizational justice, trust in supervisors, or perceived organizational support (POS) are strong predictors of citizenship behaviors. High levels of trust and fairness foster the belief that the individual's efforts will be appreciated, even if they are not directly rewarded (Cropanzano et al., 2007).

However, this theory is relational in nature—it assumes that citizenship behaviors are a reaction to the treatment employees receive from the organization, rather than merely the result of internal personality traits. Therefore, many scholars (Lavelle et al., 2007) argue that social exchange can have both an organizational dimension (employee–organization relationship) and an interpersonal dimension (employee–supervisor or employee–coworker relationship).

A second approach to explaining OCB is the organizational identification mechanism, which derives from social identity theory (Tajfel, Turner, 1979). It assumes that employees strive to build a positive self-image through belonging to a prestigious group. The more strongly an individual identifies with the organization, the more they perceive its successes as their own, and its failures as personal setbacks. Strong organizational identification promotes citizenship behaviors because employees view the organization's well-being as their own. A high level of identification leads to the internalization of organizational norms and values, resulting in the spontaneous undertaking of actions that benefit the team and the institution (Ashforth et al., 2008). From this perspective, OCB is not a reaction to social exchange but an outcome of internal identification with the organization. Such behaviors are therefore more stable and less dependent on immediate situational evaluations. Research indicates that organizational identification plays an especially important role in cultural contexts characterized by high collectivism (Van Der Veegt et al., 2003).

The third approach assumes that some citizenship behaviors are strategic in nature and serve to build a positive image of the employee in the eyes of others. According to Impression Management Theory (Bolino, 1999), employees may engage in OCB not only for altruistic reasons but also to gain recognition, promotions, or the trust of supervisors. From this perspective, OCB becomes an element of self-presentation. Employees who display high levels of citizenship behaviors may be perceived as more loyal, competent, and committed, which in the long term translates into personal benefits (Grant, Mayer, 2009).

This theory explains why OCB can also occur in environments where social relationships are weak or based on competition—in such contexts, citizenship behaviors become a way of building reputation. Although this approach is sometimes criticized for emphasizing egoistic motives, it constitutes an important complement to classical altruistic theories. In reality, motivation for OCB is often mixed, encompassing both prosocial and self-presentational components (Bolino et al., 2008).

The fourth approach is based on the assumption that citizenship behaviors result from positive interpersonal relationships in the workplace. According to the Positive Relationships Theory (Cameron et al., 2003; Clark, Mills, 1979), people have a natural need to form

relationships grounded in trust, reciprocity, and empathy. Strong bonds within a team foster knowledge sharing, cooperation, and helping others—behaviors that are typically associated with OCB. These relationships do not need to be formal; they may stem from everyday interactions that build a sense of community and belonging. Research indicates that in teams with high levels of trust and social support, the frequency of OCB is significantly higher (Bowler, Brass, 2006). Positive relationships play a particularly important role in collectivist cultures, where interdependence among individuals is a social norm. This approach focuses on the social context of OCB, in which citizenship behaviors are not so much a reaction to organizational conditions as a result of functioning within a network of trust-based and supportive relationships.

Although each of the above approaches focuses on a different motivational mechanism, in practice the phenomenon of OCB requires an integrative perspective. Social exchange theory explains the relational component of OCB, the identification mechanism explains the identity-based component, impression management highlights the strategic component, and positive relationships emphasize the social component. Only by jointly considering these four perspectives can one grasp the complexity of citizenship behaviors and understand why different factors may lead to similar outcomes.

The following section of the article presents a detailed analysis of the determinants of organizational citizenship behavior across three key categories: personality traits, work-related attitudes, and environmental factors.

3. Determinants of Citizenship Behaviors

Following the research directions outlined above, the article first describes personality traits that have been examined as potential foundations for engaging in citizenship behaviors. Next, work-related attitudes are analyzed. Finally, the article discusses the group of determinants rooted in the organization itself, that is, environmental factors.

3.1. Personality Traits

Several meta-analyses have been conducted in which authors examined the relationships between different human personality traits and OCB. However, these analyses most often differed in terms of how they were designed. In Borman and colleagues' meta-analysis (2001), an aggregated index of citizenship behavior was considered. Lapiere and Hackett (2007) adopted a similar approach. In some analyses, separate studies were conducted for OCB-I and OCB-O (Ilies et al., 2009; Lepine et al., 2002), while others examined only selected categories of OCB (Organ, Ryan, 1995). For individuals in managerial positions, many behaviors

classified as OCB naturally stem from their job responsibilities; therefore, the aforementioned meta-analyses primarily included non-managerial positions.

Previous research seeking the dispositional basis of citizenship behaviors has focused mainly on the Big Five model. Numerous studies have shown that conscientiousness correlates most strongly with OCB. Individuals high in conscientiousness are hardworking, responsible, dependable, disciplined, and skilled at organizing their work. Such an employee is consistent in their actions, sets demanding goals for themselves, and diligently strives to achieve them (Oleś, Drat-Ruszczak, 2008). Conscientious individuals are also more likely to follow organizational procedures and behavioral norms. Given this personality profile, it is reasonable to expect that highly conscientious employees are more inclined to exhibit citizenship behaviors (Baka, 2016). Organ and Ryan (1995) demonstrated that conscientiousness shows a positive and statistically significant relationship with OCB, especially with altruism and organizational compliance. Ilies et al. (2009), in addition to examining aggregated OCB, also analyzed links between personality traits and specific OCB dimensions. Their findings indicated that conscientiousness is most strongly associated with behaviors directed toward the organization (OCB-O), while agreeableness is most closely linked to behaviors directed toward individuals (OCB-P).

Agreeableness encompasses traits such as loyalty, warmth, politeness, and cooperativeness. A person high in agreeableness is caring, considerate, attentive to others' needs, and often displays empathy. In this sense, agreeable individuals are friendly, willing to help, and inclined to believe that others act similarly (Kraczla, 2017). People with high agreeableness enjoy being "socially useful". They tend to be well-liked, more compliant, and more willing to follow rules. They generally perform better in tasks where interpersonal relations matter (Barrick, Mount, 1993), and their attitude is far from competitive.

Since citizenship behaviors inherently involve support and a positive work environment, agreeable individuals may view OCB as a means of gaining acceptance and fostering positive workplace conditions. Empirical analyses confirm these relationships. High agreeableness correlates with aggregated OCB as well as with both OCB-O and OCB-P (Chiaburu et al., 2011). Neuman and Kickul (1998) also demonstrated relationships between agreeableness and various OCB categories—altruism, civic virtue, organizational compliance, courtesy, and conscientiousness—though these associations were weaker than those for conscientiousness.

The third component of the Big Five—extraversion—involves high levels of activity, positive energy, and the capacity to experience positive emotions. Extraverted individuals tend to enjoy life, are sociable, assertive, and communicative. Despite some evidence of positive relationships between extraversion and job performance, the link between extraversion and OCB remains insufficiently confirmed. Organ (1994) described the findings regarding extraversion as the most disappointing. However, isolated studies cited by Baka (2016) indicate weak but positive associations between OCB, extraversion, and positive affectivity—

understood as a component of extraversion. The role of positive affectivity in providing emotional support was demonstrated, among others, by Toegel, Anand, and Kilduff (2007). Encouragingly, Polish studies have shown positive correlations between OCB and extraversion, as well as its components—activity and assertiveness (Witkowski, Chwalibóg, 2010).

Neuroticism comprises traits such as sensitivity, anxiety, anger, nervousness, and fear. Individuals high in neuroticism are more prone to experiencing negative emotions, feel insecure, and are more psychologically reactive to stress. They may exhibit irrational behaviors, have difficulty controlling their emotions, and struggle with stress (Kraczla, 2017). According to Oleś and Drat-Ruszczak (2008), traits characteristic of neuroticism do not foster employee activity or engagement in helpful behaviors. Thus, one may infer a negative relationship between neuroticism and OCB. Baka (2016) identified several studies examining the relationship between one component of neuroticism—negative affectivity—and OCB. The results suggest negative associations between the constructs, both for aggregated OCB and for its individual dimensions (Hogan et al., 1998; McManus, Kelly, 1999).

The final component of the Big Five is openness to experience, which involves an individual's tendency to seek life experiences and evaluate them positively, cognitive curiosity, and acceptance of change. Individuals high in openness are creative, innovative, and eager to explore the world. They strive to continuously develop their competencies and knowledge, value autonomy, and seek variety in their work. One might expect that a tendency toward new experiences and creativity would correlate significantly with OCB. However, findings are inconsistent. Some studies show positive but weak relationships between openness and aggregated OCB, as well as between openness and both OCB dimensions (OCB-P and OCB-O) (Chiaburu et al., 2011). Other studies report no significant relationship between openness and OCB (Bourdage et al., 2012). Additionally, several authors suggest—and empirically confirm—that openness is an important predictor of OCB, especially in terms of fulfilling social expectations at work and promoting the organization's external image (Abu Elanain, 2007). The inconsistencies reflect primarily the limited amount of research on this trait.

The Big Five personality traits do not exhaust the catalogue of characteristics considered in predicting employee-initiated behaviors. In addition to the Five-Factor Model, researchers have also examined the relationships between OCB and traits such as locus of control, collectivism, and prosocial orientation.

The locus of control stems from the fact that people often have different interpretations and perspectives on the same events, whether they concern themselves or others. Julian Rotter (1966), the creator of the theory, argued that individuals fall into two categories: those who believe they control their own destiny, and those who think their lives are governed by external forces. For this reason, the locus of control can be divided into internal and external. People with an internal locus of control are more confident in their abilities and in their influence over the outcomes of their actions. They tend to be more engaged and more likely to take initiative.

One might therefore assume that such behaviors would largely support the undertaking of citizenship behaviors. However, research findings on this issue are not entirely consistent. Motowidlo and Van Scotter (1994) found positive relationships between internal locus of control and overall OCB. In contrast, Funderberg and Levy (1997) confirmed a positive relationship between internal locus of control and altruism measured through self-reports, but a negative relationship when altruism was assessed by coworkers. As Baka (2016) notes, these inconsistencies may stem from the limited knowledge about the mechanisms through which locus of control influences OCB.

Another trait under examination is collectivism, understood as the opposite of individualism. Although debates exist as to whether collectivism should be treated as a personality trait, some researchers do approach it this way. Collectivism refers to communal orientation. Definitions of collectivism emphasize the importance of group belonging and placing group goals above one's own ambitions. Realo et al. (2008) argue that communal orientation treats the group as the primary unit of reality and requires individuals to commit themselves to the interests of the community. People with this trait tend to improve their skills for the benefit of the majority and value teamwork. These assumptions led researchers to explore the links between collectivism and OCB. Van Dyne et al. (2000), in an analysis of employees of a housing cooperative, showed that collectivism is associated with helpful behaviors. Lee and Allen (2002) found in their research on managerial staff that a high level of collectivism correlates with the amount of time managers spend mentoring employees. Positive relationships between collectivism and OCB were also observed by Borman et al. (2001).

Another trait—prosocial orientation—is linked to a system of moral norms and evaluations that emphasizes the importance of considering the well-being of others in one's own actions. The welfare of others, which must be respected, becomes the overriding value (Mariański, 2014). The pioneers of this concept and creators of a tool for measuring prosocial orientation were Penner, Fritzsche, Craiger, and Freifeld (1995). Their instrument measured seven personality characteristics referring to prosocial behaviors, thoughts, and emotions. An analysis by Midili and Penner (1995) revealed factors such as other-oriented empathy and helpfulness. Empathy correlated with all OCB categories, while helpfulness correlated with four.

The relationships between the eight personality traits listed above and citizenship behaviors indicate that the strongest connections occur for conscientiousness and agreeableness. A positive relationship—though based on a limited number of studies—can also be observed for collectivism and prosocial orientation. Extraversion, neuroticism, openness to experience, and locus of control do not play as significant a role in this relationship. However, it is important to note that the number of studies examining these traits is still insufficient. The results of analyses within the group of personality determinants of OCB are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1.
Results of Analyses on Personality Determinants of OCB

Personality Trait	Relationship with OCB	Determinant
Conscientiousness	positive	Conscientiousness
Agreeableness	positive	Agreeableness
Extraversion	weak positive / insufficient evidence	Extraversion
Neuroticism	negative	Neuroticism
Openness to experience	inconsistent results	Openness to experience
Locus of control	inconsistent results	Locus of control
Collectivism	positive	Collectivism
Prosocial orientation	positive	Prosocial orientation
Conscientiousness	positive	Conscientiousness

Note: “+” indicates that the trait is recognized as a determinant of OCB, “-” indicates it is not.

Source: own elaboration based on (Grego-Planer, 2023, p. 57).

It is worth noting that the vast majority of authors addressing this topic emphasize that the relationship between personality traits and citizenship behaviors is multifaceted in nature. Some researchers assume that personality traits may influence OCB directly. However, the dominant view suggests that this influence is indirect—occurring through the shaping of work attitudes or by moderating the relationship between how employees perceive their work environment and their actual behavior (2000). In recent years, growing attention has been given to Spector and Fox’s (2005) stressor–emotion framework. According to this perspective, an interactional approach is crucial: personality traits become relevant for displaying OCB only when combined with environmental factors—that is, organizational or situational influences (Dalal, 2005).

3.2. Work-related attitudes

The second group of determinants of organizational citizenship behaviors consists of attitudes. These subjective (individual) factors—alongside personality traits—have been conceptually and empirically linked to OCB. In light of social exchange theory and the norm of reciprocity, a positive relationship is expected between employees’ attitudes toward the organization and their citizenship behavior. As Dalal (2005) notes, if an organization provides employees with favorable working conditions, it may expect reciprocation in the form of engagement in OCB. Meta-analytic findings have confirmed these expectations (Lepine et al., 2002). Bolino et al. (2002) showed that the willingness to take on extra-role activities increases when employees are satisfied with their jobs or strongly attached to their organization. Podsakoff and colleagues (2000) reported similar conclusions, finding consistent support for the notion that positive work attitudes foster citizenship. Three key attitudes are most commonly emphasized in relation to OCB: job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and perceived organizational justice.

Hopkins (2002) defines job satisfaction as the fulfillment of specific needs related to performing a job. Traditionally, it encompasses relationships with coworkers, pay, working conditions, supervision, and benefits. According to Colquitt et al. (2019), job satisfaction reflects how employees feel about their work and how they evaluate it. Golbasi & Selma (2008) add that it is both an emotional and behavioral response to work, shaped by achievements, the work environment, and broader professional experiences. When an organization raises job satisfaction, employees—consistent with the logic of reciprocity—“repay” it by exhibiting OCB more frequently. Empirical evidence supporting this relationship was provided by, among others, Bateman and Organ (1983) and Organ and Konovsky (1989). Organ and Lingl (1995) found that overall job satisfaction increases altruistic behavior. Strong positive links between satisfaction and OCB are also reported in studies by Murphy et al. (2002), Foote et al. (2008), and more recent analyses by Setyowati et al. (2021) and Haji et al. (2021). The scale and consistency of findings confirm that job satisfaction is a robust antecedent of organizational citizenship.

Organizational commitment is the second attitude consistently identified as a determinant of OCB. It is defined as the relative strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in an organization (Mowday et al., 1982). In Meyer and Allen’s (1997) three-component model, commitment is divided into affective, normative, and continuance commitment. The affective component refers to emotional attachment to the organization, the normative component reflects a sense of obligation to stay, and the continuance component concerns the perceived costs of leaving. Commitment is considered a factor promoting OCB because it reflects a readiness to support the organization even without direct rewards. Meyer et al. (2002) showed that employees who are emotionally attached to their organization engage more frequently in OCB, with the effect particularly strong for affective commitment (Meyer, Allen, 1997). This relationship is confirmed in more recent work (Siregar et al., 2019; Vasudevan, 2021). It is also worth noting that some scholars consider commitment—compared with satisfaction—to be a stronger antecedent of organizational outcomes, including OCB (Luthans, 1998).

Another key construct in the domain of individual determinants of citizenship is perceived organizational justice. In a social context, it refers to the extent to which employees perceive events and practices in an organization as aligned with their expectations (Herington et al., 2005). Moorman et al. (1993) argue that justice is associated with numerous positive organizational outcomes. Organ (1988) emphasized that the sense of justice is crucial: individuals who experience fair treatment are more likely to display positive attitudes toward their work, performance, and supervisors. Folger and Konovsky (1989) found strong links between perceived justice, organizational commitment, trust in supervisors, and pay satisfaction. Employees who view organizational processes as fair are more loyal and more willing to act in the organization’s interest (Cropanzano et al., 2007). Importantly, Moorman et al. (1993) identified justice as an antecedent of OCB. Organ (1988) argued that fairness fosters

the building of faith and trust necessary for engaging in beneficial yet discretionary citizenship behaviors. Positive relationships between various OCB categories and perceived justice were confirmed, among others, by Konovsky and Folger (1989), Martin and Bies (1991), and Niehoff and Moorman (1993).

More recent studies have examined specific dimensions of justice: Nelson and Appel (2021), studying correctional officers in Israel, found that procedural justice is strongly linked to organizationally targeted OCB; Lim and Loosemore (2017) highlight the dominant role of interpersonal justice in shaping OCB. A lack of perceived justice clearly reduces such behaviors (Tziner, Sharoni, 2014).

3.3. Environmental Factors

Environmental factors constitute the final major group of determinants of citizenship behaviors. Undoubtedly, organizational conditions—and employees' perceptions of them—play an essential role in shaping OCB. The ways in which these determinants are grouped vary and often overlap. Podsakoff et al. (2000) attempted to systematize existing knowledge and identified three key categories: job characteristics, organizational characteristics, and leader behavior. Organ and colleagues (2006) proposed a different classification, distinguishing leadership behaviors (with emphasis on transformational and servant leadership), leader–member exchange (LMX), and employee participation. A second group of factors, according to these authors, concerns the work environment: satisfying tasks, group characteristics (cohesion, support, relationships), organizational features (e.g., formalization, perceived organizational support), and cultural context (especially the individualism–collectivism dimension). Spitzmuller and colleagues (2008) propose yet another division: individual antecedents, task characteristics, and social relationships with supervisors and coworkers.

Based on further analysis of the literature on OCB antecedents, the group of environmental factors—those shaped by the organization itself and closely tied to working conditions—can be understood to include primarily:

- organizational characteristics (including formalization, organizational climate, perceived organizational support),
- job/task characteristics,
- social relationships within the organization,
- leader behaviors.

Regarding organizational characteristics, the impact of formalization on OCB has been increasingly studied. Although excessive formalization and lack of flexibility may inhibit citizenship behaviors, organizational structure itself can influence their expression. In other words, the inclination to engage in OCB partly depends on one's position in the hierarchy. Yoshikawa and Hu (2017) indicate that at higher managerial levels, certain factors emerge that shape citizenship behaviors: informal role division among decision-makers, role identity,

and the relationship between hierarchical position and the tendency toward OCB—the higher the decision-making level, the stronger the tendency.

Engaging in activities beyond routine duties—i.e., beyond the narrowly defined role—requires a supportive work climate. Organizational climate is the shared perception of organizational events and practices—recurring patterns of attitudes and feelings (Griffin, Moorhead, 2014). When the organization is perceived as supportive, this fosters OCB. The most influential climate components include: supervisory support and voice (employee input), fair compensation (well-being), autonomy, and participation (Nwankwo et al., 2015; Randhawa, Kaur, 2015).

Perceived organizational support (POS) is the last construct within organizational characteristics. It reflects the extent to which employees feel that the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Although POS primarily influences individual-level variables, the perception of support may stem from organizational or relational factors (e.g., employee–supervisor interactions). These include job security, leader–member exchange (LMX) quality, and supervisor support (Gojny-Zbierowska, 2016). Numerous studies confirm strong links between POS and OCB (Ahmadi et al., 2010; Asgari et al., 2008; Kapela, Pohl, 2020).

The second category of environmental factors consists of job/task characteristics. Researchers consistently emphasize that tasks should be intrinsically satisfying, varied, and accompanied by leader feedback. Such characteristics are associated with higher levels of OCB. Empirical evidence shows that the strongest positive correlations with OCB occur for satisfying tasks and feedback, whereas routine, non-varied tasks are associated with lower levels of citizenship behaviors (Podsakoff et al., 2000).

Social relationships are another key area. The literature shows growing interest in the link between relationships and OCB. Bowler and Brass (2006) argue that without accounting for social relationships, one cannot fully understand citizenship behaviors. Dovidio et al. (2006) add that relationship quality can be a powerful predictor of human behavior. Relationships with coworkers have repeatedly been identified as antecedents of OCB—in the spirit of social exchange, good relationships are “reciprocated” through interpersonal citizenship behaviors. What matters is not only relationship quality but also group cohesion and cooperation norms (Ng, Van Dyne, 2005). Studies further suggest that coworker relationships are a key proximal antecedent of interpersonal OCB (Kamdar, Van Dyne, 2007).

Employee–supervisor relationships are of particular importance. Leader–Member Exchange (LMX) theory describes leadership based on relationships, emphasizing supportive, appreciative, consultative, and delegating behaviors (rather than strictly task-oriented ones) (Yukl et al., 2009). A meta-analysis by Ilies et al. (2007) indicates especially strong links between high-quality LMX and interpersonal citizenship. Kamdar and van Dyne (2007) also showed that employees “reciprocate” OCB directed specifically at the leader.

Leader behaviors constitute the final—and often considered the most important—category of environmental determinants of OCB. This area has generated an extensive body of empirical evidence. Beyond LMX, research has examined links between OCB and leadership practices such as: building acceptance of group goals, articulating vision, modeling desired behaviors, providing intellectual stimulation, shaping climates of trust and respect, and setting high expectations. All these elements show positive relationships with citizenship behaviors (Podsakoff et al., 2000). Additional studies demonstrate positive associations between OCB and leaders' rewarding behaviors, role clarity, and support (Podsakoff et al., 2000; Tran, Choi, 2019). Walumbwa et al. (2008) suggest that perceived leader integrity increases employees' tendency to engage in organizational goals and display OCB. Lapierre and Hackett (2007) argue that although conscientiousness may be innate, its expression requires a satisfactory relationship with the supervisor. According to their view, the link between leadership style and proactivity emerges when the leader–subordinate relationship reaches high quality. These conclusions are reinforced by findings by Lo et al. (2006), who determined that leader–member relationships play a crucial role in motivating OCB and examined how trust develops under fair leadership. They found that building high-quality relationships increases job satisfaction and trust, which likely translates into greater conscientiousness. Undeniably, leader behaviors should provide a role model and support for subordinates—this is one of the key dimensions shaping employee activity. The determinants of citizenship behaviors, divided into categories, are presented in Figure 1.

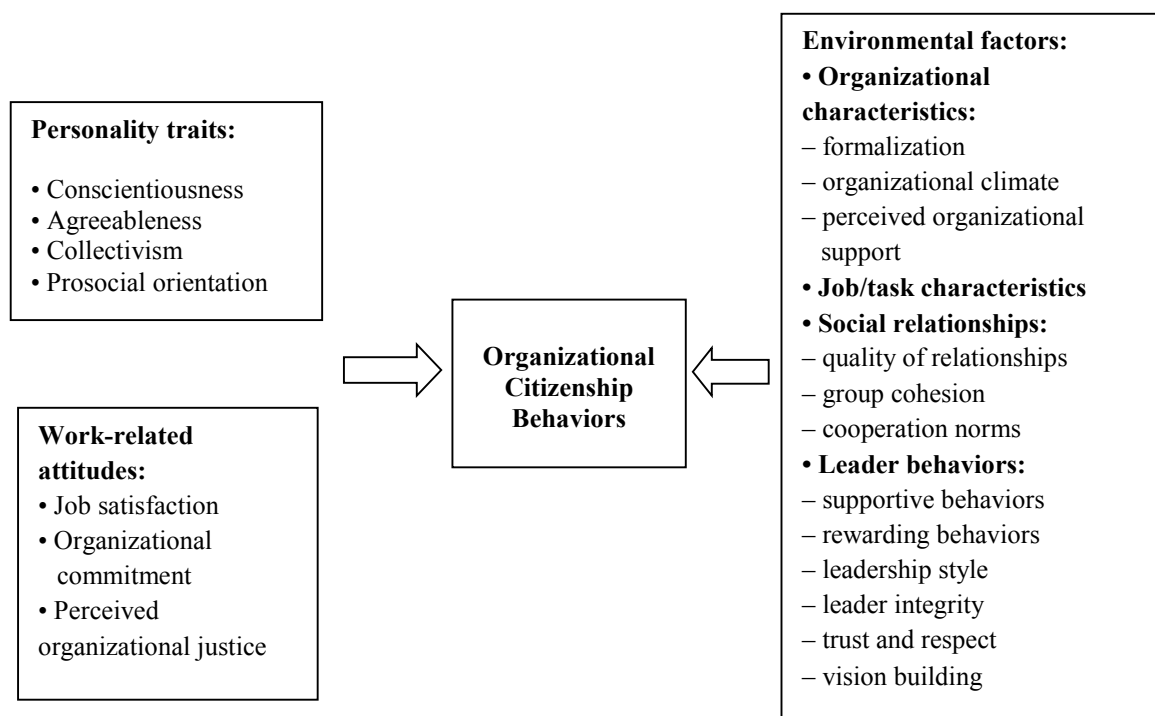


Figure 1. Determinants of Citizenship Behaviors.

Source: own elaboration based on (Grego-Planer, 2023, p. 67).

The classification of the determinants of citizenship behaviors presented in this section of the article certainly does not exhaust all the themes discussed in the literature. However, the authors hope that, drawing on the available sources, they have been able to offer a degree of structure to this issue in a synthetic and coherent manner.

4. Conceptual Model: An Interactionist and Layered Approach

Based on the literature review and the arguments presented earlier, a conceptual model is proposed that moves away from treating the three groups of determinants (personality traits, work-related attitudes, and environmental factors) as parallel and independent sources of OCB. Instead, this model (Figure 2) assumes that these determinants form a system of mutually interconnected mechanisms in which:

1. Personality traits influence OCB primarily indirectly—through shaping work-related attitudes and through the moderated effects of environmental factors.
2. Environmental factors provide the context that activates or suppresses the influence of personality traits and simultaneously shape attitudes, which in turn determine citizenship behaviors.
3. Work-related attitudes serve as a central mediator, transmitting the effects of both personality traits and the organizational environment onto OCB.

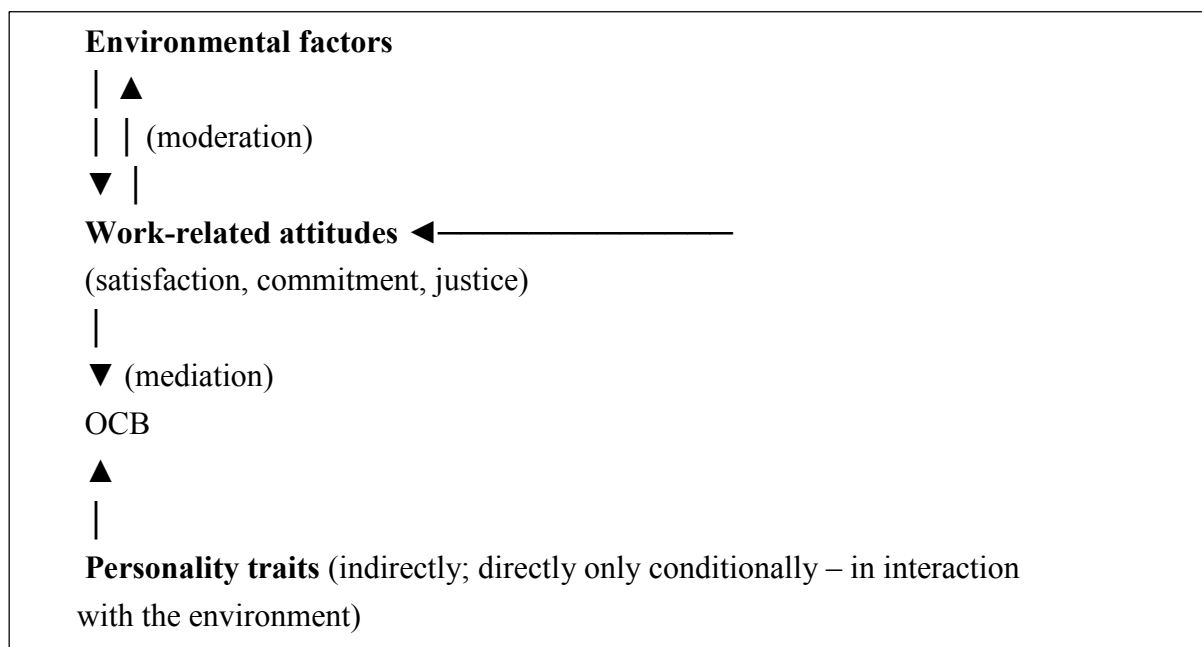


Figure 2. Conceptual model of OCB's determinants.

Source: own elaboration.

The model assumes three fundamental pathways:

(1) Personality → Work-related attitudes → OCB (mediation)

Personality traits rarely lead directly to OCB but instead influence how employees perceive their work, relationships with supervisors, fairness, climate, and satisfaction. These attitudes constitute the key mechanism through which psychological dispositions translate into behavior.

(2) Organizational environment → Work-related attitudes → OCB (full or partial mediation)

Environmental factors—such as climate, LMX, organizational justice, job design, or organizational culture—strongly and consistently influence attitudes toward work (Podsakoff et al., 2000). These attitudes partially mediate the impact of the environment on OCB; however, in many cases, the environment also exerts a direct effect on OCB (e.g., leadership style, relationship quality).

(3) Personality × Environment → Attitudes/OCB (moderation)

According to the interactionist perspective, personality traits manifest in citizenship behaviors only when the organizational environment allows their expression. This means that the influence of conscientiousness, agreeableness, or proactivity will be stronger when employees experience fairness, organizational support, or high-quality leader–member exchange (LMX).

The proposed model aligns more closely with contemporary scientific findings than classical linear approaches.

First, it acknowledges that research on personality traits yields mixed results, primarily because work environments are heterogeneous and differ in how much they enable employees to express their dispositions (Dalal, 2005).

Second, the model highlights the central role of work-related attitudes, which—according to meta-analyses—are the strongest and most consistent predictors of OCB (Lepine et al., 2002; Organ, 1990; Podsakoff et al., 2000).

Third, this approach helps explain why in some environments personality effects are weak or insignificant—because these dispositions cannot manifest without support and fairness.

5. Discussion and Theoretical Implications

The conducted literature review and the proposed conceptual model allow for the formulation of several key conclusions about the nature of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). First, the review indicates that previous research on OCB antecedents has been marked by a lack of terminological consistency. Different classifications have coexisted in the literature, often overlapping, and in many cases the same variables were described using different

conceptual categories. As a result, drawing synthetic conclusions was difficult, and interpretations of existing findings were often ambiguous. Organizing these fragmented perspectives into three overarching groups—personality traits, work-related attitudes, and environmental factors—therefore constitutes a significant added value. This structure makes it possible to view OCB determinants through the lens of three classical levels of analysis in organizational behavior: individual dispositions, psychological states, and organizational context.

However, this organization serves not only a classificatory function. It also enables the identification and explanation of complex relationships linking these three groups of factors. In this regard, the interactionist perspective proposed in the article is particularly important, consistent with the stressor–emotion model (Spector, Fox, 2005) and Dalal's (2005) arguments. According to this approach, personality traits do not affect citizenship behaviors directly and uniformly, as classical dispositional models would suggest. Their influence is realized primarily through the shaping of work-related attitudes or only in situations where the organizational context supports the expression of prosocial dispositions. This means that personality “works” only under certain conditions—those that enable the manifestation of traits associated with altruism, conscientiousness, or agreeableness.

At the same time, the literature review confirms that environmental factors are not merely a backdrop but play an activating role. Organizational climate, the quality of relationships with supervisors, fairness, organizational support, and job characteristics are the factors that most strongly shape employees' attitudes, which subsequently translate into citizenship behaviors. These attitudes—including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and perceived justice—thus constitute the central psychological mechanism linking both individual dispositions and the work environment with OCB. In light of meta-analyses (Lepine et al., 2002; Podsakoff et al., 2000), these variables consistently demonstrate the strongest and most stable predictive power.

The proposed interactionist model allows OCB to be viewed as a phenomenon emerging at the intersection of three spheres: employee dispositions, the organizational environment, and the attitudes formed through their interaction. This perspective not only explains the inconsistencies found in previous research more effectively but also offers a more realistic and useful analytical tool for organizational practitioners. The integration of dispositional, situational, and attitudinal approaches forms a coherent theoretical framework that supports further empirical research using mediated and moderated models.

To enhance the usefulness of the proposed model and provide a foundation for its empirical validation, it is important to indicate specific analytical strategies appropriate for the interactionist and layered approach. The model assumes the simultaneous presence of both mediation and moderation processes, which necessitates the use of advanced statistical methods.

First, suitable methodological approaches include mediation and partial mediation models, which allow for examining whether work-related attitudes indeed mediate the relationship between personality traits or environmental factors and OCB. In particular, structural equation modeling (SEM) enables the simultaneous testing of multiple paths and accounts for measurement error, which is crucial when analyzing psychological constructs.

Second, to verify the interactional role of the organizational environment assumed in the model, it is necessary to apply moderation analyses. These analyses make it possible to empirically determine whether the influence of personality traits on OCB becomes stronger under conditions of high organizational justice, perceived organizational support, or high-quality LMX relationships.

Third, given the simultaneous occurrence of mediation and moderation, the most appropriate empirical method is moderated mediation. This approach tests whether the strength of mediational pathways (e.g., personality → attitudes → OCB) depends on the level of environmental factors (e.g., organizational climate or leadership style). This is essential for the proposed theoretical framework, in which the environment not only shapes OCB directly but also conditions the extent to which individual dispositions can manifest.

Fourth, longitudinal studies may serve as a valuable complement to cross-sectional analyses, as they allow for testing the directionality of effects and determining whether the relationships described are stable over time. This is particularly important for attitudes and behaviors that may evolve with employees' experiences.

Fifth, model validation should ideally rely on multi-source data (e.g., self-reports combined with supervisor ratings), which helps reduce the risk of common method bias—a frequent concern in OCB research.

In sum, empirical validation of the proposed model requires the application of integrated analytical techniques, such as moderated mediation, SEM, or multilevel analyses, which account for the simultaneous influence of individual dispositions, attitudes, and environmental factors. These methods will not only confirm the model's adequacy but also deepen understanding of the psychological mechanisms underlying organizational citizenship behaviors.

6. Practical Implications

The conclusions drawn from the analysis have important implications for management practice and the design of the work environment. First, it is worth emphasizing that although organizational citizenship behaviors are associated in the literature with many different antecedents, effectively strengthening them requires understanding that personality traits, work-related attitudes, and organizational environmental factors operate simultaneously at different

levels of employee functioning. They do not represent separate, fully independent domains but rather areas that can complement one another in fostering or inhibiting OCB. In practice, this means that organizations aiming to build a culture supportive of citizenship behaviors should approach employee development holistically.

A key practical conclusion from the literature review is the role of the work environment as a space that can amplify or weaken the influence of both personality traits and attitudes. This implies that organizations should concentrate on creating conditions that promote a sense of fairness, trust, and psychological safety, because these elements enable the fuller expression of employees' prosocial dispositions. In practice, this includes transparent procedures, consistent leadership actions, adequate compensation systems, and reducing excessive formalization, which—according to research—does not promote engagement in discretionary behaviors.

The analysis also confirmed that work-related attitudes play an essential role in explaining citizenship behaviors. This leads to several practical recommendations: organizations should foster employee satisfaction, reduce barriers that undermine organizational commitment, and strengthen perceptions of procedural, distributive, and interpersonal justice. Because these attitudes reflect employees' overall assessment of their working conditions, improving them can substantially increase their willingness to engage in behaviors that go beyond formal job requirements.

From a management perspective, the role of leaders is particularly critical, as their behaviors and leadership style constitute one of the strongest predictors of OCB. Supportive and fair leadership, providing constructive feedback, openness to dialogue, and consistency in actions can influence employees' propensity to engage in organizationally beneficial initiatives—both directly and indirectly. For this reason, developing managerial competencies—especially in the areas of relationship-building, communication, and influence—should be a central element of HR policies aimed at fostering citizenship behaviors.

In summary, the model presented in this article and the developed categorization of the three main groups of OCB determinants lead to the conclusion that effectively supporting citizenship behaviors requires combining efforts across several complementary areas: ensuring favorable organizational conditions, strengthening positive work-related attitudes, and taking into account individual differences among employees.

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