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OCBs Gone Bad: The Moderating Roles of Burnout and Role Overload

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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Abstract

Previous literature has typically assumed that organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) are beneficial to both employees and organizations. Researchers have begun to question this assumption. This paper seeks to identify situations when OCBs are detrimental to employees or organizations. Specifically, two variables (burnout and role overload) are hypothesized to moderate the relationship between OCBs and outcomes (job satisfaction, turnover intentions, and task performance), such that when burnout and role overload are high, negative outcomes occur. Moderated regression was used to test the hypotheses. There was little evidence for burnout as a moderator, but interactions involving role overload were significant; however, the directions of the relationships were not as hypothesized. Alternative hypotheses were tested, which provided support for the general theory that OCBs can result in negative outcomes.

Introduction

Organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) have been an important area of study in the industrial/organizational psychology literature. One of the most widely accepted definitions of OCBs is the “contributions to the maintenance and enhancement of the social and psychological context that supports task performance” (Organ, 1997, p. 91). Inherent in this definition is the positive connotation of OCBs: OCBs should be encouraged within an organization because they will result in positive support for task performance. Much of the previous literature on OCBs has accepted this assumption without thoroughly questioning the true nature of OCBs. This study seeks to identify certain situations in which OCBs might be detrimental

Past studies on OCBs have primarily focused on finding potential antecedents and consequences. A meta-analysis on OCBs (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000) found that correlates included job satisfaction, organizational commitment, perceptions of fairness/justice, leader supportiveness, role clarity, and lack of role conflict, whereas the consequences included increased performance evaluations, organizational effectiveness, and decreased turnover. Most relevant to this paper are the relationships of OCBs to job satisfaction, turnover, and task performance.

A meta-analytic review by Organ and Ryan (1995) found a positive relationship between job satisfaction and OCBs. More specifically, when they aggregated facets of

OCBs to form a composite OCB score, they found an uncorrected correlation of .38 between the composite OCB score and job satisfaction. A possible explanation of this relationship is described by Organ, Podsakoff, and MacKenzie (2006) and is framed with the social exchange theory (Adams, 1965; Blau, 1964; Rousseau, & Parks, 1993). According to this theory, if a job is satisfying to an employee, the employee will respond by increasing their input, which typically takes form as OCBs. Conversely, if a job is not satisfying to an employee, he/she will decrease input. Since decreasing task performance would be risky, the employee will most likely choose to decrease OCBs.

In addition to satisfaction, past literature has also found that OCBs are negatively related to actual turnover (Chen, Hui, & Segó, 1998; MacKenzie, Podsakoff, & Ahearne, 1998). According to Chen, Hui, and Segó (1998), a potential mechanism for this relationship is that workers view OCBs as a sort of “prepayment” for future rewards. This would provide incentive for employees to stay with the organization and decrease their intentions to leave, because they would not want to lose their “investment” of OCBs. Alternatively, MacKenzie, Podsakoff, and Ahearne, (1998) explain this negative relationship because OCBs positively affect the social structure of the workplace, making the organization a more attractive workplace. More specifically, they explain that workers who perform OCBs are more likely to develop closer bonds with their co-workers; these closer relationships should then decrease the amount of voluntary turnover. They also explain that performance of OCBs should result in a closer relationship with their supervisors, and this too should decrease voluntary turnover.

Finally, empirical research has examined the relationship between OCBs and task performance. Unfortunately, there is ambiguity in the literature as to whether or not

OCBs should be formally rewarded or considered during performance evaluations (Organ, 1997). Past findings reflect this ambiguity. While some studies have found very low correlations between OCBs and task performance (MacKenzie, Podsakoff, & Ahearne, 1998: $r = .03$; MacKenzie, Podsakoff, & Fetter, 1991: r -values ranging from .04-.16), other studies have found fairly high correlations (Barksdale, & Werner, 2001: $r = .62$; Johnson, 2001: r -values ranging from .42-.67; Williams, & Anderson, 1991: $r = .52$ and $r = .55$). An explanation of this disagreement could be due to some supervisors considering OCBs when making ratings of task performance, while others distinguish between task performance and OCBs/contextual performance. Organ, Podsakoff, and MacKenzie (2006) offer several reasons why a supervisor may consider OCBs when evaluating task performance. Berman and Kenny (1976) and Bruner and Tagiuri (1954) suggest that if there is an implicit belief in the co-occurrence of two behaviors, then raters may infer amount of one behavior from the other behavior. Organ et al. (2006) apply this implicit theory to good task performance and OCBs; raters may make assumptions about an employee's task performance based on their level of OCBs. Alternatively, according to Morrison (1994), Pond, Nacoste, Mohr, and Rodriguez (1997), and Lam, Hui, and Law (1999) some managers believe that OCBs are part of the employees' job responsibilities, so OCBs may be considered "tasks" that employees are formally required to complete. In either of these scenarios, if the rater takes into account OCBs when rating task performance, the two will be positively correlated. On the other hand, if the rater specifically distinguishes between task performance and OCBs/contextual performance, then one would not expect a strong relationship.

Although the past literature has focused primarily on the positive nature of OCBs, one must wonder if OCBs are always positive. A small subfield of research exists that theorizes negative connotations of OCBs. Just as much of the previous literature focused on antecedents and consequences, the “dark-side” literature is also split into negative antecedents and consequences. Vigoda-Gadot (2006), Bolino, Turnley, Gilstrap, and Suazo (in press), and Becker, and O’Hair (2007) theorize that OCBs can be the result of negative influences. More specifically, Vigoda-Gadot (2006) introduces the idea of “compulsory OCBs” (CCBs). CCBs rest on three assumptions: employees sometimes face strong social or managerial pressures to complete certain tasks outside of their formal job; employees for the most part comply with these pressures and are not formally rewarded for their efforts; and these employees would not have performed these tasks had these outside pressures not existed. This concept deals with the involuntary nature of the tasks. Although Organ’s (1997) most recent definition of OCBs does not explicitly state that they need to be voluntary, he does state that OCBs are less likely to be enforced job tasks. This implies some choice for the employee. This is contradictory to the idea of CCBs, where employees feel “forced” to perform tasks outside of their formal job role. Furthermore, Vigoda-Gadot (2006) hypothesizes that CCBs are related to negative outcomes (job stress, organizational politics, intentions to leave, negligent behavior, and burnout), while being negatively related to positive outcomes (innovation, job satisfaction, OCBs, and formal performance). Although Vigoda-Gadot does not empirically test these hypotheses, it expands the literature by providing theoretical arguments about the potential negative nature of OCBs.

Similar to Vigoda-Gadot's (2006) concept of CCBs, Bolino et al. (in press) theorize a construct they call citizenship pressure. They define this construct as "a specific job demand in which an employee feels pressured to perform OCBs" (Bolino et al., in press, p. 5). The authors theorize that citizenship pressure is an antecedent of OCBs, which is contrary to the positive nature associated with OCBs. This construct is differentiated from other similar constructs such as culture of citizenship (Chen, 2008), citizenship climate (Tepper, Duffy, Hoobler, & Ensley, 2004), and OCB norms (Ehrhart, & Naumann, 2004); citizenship pressure is a subjective feeling an employee experiences, whereas the others are organizational characteristics. While related, culture of citizenship, citizenship climate, and OCB norms are thought to be antecedents of citizenship pressure. Employees in an organization with a culture, climate, or norm of OCBs are more likely to feel citizenship pressure. The authors empirically tested this construct and found that citizenship pressure is associated with negative implications, such as higher levels of work/family conflict. They reasoned that this conflict arose because spouses of those employees experiencing citizenship pressure would not understand the employee's feelings of obligation to perform work that is not officially required or explicitly rewarded. Furthermore, citizenship pressure was also associated with increased work/leisure conflict; employees experiencing citizenship pressure would most likely feel the need to complete job related tasks when they are at home or on vacation. Finally, employees feeling citizenship pressure also reported higher levels of job stress and were more likely to leave the organization. The citizenship pressure most likely made the organization a less attractive place to work, which explains the increased turnover. Clearly, these findings contradict the positive nature of OCBs.

Becker and O’Hair (2007) identify another potentially negative antecedent of OCBs. They empirically link the personality trait of Machiavellianism to OCBs. Machiavellians (or Machs) are people who use impression management to manipulate others for their own personal benefit, without regard to social norms. These Machs are not likely to engage in OCBs because of prosocial or altruistic reasons; instead, they are motivated by personal gain and will only perform OCBs if there is some perceived benefit. Becker and O’Hair found that Machs are more likely to engage in OCBs directed toward the individual rather than the organization. The hypothesized reason for this is that OCBs directed toward the individual will gain attention and reciprocity (both of which are beneficial to the Mach), whereas OCBs directed toward the organization are less noticeable and therefore less rewarded. The authors further found that Machiavellianism is negatively related to organizational concern and prosocial values (as rated by the employee, co-workers, and supervisors). These findings highlight another negative reason employees may engage in OCBs.

Just as there are potential negative antecedents to OCBs, some authors have theorized negative consequences of OCBs. These involve employees who engage in OCBs, but derive some negative consequence from the behaviors.

Bergeron (2007) theorizes that in certain situations, there is a trade-off between task performance and OCBs. In particular, because employees possess only limited resources on the job, engaging in OCBs may interfere with task performance, resulting in decreased overall performance evaluations and subsequent negative career outcomes (career advancement and rewards). More specifically, Bergeron hypothesizes that certain variables moderate whether or not OCBs will be costly to the individual. Organization

type serves as one potential moderator; organizations that reward employees based on specific outcomes or have very low role ambiguity should not show a positive relationship between OCBs and career outcomes. This negative relationship is theorized because time spent on OCBs means less time spent on outcomes that are rewarded or roles that are formally recognized by the organization, both of which lead to diminished career outcomes. Another potential moderator is the type of OCB: OCBs that are not visible or are especially time consuming are hypothesized to have a negative relationship with career outcomes. Again, time spent on OCBs means less time spent on formal tasks, so if the OCBs are not recognized/rewarded or take too much time, this could lead to lower performance evaluations. Finally, individual level of OCBs is also a theorized moderator. Bergeron hypothesizes that if an individual consistently performs OCBs, others may begin to perceive those OCBs as being a part of the individual's job. Although this author did not empirically test these hypotheses, it provides theoretical reasons for why OCBs may have negative consequences.

Bolino, Turnley, and Niehoff (2004) also provided theoretical rationale for potential negative aspects of OCBs. More specifically, the authors questioned these three assumptions: OCBs stem from non-self-serving motives; OCBs contribute to effectiveness; and OCBs make the organization a more attractive place to work. The authors posit that these positive assumptions may not be true and provide examples that refute each assumption. Although some OCBs may be non-self-serving, Bolino, Turnley and Niehoff point out that OCBs can be used instrumentally to increase one's own performance evaluations, violating the assumption that OCBs are a non-self-serving act. Or even more deviously, OCBs can be used to make other workers look bad (either trying

to hurt a co-worker's image by making him/her look unhelpful or simply making others look like they are not doing enough work) or to escape from formal task roles. When OCBs are performed instead of formal tasks, this also potentially decreases the effectiveness of the organization, violating the assumption that OCBs increase effectiveness. Finally, the third assumption is that co-workers want to work in an organization that fosters OCBs, but as the authors point out, this is not necessarily true. A workplace that encourages OCBs may have a less transparent performance appraisal system (increased role ambiguity), foster conflict among employees (unwanted help may make certain employees resentful), or simply demand too much work from its employees (escalating citizenship).

Bolino and Turnley (2005) conducted an empirical study examining potential negative consequences of OCBs. More specifically, the authors studied the potential personal costs of engaging in a certain type of OCB, individual initiative. Defined as when employees “engage in task-related behaviors at a level that is so far beyond minimally required or generally expected levels that it takes on a voluntary flavor” (Podsakoff et al., 2000, p. 524), the authors empirically tested the relationships between individual initiative and negative outcomes such as role overload, job stress, and work-family conflict. The authors found that individual initiative was positively associated with all three negative outcomes. They explained these findings through a resource allocation model; OCBs require resources to complete, and these resources are taken from the job holder role (the formal job role) or the nonwork roles (spousal or family roles). If the resources come from the job holder role, the employee experiences role overload. If the resources come from nonwork roles, the employee experiences work-

family conflict. Finally, regardless of where the resources come from, increased amounts of work increase stress.

As reviewed in this paper, there has been a small subfield of theory and research questioning the positive aspects of OCBs and studying the potential “dark-side” of these behaviors. Although these articles show potential negative antecedents and consequences, I doubt that any of the authors are implying that OCBs are fundamentally bad. Instead, they are questioning the assumption that OCBs are always good; OCBs may not originate from good intentions on behalf of the employee and OCBs may not lead to positive benefits for the organization and employees. It is necessary to distinguish when OCBs are derived from good intentions rather than self-serving intentions and when OCBs lead to positive benefits rather than negative consequences. Unfortunately, there is a noticeable lack of empirical work in this area. Although the theoretical articles are important to build a solid foundation, I believe more empirical work is needed.

In order to help differentiate when OCBs lead to negative versus positive outcomes, I propose to test a model of OCBs, organizational outcomes (job satisfaction, turnover intentions, and task performance), and moderators of these relationships. However, before discussing the moderators, one point must be discussed. Past literature has found a positive relationship between OCBs and job satisfaction, but it is typically conceptualized as job satisfaction predicting OCBs. Although this directionality is plausible, this paper takes an alternative view and conceptualizes satisfaction as a consequence of OCBs. Borrowing from social psychology, schemas and cognitive consistency are two potential mechanisms for explaining job satisfaction as a consequence of OCBs. The first mechanism, a schema, is defined as “a cognitive

structure containing the attributes of a concept or type of stimulus and the relationships among the attributes” (Fiske, 2004, p. 143). More specifically, the theory of schema-triggered affect states that the relationships between attributes can trigger specific affects in an individual (Fiske, 1981; Fiske, 1982; Fiske, & Pavelchak, 1986). Applied to OCBs and job satisfaction, these two variables are most likely cognitively linked together in a schema because past literature has supported the hypothesis that satisfied employees go beyond their work and help others and the organization. Due to this schema, we can hypothesize the opposite directionality of the relationship between OCBs and job satisfaction. Performance of OCBs should trigger positive affect, thereby increasing one’s job satisfaction.

An alternative approach to explaining job satisfaction as an outcome variable is the theory of cognitive consistency. According to Fiske (2004), an inconsistency may exist among or between a person’s cognitions, behaviors, and attitudes. If an inconsistency occurs, the person will feel negative affect and will strive to remedy this inconsistency. One of the most widely known theories on consistency is the cognitive dissonance theory by Festinger (1957). In this theory, dissonance from an inconsistency “describes both the perceived incongruity and the discomfort predicted to result” (Fiske, 2004, p. 232). Applied to this paper, there may be dissonance in a dissatisfied worker who is performing OCBs, as OCBs are typically associated with high job satisfaction. In order for an employee to remedy this inconsistency, a dissatisfied worker who is performing OCBs may generate attitudes that increase their own level of job satisfaction

Finally, a less altruistic mechanism could also explain how OCBs might affect job satisfaction. Although OCBs are less likely to be systematically rewarded compared to

task performance (Organ, 1997), employees most likely realize that OCBs are taken into account on performance evaluations (Barksdale, & Werner, 2001; Johnson, 2001; Mackenzie, Podsakoff, & Ahearne, 1998; MacKenzie, Podsakoff, & Fetter, 1993; Orr, Sackett, & Mercer, 1989). Thus, performing OCBs may make them feel as if they are performing their jobs well or will lead to rewards, which could lead to increased job satisfaction. Regardless of the mechanism, in these scenarios, performance of OCBs is affecting job satisfaction, supporting it as an outcome variable.

Moving back to the proposed model of OCBs, moderators, and outcome variables, I posit that two “negative” variables moderate the relationship between OCBs and outcomes: burnout and role overload. Burnout, as defined by Shirom and Melamed (2006), involves three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, physical fatigue, and cognitive weariness. Emotional exhaustion is characterized by a depletion of emotional resources; physical fatigue is characterized by a depletion of physical energy; and cognitive weariness is characterized by an inability to perform mentally challenging tasks. Past literature has linked burnout to negative outcomes such as decreased job satisfaction (correlations range from $-.40$ to $-.52$) and increased turnover intentions (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). I propose that the OCB-job satisfaction relationship and the OCB-turnover intentions relationship are moderated by a worker’s burnout.

I theorize that the specific facets of burnout will differentially moderate the two types of OCBs (OCBP vs. OCBO). OCBPs are behaviors that directly benefit individuals in the organization; it encompasses behaviors such as helping others who have been absent, helping others with their work, and helping new employees get acclimated to their job. In each case, a specific individual is being helped and this specific individual

benefits from the OCBs. In contrast, OCBOs are behaviors that are directed towards the organization, and the organization as a whole is the beneficiary rather than a specific person. Examples of OCBOs include defending the organization from criticism, showing pride for the organization, and protecting the organization from potential problems. As one can see, these tend to be more global in nature and are targeted towards the organization as opposed to an individual. I hypothesize that emotional exhaustion will moderate the relationship between OCBPs and outcome variables, but not the relationship between OCBOs and outcome variables. Additionally, I hypothesize that physical fatigue will moderate the relationships between both OCBPs and OCBOs and outcome variables. Finally, I make no specific hypotheses regarding the moderating effect of cognitive weariness.

Emotional exhaustion deals with a person's emotional resources and their ability to cope with coworkers and customers. Because this facet of burnout deals with a worker's ability to cope with others, and OCBPs are behaviors targeted toward individuals, I hypothesize that emotional exhaustion will moderate the relationships between OCBPs and job satisfaction and OCBPs and turnover intentions. If a worker feels that he/she has an abundance of emotional resources, I hypothesize that performance of OCBPs will actually increase job satisfaction (as described by the schema-triggered affect theory, the cognitive consistency theory, or the increased performance/reward theory) and decrease turnover intentions. This hypothesis is in agreement with the positive nature of OCBs, and past literature has supported this view. In contrast, if a worker is emotionally depleted, I hypothesize that performance of OCBPs will lead to negative outcomes. Because an emotionally exhausted person feels as if

he/she cannot emotionally invest, sympathize, or be sensitive to others, performance of OCBPs that deal with helping others will most likely decrease their satisfaction. This decrease in satisfaction is theorized because the worker feels as if he/she does not possess the resources required to perform these behaviors. Furthermore, it may also increase their intentions to leave the organization because there appears to be an incompatible fit of performance of OCBPs and lack of emotional resources; the worker may feel that another job or organization that does not emphasize OCBPs as much as their current organization would be a better fit.

Hypothesis 1: The relationship between OCBPs and job satisfaction is moderated by emotional exhaustion. The relationship is positive when emotional exhaustion is low, but negative when emotional exhaustion is high.

Hypothesis 2: The relationship between OCBPs and turnover intentions is moderated by emotional exhaustion. The relationship is positive when emotional exhaustion is high, but negative when emotional exhaustion is low.

Physical fatigue is another facet of burnout, one characterized by a person's physical energy. I hypothesize that physical fatigue will moderate the relationships between both OCBPs and OCBOs and the outcome variables. If a person has low physical fatigue, I hypothesize that both OCBPs and OCBOs will increase satisfaction, decrease turnover intentions, and unrelated to task performance. This last part of the hypothesis involving task performance is in line with the belief that ideally, task performance and OCBs/contextual performance should be kept completely distinct from one another. However, when physical fatigue is high, performance of either OCBPs or OCBOs will lead to decreased satisfaction, increased turnover intentions, and decreased

task performance. Regardless of whether the behaviors are directed toward a specific individual or the organization, any type of increase in work/tasks for a physically fatigued employee will most likely have a detrimental effect.

Hypothesis 3a: The relationship between OCBPs and job satisfaction is moderated by physical fatigue. The relationship is positive when physical fatigue is low, but negative when physical fatigue is high.

Hypothesis 3b: The relationship between OCBOs and job satisfaction is moderated by physical fatigue. The relationship is positive when physical fatigue is low, but negative when physical fatigue is high.

Hypothesis 4a: The relationship between OCBPs and turnover intentions is moderated by physical fatigue. The relationship is negative when physical fatigue is low, but positive when physical fatigue is high.

Hypothesis 4b: The relationship between OCBOs and turnover intentions is moderated by physical fatigue. The relationship is negative when physical fatigue is low, but positive when physical fatigue is high.

Hypothesis 5a: The relationship between OCBPs and task performance is moderated by physical fatigue. There will be no relationship when physical fatigue is low, but negative when physical fatigue is high.

Hypothesis 5b: The relationship between OCBOs and task performance is moderated by physical fatigue. There will be no relationship when physical fatigue is low, but negative when physical fatigue is high.

In addition to burnout, I hypothesize that role overload will moderate the relationship between OCBs and the outcome variables. According to Welbourne,

Johnson, and Erez (1998), individuals at work have two different roles, the job-holder role (formal duties and responsibilities) and the organizational-member role (expectation that employees will be good organizational citizens). Performance of OCBs falls into the organizational-member role. Role overload occurs when a person is expected to fulfill multiple roles that require different behaviors, but is unable to fulfill these various roles due to a lack of resources, time, or other constraints (Bolino, & Turnley, 2005; Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970). Therefore, if a person is not able to simultaneously fulfill both their job-holder role and organizational-member role, he/she will experience role overload.

I hypothesize that if a person does not experience role overload, then performing OCBPs/OCBOs will lead to an increase in satisfaction, a decrease in turnover intentions and no relationship with task performance. These relationships are supported by past literature and are consistent with the positive nature of OCBs. On the other hand, if a person is experiencing role overload, performance of OCBs will most likely lead to negative outcomes for the employee. Further increasing a worker's responsibility with OCBs will most likely have a negative effect on general affect leading to decreased job satisfaction. In addition, the worker may seek other jobs or organizations that they perceive as having less role overload, which would increase intentions to quit. Finally, because there are limited resources, devoting more resources to OCBs would decrease the resources available for task performance. This would decrease task performance. I hypothesize that a person with high role overload will be negatively affected by this increase in demands regardless of whether the behaviors are targeted toward individuals or the organization.

Hypothesis 6a: The relationship between OCBPs and job satisfaction is moderated by role overload. The relationship is positive when role overload is low, but negative when role overload is high.

Hypothesis 6b: The relationship between OCBOs and job satisfaction is moderated by role overload. The relationship is positive when role overload is low, but negative when role overload is high.

Hypothesis 7a: The relationship between OCBPs and turnover intentions is moderated by role overload. The relationship is negative when role overload is low, but positive when role overload is high. See Figure 11.

Hypothesis 7b: The relationship between OCBOs and turnover intentions is moderated by role overload. The relationship is negative when role overload is low, but positive when role overload is high. See Figure 12.

Hypothesis 8a: The relationship between OCBPs and task performance is moderated by role overload. There will be no relationship when role overload is low, but negative when role overload is high. See Figure 13.

Hypothesis 8b: The relationship between OCBOs and task performance is moderated by role overload. There will be no relationship when role overload is low, but negative when role overload is high. See Figure 14.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Survey data were collected from 227 (75% female) employed participants enrolled in a psychology course at a university in the Southeast U.S. Participants came into the lab and completed a self-report survey. Once completed, they received another survey with a pre-paid envelope for their supervisor to fill out and return; 112 supervisor surveys were returned to the researchers. Average age of the participants was 22.42 years ($SD = 3.93$), and 57% were Caucasian, 17% African American, and 17% Hispanic. Average tenure was 26.03 months ($SD = 23.65$), they worked an average of 28.69 hours per week ($SD = 8.90$), and they were employed predominantly in retail/service (56%).

Measures

Citizenship behavior was measured using 42 items from an OCB checklist (Fox, et al., 2007), which is divided into OCBP (personal OCB: “Helped co-worker with personal matter such as moving, childcare, car problems, etc”; $\alpha = .84$) and OCBO (organizational OCB: “Said good things about your employer in front of others”; $\alpha = .85$). Employees responded to this measure on a five-point Likert-type scale with anchors 1 = Never and 5 = Everyday.

Burnout was measured using the Shirom and Melamed’s Burnout Measure (Shirom, Nirel, & Vinokur, 2006). Two subscales of this measure were used for this

study: 3 items assess emotional exhaustion (“I feel I am not capable of investing emotionally in coworkers and customers; $\alpha = .91$) and 6 items assess physical fatigue (“I feel physically drained”; $\alpha = .91$). Participants responded to this measure by indicating how often, in the past 30 workdays, they have felt the feelings from each of the items. It was measured on a Likert-type scale with anchors 1 = Never or almost never and 7 = Always or almost always.

Role overload was measured using 3 items from Bolino and Turnley’s (2005) modified role overload scale (“I never seem to have enough time to get everything done at work”; $\alpha = .82$). Participants responded to this measure on a five-point Likert-type scale with anchors 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree.

Job satisfaction was measured using 3 items from Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, and Klesh’s (1979) Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire Job Satisfaction Subscale (“All in all I am satisfied with my job”; $\alpha = .92$). Participants responded to this measure on a seven-point Likert-type scale with anchors 1 = Disagree and 7 = Agree.

Turnover intentions was measured using 6 items derived from Mobley, Horner, and Hollingsworth (1978) and Mowday, Koberg, and McArthur’s (1984) work (“I constantly think about quitting my current job”; $\alpha = .85$). Participants responded to this measure on a five-point Likert-type scale with anchors 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree.

Task performance was measured using 7 items from William and Anderson’s (1991) in-role behavior performance measure (“Fulfills responsibilities specified in job description”; $\alpha = .82$). Supervisors responded to this measure on a five-point Likert-type scale with anchors 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree.

Results

Intercorrelations and descriptive statistics for all study variables are listed in Table 1. Before discussing hypothesis testing, a few points should be noted about the correlation table. Firstly, there appear to be differential relationships for OCBP and OCBO. OCBPs seem to be positively related to physical fatigue, whereas OCBOs are not. OCBOs are significantly related to increased role overload and decreased turnover intentions, whereas OCBPs are not. This suggests that OCBOs may be more important in some ways. Additionally, it appears that OCBs are unrelated to task performance, which is in line with the original framework that OCBs and task performance should be kept conceptually distinct.

To test the hypotheses that the relationships between OCBs and outcome variables are moderated by burnout and role overload, moderated regression was used. A series of moderated regressions, as outlined by Baron and Kenny (1986), were run for each of the hypotheses. For example, in order to test if emotional exhaustion moderated the relationship between OCBPs and job satisfaction, hierarchical regression was conducted: in step one, job satisfaction was regressed onto the predictor variable (OCBP) and the moderator variable (emotional exhaustion), and in step two, job satisfaction was regressed onto the predictor, moderator, and the interaction term, or the cross-product between the predictor and the moderator.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

	Mean	Standard Deviation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 OCBP	2.46	.56	(.84)							
2 OCBO	2.42	.60	.74**	(.85)						
3 BO - Emotional Exhaustion	2.17	1.23	-.01	-.01	(.91)					
4 BO - Physical Fatigue	3.84	1.23	.14*	.10	.43**	(.91)				
5 Role Overload	2.41	1.11	.13	.21**	.29**	.42**	(.82)			
6 Job Satisfaction	5.36	1.44	.05	.12	-.40**	-.51**	-.36**	(.92)		
7 Turnover Intentions	2.84	1.02	-.09	-.20**	.26**	.33**	.24**	-.64**	(.85)	
8 Task Performance (Supervisor)	6.24	.81	.00	.15	-.08	-.04	-.02	.18	-.22*	(.82)

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Burnout as a Moderator

There appeared to be little support of the various facets of burnout as moderators between OCBs and outcome variables (hypotheses 1-5). As shown in Table 2, none of the interaction terms for hypotheses 1-5 were statistically significant at the .05 level. However, two of the interaction terms approached significance. The interactions between OCBP and physical fatigue and OCBO and physical fatigue in predicting turnover intentions were close to significance ($\beta = .63, p = .08$ and $\beta = .46, p = .13$, respectively). These two interactions are graphed in Figure 1 and Figure 2.

Simple slope analyses were conducted to determine if the slope of the lines were significantly different from zero. When physical fatigue was low, OCBs were negatively related to turnover intentions (OCBP: $\beta = -.45, t(223) = -2.81, p < .01$; OCBO: $\beta = -.52, t(223) = -3.89, p < .01$), but when physical fatigue was high, there is no relationship (OCBP: $\beta = -.05, t(223) = -.34, p = .74$; OCBO: $\beta = -.23, t(223) = -1.53, p = .13$).

Role Overload as a Moderator

There was mixed support for role overload moderating the relationship between OCBs and outcome variables (hypotheses 6-8; Table 3). Hypotheses 6 and 7 theorized that role overload would moderate the relationship between OCBs and job satisfaction and OCBs and turnover intentions; none of these interaction terms were significant. However, the interaction terms for hypotheses 8a and 8b were significant; OCBP and OCBO appeared to be interacting with role overload when predicting supervisors' ratings of subordinate task performance. The interaction term of "OCBP x role overload" accounted for an additional 5% of variance in task performance, after controlling for the main effects of OCBP and role overload, $\beta = 1.28, p = .02$. Similarly, the interaction

Table 2

Regression Results for Burnout as the Moderator

Variable	Dependent Variables					
	Job Satisfaction		Turnover Intentions		Supervisor Task Performance	
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2
Step 1						
OCBP	0.05	0.06	-.09	-.16	-	-
Emotional Exhaustion	-0.40**	-0.36	.26**	.08	-	-
Step 2						
OCBP x Emotional Exhaustion		-0.04		.20		-
Model F	21.95**	14.58**	9.21**	6.29**	-	-
Overall R²	.16	.16	.08	.08	-	-
Adjusted R²	.16	.15	.07	.07	-	-
Change in adjusted R²		.00		.00		-
Step 1						
OCBP	.12*	.22	-.14*	-.48*	.00	-.04
Physical Fatigue	-.53**	-.39	.35**	-.11	.01	-.04
Step 2						
OCBP x Physical Fatigue		-.19		.63		-.00
Model F	43.23**	28.84**	16.81**	12.34**	.10	.07
Overall R²	.28	.28	.13	.14	.00	.00
Adjusted R²	.27	.27	.12	.13	-.02	-.03
Change in adjusted R²		.00		.01		.00
Step 1						
OCBO	.17**	.24	-.23**	-.49**	.15	.26
Physical Fatigue	-.53**	-.44*	.36**	.02	-.05	.10
Step 2						
OCBO x Physical Fatigue		-.12		.46		-.19
Model F	46.58**	31.00**	22.07**	15.58**	1.41	.97
Overall R²	.29	.29	.17	.17	.03	.03
Adjusted R²	.29	.29	.16	.16	.01	-.00
Change in adjusted R²		.00		.01		.00

Table 3

Regression Results for Role Overload as the Moderator

Variable	Dependent Variables					
	Job Satisfaction		Turnover Intentions		Supervisor Task Performance	
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2
Step 1						
OCBP	.10	.18	-.12	-.26	.00	-.44*
Role Overload	-.38**	-.20	.26**	-.05	-.02	-1.10*
Step 2						
OCBP x Role Overload		-.20		.36		1.28*
Model F	18.29**	12.30**	8.74**	6.25**	.02	1.90
Overall R²	0.14	0.14	.07	.08	.00	.05
Adjusted R²	0.13	0.13	.06	.07	-.02	.02
Change in adjusted R²		.00		.01		.05*
Step 1						
OCBO	.20**	.18	-.26**	-.30*	.17	-.27
Role Overload	-.40**	-.44	.29**	.20	-.07	-1.03*
Step 2						
OCBO x Role Overload		.05		.11		1.19*
Model F	23.07**	15.32**	15.29**	10.21**	1.50	2.95*
Overall R²	.17	.17	.12	.12	.03	.08
Adjusted R²	.16	.16	.11	.11	.01	.05
Change in adjusted R²		.00		.00		.05*

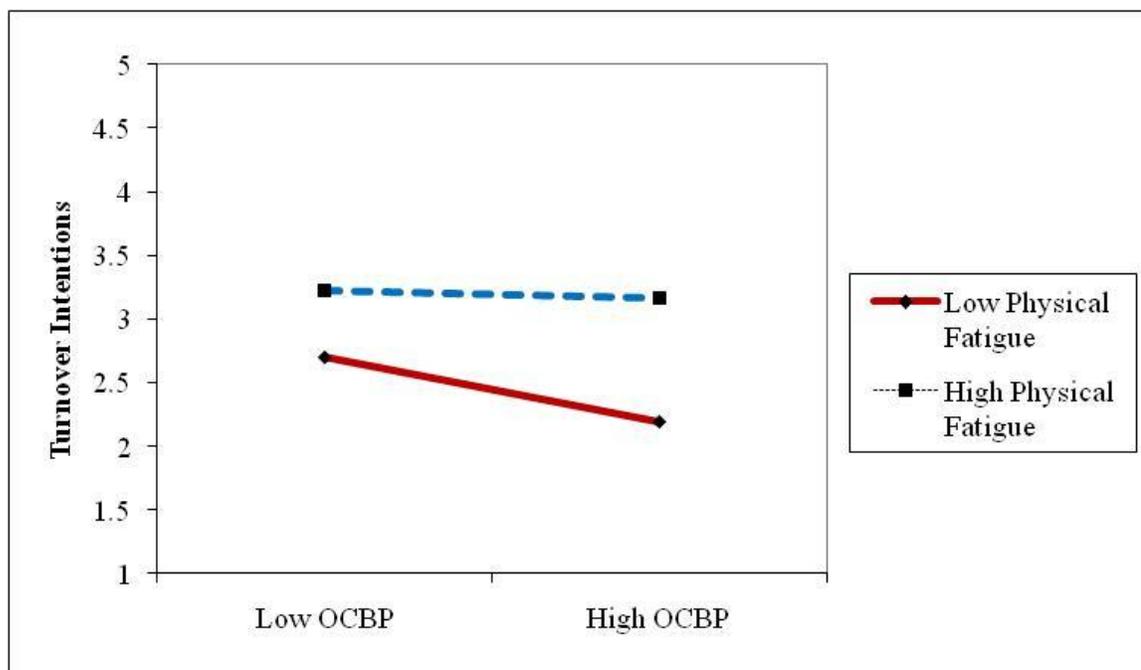


Figure 1. Physical fatigue moderating the relationship between OCBP and turnover intentions

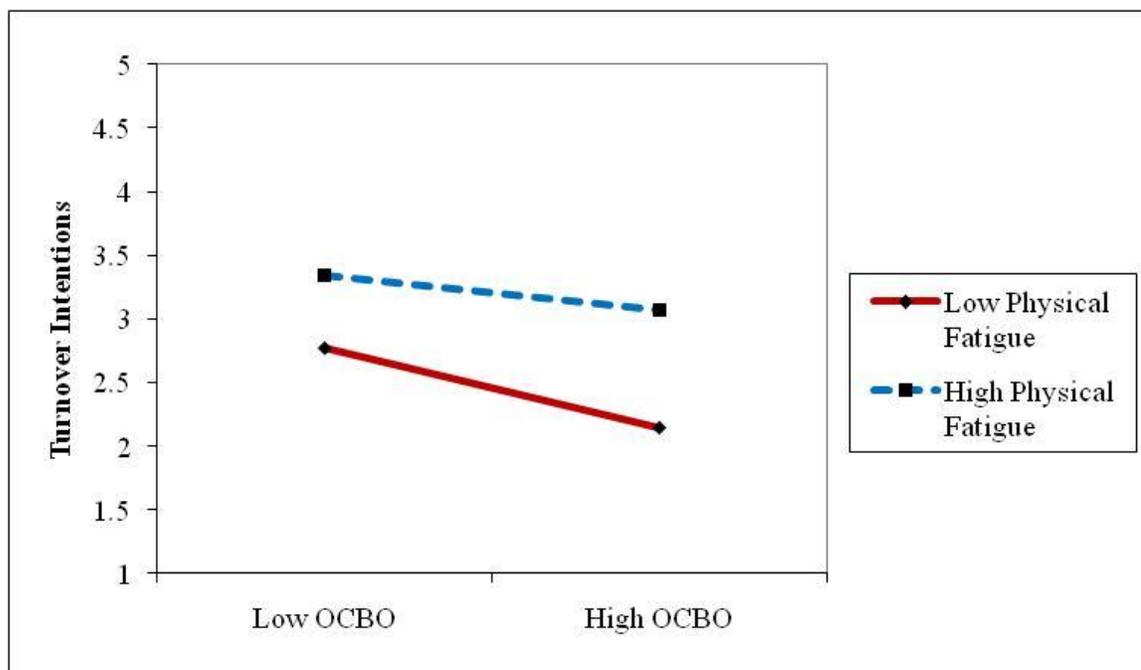


Figure 2. Physical fatigue moderating the relationship between OCBO and turnover intentions

term of “OCBO x role overload” accounted for an additional 5% of variance in task performance, after controlling for the main effects of OCBO and role overload, $\beta = 1.19$, $p = .02$. These two interactions are graphed in Figure 3 and Figure 4.

Simple slope analyses were conducted to determine if the slope of the lines were significantly different from zero. Interestingly, although the interaction term was significant, the two lines for OCBP predicting task performance at high role overload and low role overload were not significantly different from zero (high role overload: $\beta = .41$, $t(108) = 1.80$, $p = .08$; low role overload: $\beta = -.27$, $t(108) = -1.37$, $p = .17$). However, one must keep in mind that slope analyses were conducted, arbitrarily, at +/- one standard deviation on the moderator; as such, the general pattern that when role overload was high, OCBPs appeared to be positively related to task performance, should be recognized. In regards to OCBO, when role overload was high, OCBOs were positively related to task performance ($\beta = .59$, $t(108) = 2.92$, $p < .01$), and when role overload was low, OCBOs were not related to task performance ($\beta = -.01$, $t(108) = -.05$, $p = .96$).

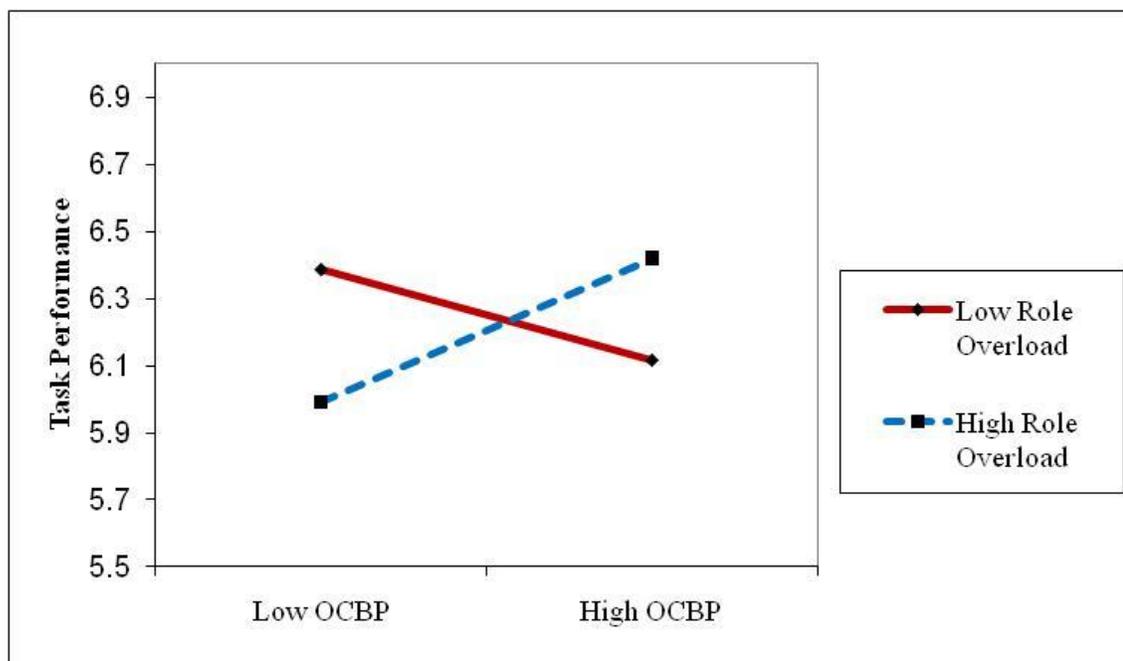


Figure 3. Role overload moderating the relationship between OCBP and task performance

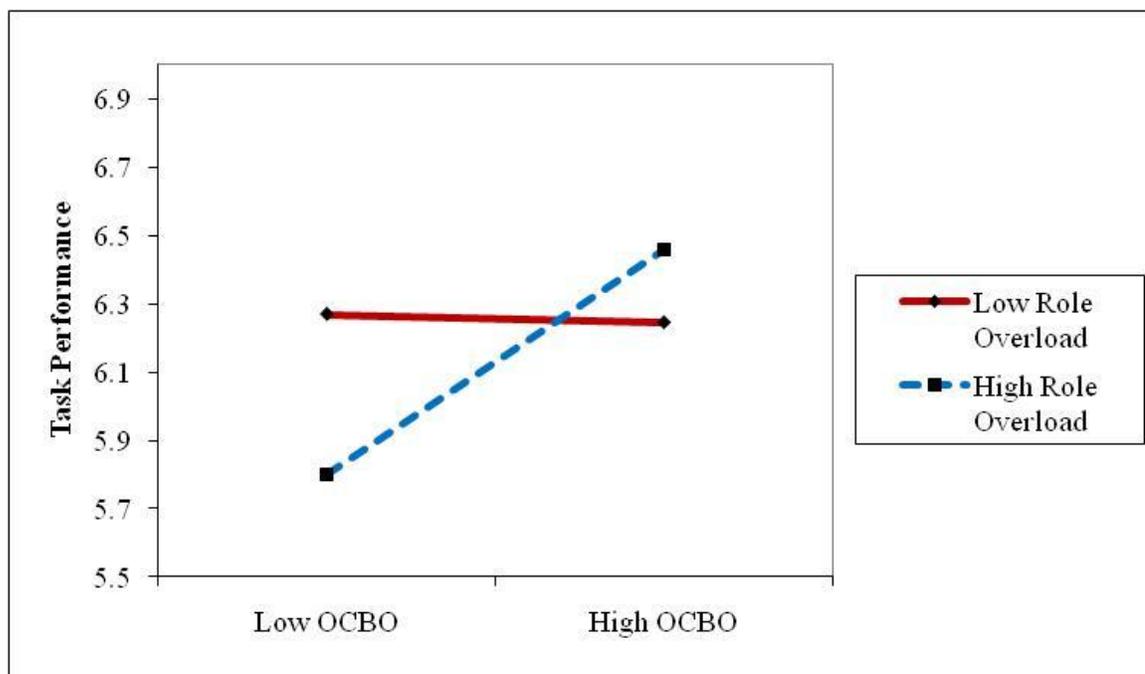


Figure 4. Role overload moderating the relationship between OCBO and task performance

Discussion

It was hypothesized that burnout and role overload would moderate the relationship between OCBs and various outcome variables. Unfortunately, there was little support for burnout as a moderator: none of the eight interaction terms with burnout as the moderator were significant, although two approached significance. Role overload as a moderator received mixed support, as two out of six interaction terms with role overload were significant.

The two burnout hypotheses (4a and 4b) that approached significance dealt with physical fatigue moderating the relationship between OCBP/OCBO and turnover intentions. It was hypothesized that when physical fatigue is low, there would be a negative relationship, and when physical fatigue is high, there would be a positive relationship. As one can see from Figure 1 and Figure 2, the data are not exactly in line with the original hypotheses. When physical fatigue was low, performance of OCBs was positive for the organization because it was related to decreased turnover intentions. This is in line with the previous literature. However, when physical fatigue was high, rather than OCBs being related to higher turnover intentions, the benefits of OCBs were simply eliminated. Although the interaction terms were not significant, the graphical representations do seem to support the general hypothesis that it is not always beneficial to encourage performance of OCBs.

The two role overload hypotheses (8a and 8b) that were significant dealt with role overload moderating the relationship between OCBP/OCBO and supervisor ratings of subordinate task performance. It was hypothesized that when role overload is low, there would be no relationship between OCBs and task performance, but when role overload is high, there would be a negative relationship. However, the graphical representations (Figures 3 and 4) do not support the original hypotheses.

According to Figure 3 and Figure 4, the overall pattern seemed to suggest that when role overload was high, there was a positive relationship between OCBs and task performance. In other words, when a person was high on role overload, increased OCBs were related to higher task performance. This pattern with role overload as a moderator seems counter-intuitive because if a person is experiencing high role overload and does not have enough resources to fulfill the multiple roles expected of him/her, performance of OCBs should lead to decreased task performance, not increased task performance. Perhaps an explanation of the pattern is that a supervisor is “rewarding” an employee with high “performance” for engaging in OCBs when the employee clearly has too many roles to fulfill. In other words, the supervisor sees an employee struggling to fulfill both their job-holder role and organizational-member role, and because he/she is still performing OCBs in the face of a large workload, the supervisor rates the employee as high on job performance. However, such an explanation taps into halo and schema errors, which should have been avoided as the performance measure was specifically focused on task performance and the OCB measure was a frequency based behavioral measure. The specific behaviors on the OCB measure should help distinguish it from a task performance measure.

Another possible explanation of the results is simply that the hypotheses were incorrect. The original hypotheses dealt with role overload as a moderator, without making an explicit connection between OCBs and role overload. However, Bolino and Turnley's (2005) study related OCBs to role overload, theorizing that performance of OCBs leads to personal costs, such as role overload and job stress. Perhaps instead of role overload moderating the relationship between OCBs and task performance, there is an interaction between OCBs and task performance in predicting role overload. According to the past literature, this hypothesis also seems plausible. As stated previously in the introduction, role overload occurs because a person is not able to simultaneously fulfill their job-holder role and their organizational-member role. Based off of this, role overload should occur when OCBs and task performance are simultaneously high, but not when only one or the other is high.

These revised hypotheses, where task performance moderates the relationship between OCBs and role overload, were tested and the results of the regressions are reported in Table 4. Both of the interaction terms were significant (OCBP x task performance: $\beta = 2.67, p < .01$; OCBO x task performance: $\beta = 2.81, p < .01$). The data are graphed in Figures 5 and 6. As shown in the figures, the patterns support the hypotheses; when task performance and OCBs were high, role overload was high, but when either task performance or OCBs alone were high, role overload was lower. Additional simple slope analyses confirmed these results: when task performance was high, there was a positive relationship between OCBs and role overload (OCBP: $\beta = 1.21, t(108) = 3.90, p < .01$; OCBO: $\beta = 1.20, t(108) = 4.21, p < .01$), but when task performance was low, there was no relationship between OCBs and role overload

Table 4

Regression Results for Task Performance as the Moderator

Variable	Dependent Variable	
	Role Overload	
	Step 1	Step 2
Step 1		
OCBP	.23*	-2.04**
Task Performance	-.02	-1.39**
Step 2		
OCBP x Task Performance		2.67**
Model F	3.02	5.07**
Overall R²	.05	.12
Adjusted R²	.04	.10
Change in adjusted R²		.07**
Step 1		
OCBO	.29**	-2.04*
Task Performance	-.06	-1.30**
Step 2		
OCBO x Task Performance		2.81**
Model F	5.06**	6.05**
Overall R²	.09	.14
Adjusted R²	.07	.12
Change in adjusted R²		.06**

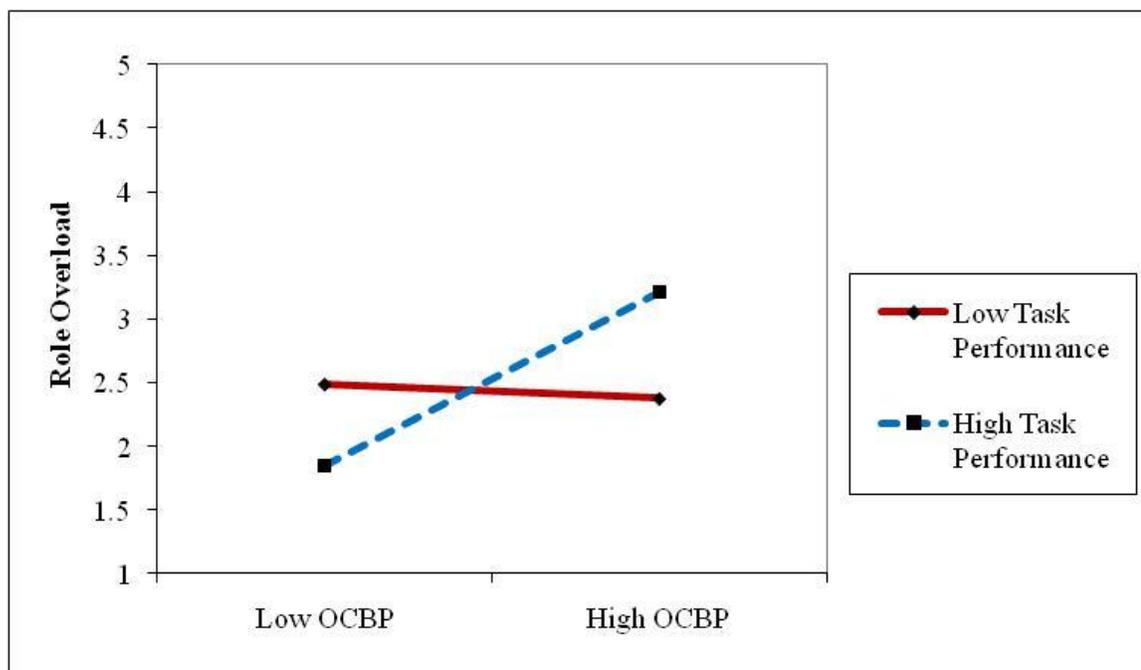


Figure 5. Task performance moderating the relationship between OCBP and role overload

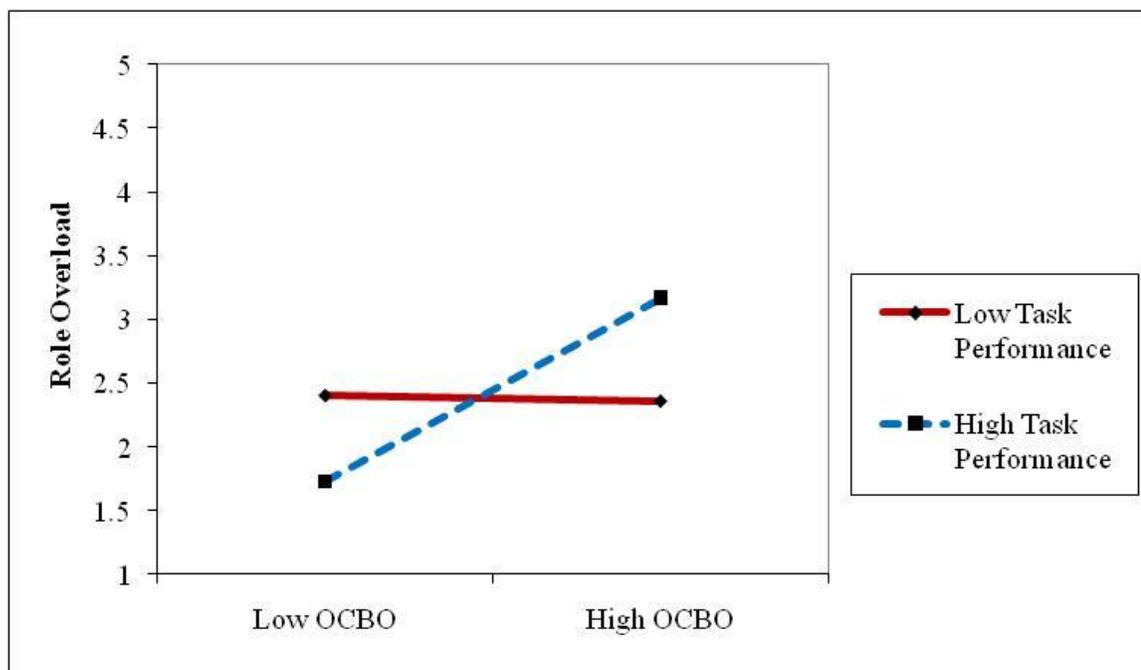


Figure 6. Task performance moderating the relationship between OCBO and role overload

(OCBP: $\beta = -.10$, $t(108) = -.35$, $p = .73$; OCBO: $\beta = -.04$, $t(108) = -.13$, $p = .90$). Taken together, the results support the hypothesis that a person attempting to simultaneously fulfill both roles of job-holder and organizational-citizen may be taking on too many responsibilities, and therefore experience the personal cost of role overload when performing OCBs. This provides support for the general theory that under certain circumstances, OCBs may be detrimental.

Implications and Future Research

Due to increased global competition, team-based organizations, downsizing, and customer service/satisfaction emphasis, the focus on OCBs has been rising (Borman, 2004; Borman, & Motowidlo, 1997; Borman, & Penner, 2001), and organizations appear to be increasing pressure for employees to engage in OCBs (Bolino et al., in press; Vigoda-Gadot, 2006). In the past, this may have been considered a “good” trend, as OCBs have often been related to positive organizational outcomes, but results from this study show that there are potential hazards of continuing this trend. Under certain circumstances, benefits derived from OCBs may be attenuated, or even more importantly, performance of OCBs may even result in personal costs to employees. For instance, if employees comply with this pressure to perform OCBs, our results suggest that this will lead to stress on the job, in the form of role overload; even more seriously, it is the employees who are doing their tasks well who experience this increase in role overload. This has negative implications for the employees as role overload has been linked to negative outcomes such as decreased job satisfaction and decreased psychological health (Pearson, 2008). This in itself is a major concern, as it is the organization’s “good” employees that are suffering the most by performing the OCBs. In addition to this, there

are most likely negative ramifications for the organization as well, such as increased turnover intentions.

The next logical step would be to research the more distal effects of this interaction between OCBs and task performance. For example, results show that simultaneous performance of task performance and OCBs leads to role overload, which in turn is related to job dissatisfaction and decreased psychological health; future research should examine if this interaction also leads to negative physical health and decreases in other affective feelings toward the organization, such as commitment or job involvement. Similarly, organizational outcomes, such as turnover and CWBs, should be studied as distal outcomes of the interaction between OCBs and task performance. Another direction for future research is to test various moderators of the relationship between OCBs and dependent variables. For example, future research could focus on the potential moderators of workload, role ambiguity, or role conflict.

Limitations

One potential limitation of this study is the use of a student sample, which may not generalize to the population of employed adults. However, the results are still important as the sample represents a significant portion of the adult workforce. Future research can seek to replicate the findings with other work samples. Another limitation could be the small sample size. Although there were 227 completed self-report surveys, there were only 112 completed pairs of self-report and supervisor surveys. However, the fact that the only two interaction terms that were significant relied on the supervisor data, and hence a sample of 112, provides support that 112 is a large enough sample to detect the effects of the interaction.

Conclusion

In the past, the literature has typically assumed that OCBs are good. However, the results of this study show that this assumption may not be valid. In fact, the results support the idea that under certain circumstances, performance of OCBs may actually be bad. In light of this evidence, the field as a whole should investigate under what circumstances OCBs are good for employees and organizations, and when OCBs are bad for employees and organizations.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Target Survey

OCB

1. Helped co-worker with personal matter such as moving, childcare, car problems, etc
2. Picked up meal for others at work
3. Picked up or dropped off co-worker at airport, hotel, restaurant, etc
4. Drove, escorted, or entertained company guests, clients, or out-of-town employees
5. Took time to advise, coach, or mentor a co-worker
6. Helped co-worker learn new skills or shared job knowledge
7. Covered a co-worker's mistake
8. Helped new employees get oriented to the job
9. Lent a compassionate ear when someone had a work problem
10. Bought Girl Scout cookies or other fund raising items from a co-worker (or their child)
11. Used own vehicle, supplies or equipment for employer's business
12. Lent a compassionate ear when someone had a personal problem
13. Lent money to a co-worker
14. Contributed and/or sent cards/flowers for co-worker birthdays/special occasions
15. Lent car or other personal property to co-worker
16. Changed vacation schedule, work days, or shifts to accommodate co-worker's needs
17. Offered suggestions to improve how work is done
18. Offered suggestions for improving the work environment
19. Finished something for co-worker who had to leave early
20. Helped a less capable co-worker lift a heavy box or other object
21. Came in early or stayed late without pay to complete a project or task
22. Helped a co-worker who had too much to do
23. Volunteered for extra work assignments
24. Took phone messages for absent or busy co-worker
25. Tried to recruit a person to work for your employer
26. Worked weekends or other days off to complete a project or task
27. Informed manager of co-worker's excellent performance
28. Brought work home to prepare for next day
29. Volunteered to attend meetings or work on committees on own time
30. Developed extracurricular activities for co-workers (sport team, etc.)
31. Said good things about your employer in front of others
32. Gave up meal and other breaks to complete work
33. Brought candy, doughnuts, snacks, or drinks for co-workers
34. Organized office celebrations for holidays and co-workers' birthdays, retirement, etc
35. Volunteered to work at after-hours or out-of-town events
36. Volunteered to help a co-worker deal with a difficult customer, vendor, or co-worker
37. Gave a written or verbal recommendation for a co-worker
38. Went out of the way to give co-worker encouragement or express appreciation
39. Decorated, straightened up, or otherwise beautified common work space
40. Spent extra time helping a co-worker prepare/edit/rehearse a presentation or paper
41. Assisted a co-worker with device or equipment such as computers, copy machines, etc

42. Defended a co-worker who was being "put-down" or spoken ill of by other co-workers or supervisor

Job Satisfaction

1. All in all I am satisfied with my job
2. In general, I don't like my job
3. In general, I like working here

Burnout

4. I feel tired
5. I have no energy for going to work in the morning
6. I feel physically drained
7. I feel fed up
8. I feel like my "batteries" are "dead"
9. I feel burned out
10. My thinking process is slow
11. I have difficulty concentrating
12. I feel I'm not thinking clearly
13. I feel I'm not focused in my thinking
14. I have difficulty thinking about complex things
15. I feel I am unable to be sensitive to the needs of coworkers and customers
16. I feel I am not capable of investing emotionally in coworkers and customers
17. I feel I am not capable of being sympathetic to co-workers and customers

Role Overload

18. The amount of work I am expected to do is too great
19. I never seem to have enough time to get everything done at work
20. It often seems like I have too much work for one person to do

Turnover Intentions

21. I constantly think about quitting
22. All things considered, I would like to find a comparable job in a different organization
23. I will probably look for a new job in the near future
24. I will probably find an acceptable alternative if I look for a new job
25. I am unlikely to leave my job soon.
26. I don't have any intention to look for a new job

Appendix B: Supervisor Survey

Task Performance

1. Adequately completes assigned duties
2. Fulfills responsibilities specified in job description
3. Performs tasks that are expected of him/her
4. Meets formal performance requirements of the job
5. Engages in activities that will directly affect his/her performance evaluation
6. Neglects aspects of the job he/she is obligated to perform
7. Fails to perform essential duties