

Character Strengths as catalysts for Organizational Citizenship

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Abstract The current research investigates the consequence of character strengths on dimensions of Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB). The priority qualities that professionals of IT Professionals in SME's in the Delhi NCR region were Inquisitiveness, Caring and Self-Control. Included in the sample were 110 professional individuals. The research design employed both correlation and multiple regression analyses. All the three character strengths significantly correlated with one another but they had varying relationships with OCB and All three character strengths had significant correlations with at least one of the OCB Dimensions. The regression analyses revealed that Self-Control was the only significant predictor of OCBO in the joint analyses. These findings suggest that self-regulatory strengths may play a more central role in organization-directed citizenship behaviors.

Keywords: Organizational Citizenship Behavior, Character Strengths, Positive Psychology,

1. Introduction

OCB is the "extra-mile" behavior that employees engage in beyond their official duties (Organ, 1988). Today's workplaces rely on collaborative efforts. Thus, volunteer behaviours (for example, helping colleagues, defending the organisation's reputation) have become essential for sustained service. Studies have consistently found that OCB decisions are associated with personality traits (Ilies et al. 2009). More specifically, discretionary helping behavior can be predicted by certain personality traits at the same time that Positive Psychology emerged, attention turned to Character Strengths – stable personality traits that enable people to flourish. Peterson and Seligman's (2004) Character Strengths and Virtues, presented the first systematic, cross-cultural classification of 24-character strengths under six core virtues, and has become the foundational taxonomy that guides contemporary academic research on character strengths in work and non-work domains.

Positive Psychology has shifted the focus from negatives to positives by showing that character strengths may help us flourish at work. Research suggests that strengths use at work is associated with organizational citizenship behavior and other extra-role outcomes (Lavy and Littman, 2016), although the evidence is stronger for general personality traits and strengths use than for any single three-strength model. Although previous work has demonstrated an association between general personality and OCB, more information is needed about how specific virtues map directly onto different dimensions of OCB. To address this gap, we examine how these internal "virtues" result in external "citizenship."

2. Literature Review

According to Lavy (2020), who reviewed the numerous studies and reviews of character strengths intervention in schools, growing evidence shows that strengths fostered support key performance outcomes such as well-being and academic performance. Niemiec's practitioner-oriented investigation of interventions based on character strengths goes deeper into the functional roles of different clusters of strengths, according to the VIA framework self-regulation (self-control) is a temperance strength that helps individuals regulate what they do and feel, managing impulses, avoiding excess and persisting in a valued goal (Niemiec, 2017). Temperance strengths may help people bounce back from adversity and sustain performance and meta-performance by facilitating internalisation of conduct standards in organisations. We have reasons to expect Self Control especially relevant for OCBO which refers to compliance, conscientiousness, reliable role performance. Recent work has moved beyond treating strengths as a single aggregate and instead examines how different clusters of strengths relate to domain-specific outcomes. Littman-Ovadia et al. (2021) highlighted the growing body of research demonstrating that character strengths are associated with well-being, optimal functioning, and positive outcomes across multiple life domains. Harzer and Ruch (2014) found evidence that interpersonal strengths (e.g., kindness, love, gratitude)

are particularly important for interpersonal and relational outcomes, whereas more cognitively oriented “mind” strengths (e.g., curiosity, love of learning) and temperance strengths (e.g., self-regulation) may be more directly related to performance and goal-directed behavior. Liu and Wang (2021) found that employees with higher trait self-control reported higher levels of OCB, and that this relationship was mediated by vocational delay of gratification and job satisfaction. Their findings suggest that self-controlled individuals are more willing to forgo immediate gratification, develop positive attitudes towards their work, and consequently engage in discretionary behaviors that benefit the organization. Related work on voluntary work behaviors at the workplace similarly frames self-control as a key resource that promotes positive extra-role behaviors and helps inhibit negative voluntary behaviors, such as counterproductive work behavior. Gander et al. (2020) showed that character strengths and their fit with one’s occupational environment are positively related to current and future job and life satisfaction, reinforcing the view that strengths are relevant and malleable resources in work contexts.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

The participants were from organizations that were part of the SME’s in Delhi NCR region and the sample size of the research was N=110, which representative of the role and years of experience in these organizations with assurances of confidentiality and voluntary participation.

3.2 Measures

- **Organizational Citizenship Behavior:** Measured across two dimensions: Organization-oriented and Person-oriented using 20 items OCB Checklist developed by Fox, S., & Spector, P.E. (n.d.) mentioned this scale have good consistency and reliability Fox et al., (2011).
- **Character Strengths:** Character strengths were assessed using the VIA Inventory of Strengths–Virtues 3 (VIA-IS-V3), a 24-item measure derived from the Values in Action (VIA) Classification of Character Strengths originally proposed by Peterson and Seligman (2004). The instrument was developed by McGrath (2017) as part of the revised VIA Assessment Suite and measures three empirically derived virtue dimensions: Caring, Inquisitiveness, and Self-Control.

4. Results

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics (N=110)

| Variable | Mean | SD |
|-----------------|-------|-------|
| OCB | 65.92 | 12.21 |
| CS | 84.61 | 12.76 |
| OCBO | 20.07 | 5.11 |
| OCBP | 19.28 | 4.58 |
| Inquisitiveness | 28.57 | 4.97 |

| Variable | Mean | SD |
|--------------|-------|------|
| Caring | 26.68 | 5.55 |
| Self-Control | 29.00 | 5.08 |

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 4.1 show Participants reported moderate to high levels of both organizational citizenship behavior and character strengths. Among the strengths, Self-Control demonstrated the highest mean, suggesting a relatively strong regulatory capacity within the sample.

Table 4.2: Correlation Matrix

| Variable | OCBO | OCBP | Inquisitiveness | Caring | Self-Control | CS |
|----------------------------------|--------|-------|-----------------|--------|--------------|------|
| OCBO | 1.00 | | | | | |
| OCBP | 0.56** | 1.00 | | | | |
| Inquisitiveness | 0.00 | -0.07 | 1.00 | | | |
| Caring | 0.09 | -0.13 | 0.62** | 1.00 | | |
| Self-Control | 0.21* | -0.02 | 0.64** | 0.60** | 1.00 | |
| Character Strengths | -0.06 | 0.03 | 0.03 | 0.05 | -0.12 | 1.00 |
| <i>*p < .05, **p < .01</i> | | | | | | |

4.2 Correlation Analysis

Table 4.2 represents Correlation analysis revealed strong positive interrelationships among Inquisitiveness, Caring, and Self-Control, indicating that these strengths function as an integrated psychological system. OCBO and OCBP were moderately correlated, supporting their conceptual distinction.

OCBO and OCBP were moderately and positively correlated, indicating that employees who engage in higher organization-directed citizenship also tend to engage more in person-directed citizenship, while still supporting their conceptual distinction. Inquisitiveness, Caring, and Self-Control were strongly and positively intercorrelated, suggesting that these strengths tend to co-occur and function as an integrated set of psychological resources. Correlations between the strengths and CS Total were small, consistent with CS Total being a composite index rather than a distinct construct

Table 4.3: Regression Analysis for predicting citizenship towards organization.

| Predictor | B | SEB | β | t | p |
|--|-------|------|---------|-------|------|
| (Constant) | 16.19 | 3.07 | — | 5.28 | .000 |
| Inquisitiveness | -0.25 | 0.14 | -0.24 | -1.84 | .068 |
| Caring | 0.03 | 0.12 | 0.03 | 0.25 | .807 |
| Self-Control | 0.35 | 0.13 | 0.35 | 2.72 | .008 |
| $R^2 = .078, F(3, 106) = 2.98, p = .035$ | | | | | |

4.3 Regression Analysis

Table 4.3 show Multiple regression analysis predicting OCBO revealed a statistically significant model, explaining approximately 7.8% of the variance. Self-Control emerged as a significant positive predictor, indicating that higher self-control is associated with higher levels of organization-directed citizenship behavior. whereas Inquisitiveness showed a marginal negative association and Caring was non-significant.

Table 4.4: Regression Analysis for Predicting citizenship towards Person.

| Predictor | B | SEB | B | T | p |
|--|-------|------|-------|-------|------|
| (Constant) | 21.21 | 2.83 | — | 7.50 | .000 |
| Inquisitiveness | -0.03 | 0.13 | -0.03 | -0.25 | .805 |
| Caring | -0.14 | 0.11 | -0.17 | -1.34 | .183 |
| Self-Control | 0.10 | 0.12 | 0.11 | 0.81 | .422 |
| $R^2 = .023, F(3, 106) = 0.84, p = .475$ | | | | | |

Table 4.4 shows regression analysis with citizenship towards person as the dependent variable and the three strengths as predictors did not yield a statistically significant overall model. None of the character strengths showed a significant unique contribution to OCBP in this multivariate context. This pattern suggests that, in this sample, the selected strengths do not reliably account for variance in person-oriented citizenship behaviors over and above shared variance among predictors

5. Discussion

The most significant finding of this study is the unique role of Self-Control in predicting citizenship towards Organisation. While "Caring" is often assumed to be the primary driver of prosocial behavior, our data shows that

for behaviors directed at the organization (compliance, punctuality, reliability). There was a marginal negative correlation between Inquisitiveness and OCBO. Hence, a possible distraction effect could mean that very curious people might pay more attention to discovery and exploration than fulfilling their duty as organizational citizens. for OCBP, the non-predictive aspect could imply that person-oriented helping behavior is less concerned with the characteristic of a person.

6. Conclusion and Implications

The research demonstrates that self-regulatory character strengths predict organization-directed citizenship behaviors (OCBs) above and beyond personality. In terms of an entire set, however, character strengths are valuable psychological resources and reasonably stable over time, which contribute to all forms of OCB. Organizations can promote OCBO through training and development initiatives that encourage the development of employees' self-regulatory capacities. Strength-based development programs should focus on distinct strengths and their relevance for various organizational outcomes. A differentiation of OCB dimensions is also important for assessment and intervention purposes.

7. Limitations

There are some limitations to the study. since all measures were self-reported it is possible that a part of the association may be due to common method bias or social desirability response set. also, the sample of current study only represent employees of IT SMEs of Delhi NCR region which may not be true representative of overall sample.

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