

Understanding the “Dark Side” of Organizational Citizenship Behavior: A 25-Year Journey

ABSTRACT: Prior research has found that organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) is beneficial for both employees and organizations. Employees who go beyond the call of duty are typically evaluated more favorably by supervisors, and organizations benefit from OCB because such behavior contributes to the development of social capital and “lubricates” the social machinery of the organization. However, in this presentation, I discuss a growing body of work that challenges the notion that OCB is positive and explores its “dark side.” I give particular attention to research I have conducted over the past 25+ years, which indicates that employees engage in OCB to manage impressions; that performing OCB can be associated with stress, overload, and work-family conflict; that employees may feel pressured to engage in OCB; that being a “good soldier” can sometimes result in citizenship fatigue and lower levels of OCB in the future; that OCB may lead to moral licensing and regret; and that employees are sometimes reluctant to accept help from their coworkers. I conclude by discussing a study examining how employees communicate with their partner about going the extra mile and how these communication strategies are related to OCB, work-family conflict, and partner satisfaction.