

# Enhancing the University's Effectiveness: Recognizing, Promoting, and Rewarding Functional Organizational Citizenship Behavior

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## ABSTRACT

*Vivaldi State University (VSU) is a small four-year university whose primary focus is effective teaching. Research and service are designed to complement teaching and to create a synergy among all three activities. This synergy is to enhance the competence of Vivaldi's faculty and the learning process of its students. It is also Vivaldi's strength concerning its relevance to the business community and the community in general. However, the university faces strategic challenges, including removing boundaries between higher education institutions and their communities, redesigning traditional college programs, and restructuring the academic environment. VSU's challenges lie in its reluctance to stimulate innovation and change and in its unwillingness to be proactive by promoting a flexible and spontaneous environment that elicits productive and creative citizenship behavior of its faculty. The purpose of this study is to decide whether the presence or absence of organizational citizenship behavior (discretionary behavior that is genuine and spontaneous and not part of the requirements of the job description) - exhibited by faculty and administrators - directly impacts Vivaldi's performance. Furthermore, the study is to examine whether the university can build organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) through the creation of social capital. Recommendations for interventions were made on the assumption that a relationship exists between OCB and organizational effectiveness.*

## INTRODUCTION

University professors who prepare for their courses, start their classes punctually, teach the prescribed material, do research, and attend college meetings and conferences demonstrate behavior that is contractually agreed upon and "directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system" (Organ, 1988, p.5) of the organization, the university. If these professors volunteer to do additional committee and governance work, if they offer to do ancillary activities with students, and if they actively support organizational objectives, they exhibit what since the late 1980s has been called *organizational citizenship behavior* or OCB (Bateman & Organ, 1983; Organ, 1988; Robbins, 2003; Turnley & Bolino, 2001; LePine, Erez & Johnson, 2002; Bolino, Turnley & Bloodgood, 2002; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine & Bachrach, 2000).

Organizational citizenship behavior or *extra-role cooperative behavior* (Katz & Kahn, 1966; D'Intino, Shepard, & Wolfe, 2002) is discretionary behavior that is genuine and spontaneous and not part of the requirements of the job description (Organ, 1988). In the aggregate, OCB promotes the effective functioning of the organization (Organ, 1988; see also Allen & Meyer,

1990; Bolino & Turnley, 2003; D'Intino, Shepard, & Wolfle, 2002; Organ, 1988; Schrodtt, Cawyer & Sanders, 2003).

Vivaldi State University (VSU) is one of those higher education institutions that have set their goals higher for the new century and have decided to improve their effectiveness. Effectiveness measures whether organizational objectives are accomplished (Kreitner, 2004; Moorhead & Griffin, 2004). If a higher education institution intends to meet its effectiveness criteria, it will accomplish its purposes, be efficient in the use of resources, and satisfy students, administrators, faculty, and society.

As recent research has suggested that citizenship behavior influences the effective functioning of the organization, the OCB-effectiveness relationship will be investigated at the university level. Faculty members and administrators who exhibit OCB do not just contribute to the regular academic services created and provided by the university, they also enhance and promote the successful and effective functioning of the university and support its social structure (Williams, Gore, Broches & Lostoski, 1987).

## **BACKGROUND**

Vivaldi State University (VSU) is a small four-year university in the south-east of the US with an average student population of 4,200; it has a high percentage of faculty with terminal degrees (85%) and a very low student/teacher ratio (18:1). VSU has established itself as a university that reaches out to the community by offering courses that prepare students for employment. The university calls itself a teaching university; research serves a practical application approach and is therefore not quite as theoretical or esoteric as the research that is done at a research university that offers doctoral programs. The university's strengths are its ability to match many of its faculty members with the profile that is established for the university and to serve its stakeholders well. Professors conduct scientific and practical research, reach out to the community via external services, teach what is expected of them and therefore make sure that classroom performance is reputable. Some faculty members support each other and work together on research projects; however, support is restricted to the intra-departmental environment. As external service is stressed strongly at Vivaldi, faculty members make an effort to actively connect with the constituents to serve as catalysts.

The major challenges the university faces are coping with temporariness and stimulating innovation and change. Faculty and administrators are aware that the quality of their service depends on the features that satisfy the customer and outdo the competition by emphasizing the organization's uniqueness. The university must create an atmosphere that encourages the adjustment to continuous fluctuation, reorganization, and restructuring. Today's student population expects universities to extend their boundaries and use technology to support communication, new teaching and learning methods and successful academic programs. No matter whether instructors see the students as customers, clients, or partners (Armstrong, 2003; Ferris, 2003), they still have the responsibility to satisfy their students' educational needs, strive for continuous improvement of course content and course presentation, and therefore become involved in strategic decisions.

The purpose of this study is to identify if and how organizational citizenship behavior has a direct impact on VSU's performance. Additionally, the proposal is to determine which factors of the university's effectiveness can be influenced by the employee's extraordinary efforts. Established dimensions of citizenship behavior are examined and discussed. Specific relationships are defined, and causalities between citizenship behavior and performance are clarified. Furthermore, this study investigates the relationship between OCB and the university's ability to face challenges and meet its goals. Relevant literature is reviewed concerning dimensions of OCB, its antecedents and its impact on organizational effectiveness.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

To better understand citizenship behavior, researchers focused a great deal of their interest on the OCB construct that was developed by Bateman and Organ (1983). Organ coined the expression "organizational citizenship behavior" and also developed five dimensions of OCB, *altruism*, *conscientiousness*, *courtesy*, *sportsmanship*, and *civic virtue* (1988). In his book he defined organizational citizenship behavior as individual behavior that is discretionary, where discretionary means that "the behavior is not an absolute requirement of the role or the job description," the behavior is rather a matter of personal choice (Organ, 1988, p.5-6).

Organ and other OCB scholars have focused mainly on antecedents of OCB (Smith, Organ, & Near, 1983). They concluded that citizenship behavior originates primarily from positive job attitudes, task characteristics, and leadership behavior (Bolino, 1999; Bolino, Turnley, & Bloodgood, 2002; Organ, 1988; Podsakoff et al., 2000). Numerous earlier studies suggest that employees who are committed to the organization and are given tasks that satisfy them may do more than what is expected of them (see also Allen & Meyer, 1990)

Researchers also suggested that OCB promotes the effective functioning and performance of the organization (Bolino, et al., 2002; Bolino & Turnley, 2003; D'Intino et al., 2002; Organ, 1988; Schrodtt, Cawyer & Sanders, 2003). Bolino and his colleagues (2002) point out that Katz (1966) initiated the interest and belief in employees' contributing to the competitiveness of the organization by going beyond their role requirements. Only a few studies, however, examined OCB and its impact on organizational effectiveness and competitiveness (Podsakoff et al., 2000; LePine et al., 2002; Bolino et al., 2002). A theoretical basis which explains how and why OCB is critical for the enhancement of organizational performance has not been developed and only a few industries, including restaurant and manufacturing, were studied (Bolino & Turnley, 2003; Bolino et al., 2002). The few papers that have used the OCB construct to apply it to academic environment focused on high schools and methods to improving learning. Studies on citizenship behavior and its impact on the proper functioning of universities have so far been neglected by OCB researchers (DiPaola & Hoy, 2003; Latham & Skarlicki, 1995; Schrodtt et al., 2003).

Also, researchers have not determined which factors of organizational effectiveness would be influenced by the employee's extraordinary efforts. Organ's initial assertion simply noted that OCB impacts the effective functioning of the organization (1988). Organ (1988) asserted that OCB should improve the functioning of the organization, but he did not define the specific relationships. Findings in current and prior studies suggest that OCB and helping behavior is related to efficiency, but the causalities are not quite clear (Podsakoff et al. 2000; LePine et al. 2002). Therefore, the intervention is of particular interest. A theoretical model could support the

exploration of intervening processes. It is obvious that research on OCB and its impact on effect and performance is still in its infancy (Bolino & Turnley, 2003; LePine et al. 2002).

The implementation of autonomous team-based organizational structures and the abandonment of strict hierarchical structures have amplified the significance of individual initiative and cooperation (LePine et al., 2002; Van der Vegt, Van der Vlier, & Osterhof, 2003). Van der Vegt and his colleagues used the OCB construct to examine how team identification, as well as helping behavior and loyal behavior (two dimensions of OCB), is related to educational and functional dissimilarities of multidisciplinary team members and how relationships are moderated by contextual variables (2003).

Recently, researchers from various disciplines have also shown increased interest in “the structure and strength of interpersonal relationships in social systems” to examine *social capital*, an asset derived from relationships among individuals and organizations, which can be mobilized when needed (Bolino et al., 2002). Bolino, Turnley, and Bloodgood (2002) base their work on Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998), who argue that a firm’s social capital can generate significant capabilities that give the organization a competitive advantage. Nahapiet and Ghoshal’s three dimensions of social capital (1998), namely, structural, relational, and cognitive, are valuable because they solve problems of coordination and facilitate communication among individuals (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Bolino et al., 2002). As organizational citizenship behavior can contribute to the development of social capital, it can at the same time contribute to the improvement of organizational performance (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Bolino et al., 2002). Not many researchers did studies on how social capital can be built; therefore, the study of Bolino, Turnley, and Bloodgood is very valuable because it explores how OCB contributes to the creation of social capital (2002). The authors created a model that delineates how OCB might contribute to the structural, relational, and cognitive dimensions of social capital; the model is multilevel and describes how individual-level behavior (OCB) contributes to a group-level phenomenon (social capital) which influences organizational-level outcome (Bolino et al., 2002).

D’Intino, Shepard, and Wolfle (2002) examined citizenship behavior from a cultural point of view. The authors based their study on Katz and Kahn’s (1966) and Barnard’s (1938) observations, who used the concept of extra-role cooperative behavior to describe cooperative actions. For example, employees cooperate to promote an organization’s effectiveness rather than focus primarily on their individual needs. D’Intino et al. (2002) propose a political and sociological relationship between social contract belief structures and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Rousseau’s social contract theory (SCT) is the basis for their study, which focuses on normative belief orientations people learn before they enter organizations. The results of the study suggest moderate support for a relationship between communitarian beliefs and a stronger performance of loyalty, advocacy participation, and social participation (these are the three dimensions of OCB according to the authors) (D’Intino et al., 2002).

Four OCB meta-analyses have so far been published (LePine et al., 2002; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine & Bachrach, 2000; Podsakoff, MacKenzie & Bommer, 1996; Organ & Ryan, 1995). The latest meta-analysis evaluates the character of the OCB concept and its dimensionality in the context of all the research conducted since the construct was coined OCB in the 1980s (LePine et al., 2002). The authors are particularly interested in the question of how

results of research should be interpreted and how inferences can be drawn from OCB studies that consider only one or two dimensions (civic virtue or courtesy) of OCB (LePine et al., 2002). The study scrutinizes the OCB construct and its most relevant labels for domains of behavior that overlap with OCB as described by Organ (1988); the labels include *prosocial behavior* (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986), *extrarole behavior* (Katz & Kahn, 1966; Barnard, 1938; Van Dyne, Cummings & McLean Parks, 1995), *suprarole behavior* (Katz and Kahn, 1966; Bolino, 1999; Bolino, & Turnley, 2003), and *contextual performance* (LePine et al., 2002). The two dimensions of contextual performance, interpersonal facilitation and job dedication, overlap with dimensions examined by other OCB researchers (Organ, 1988; Van Dyne et al., 1995). The meta-analysis of LePine et al. concludes that the OCB dimensions are imperfect indicators of citizenship behavior and that *contextual performance* (an aggregate construct) is more consistent with the definition of OCB (2002).

A construct related to the occurrence of citizenship behavior is *organizational justice* or *employee perception of fairness* (Williams, Pitre, & Zainuba, 2002). Organizational justice is influenced by managerial decisions (Williams et al., 2002). Williams, Pitre, and Zainuba examine the influence of distributive justice (which addresses the organizational reward system) and procedural justice (which involves the organization's decision-making procedures) on the intention of employees to engage in organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Findings were similar to earlier research results and showed that only perceptions of fairness influenced an employee's intention to perform OCB; perceived fair treatment by supervisors was a major predictor of OCB intentions (Moorman, Blakely, & Niehoff, 1998; Williams et al., 2002). The authors point out that the finding that fair treatment was more predictive of OCB than fair rewards is relevant, but that the data did not confirm causality (Williams et al., 2002).

Researchers have also tried to separate good citizens from good actors (Bolino, 1999; Turnley & Bolino, 2001). Turnley and Bolino (2001) examine which type of personality would be prone to engage in *impression management* tactics. Impression management is a subtle form of political behavior that resembles citizenship behavior on the surface but it is actually an intentional effort by people to enhance their image in the eyes of others (Kreitner, 2004; Turnley & Bolino, 2001). Bolino (1999) concludes that impression management has organizational implications concerning the organization's functioning and its performance.

Researchers who recently investigated organizational performance in a variety of industries have found that citizenship behavior does produce substantial benefits for the organization (Bolino & Turnley, 2003; D'Intino et al., 2002; Van der Vegt et al., 2003). As VSU is in the process of changing and improving its performance, the influence of citizenship behavior should be taken into account. Therefore, the impact of organizational citizenship behavior on the university's effectiveness needs to be diagnosed to make sure the university is not neglecting one of its most important assets.

## OBJECTIVES

As there is a high need for cooperative extra-role behavior in the academic environment, it is vital to understand and evaluate this behavior in light of VSU's goals. The intervention, examining citizenship behavior and its consequences on VSU's performance, is to guide

decision-making in terms of whether OCB is desirable and/or necessary or whether it actually detracts from organizational effectiveness. The intervention should help differentiate between impression managements and OCB and give us some insight concerning its functional or dysfunctional impact on the university's performance. Therefore, the purpose of the intervention is to diagnose the influence of OCB on the organization's effectiveness.

To take advantage of the needs of a new generation of students and to be able to embrace new technological formations and processes, internal forces of the university need to be energized. Therefore, the following list of challenges was created:

- Remove boundaries.
- Establish interdisciplinary programs.
- Redesign student support services.
- Emphasize lifelong learning.
- Achieve institutional advantage. (See Hanna, 2003).

Using the OCB construct -- specifically Bolino, Turnley, and Bloodgood's *social capital* construct -- to discuss and explain how these challenges can be met, will help to accomplish the intervention objectives. It is promising to diagnose the situation at the university with the intervention and to identify actions that encourage citizenship which lead to increased competitiveness; however within the scope of this research project it will not be feasible to determine whether employment interviews will be valid predictors of OCB and whether certain OCBs lead to dysfunctionality (see Brief & Motowidlo, 1986) in the long run.

## **STRATEGIES**

Intervention strategies have included:

- Observations that show the current situational context of the university concerning citizenship behavior.
- Examination of literature to give the stakeholders a deep understanding of what OCB is and how it can affect organizational effectiveness.
- Interviews that were designed to understand the interviewee's viewpoint and to help promote dialogue about the issue.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

In this study we suggest that Vivaldi State University explore the possibilities of enhancing its effectiveness by encouraging its faculty members to engage in OCB. These recommendations are intended to be practical and explanatory.

As recent studies suggested that the creation and maintenance of social capital is particularly encouraged if organizations "promote stability in employment, use compensation practices that reward teams and groups rather than individuals, and select and reward people who value working collectively" (Bolino et al., 2002), universities should be particularly optimistic when creating an environment that supports OCB. Vivaldi should use formal and informal practices to build social capital. Formal practices should include training and development to open up new horizons for faculty. The informal system of fostering OCB should include the development of a corporate culture that makes OCB a natural action. For example, administrators could be role

models and show that they also put in extra energy and time to reach the university's goals (see table).

Furthermore, Vivaldi may apply its knowledge about social capital to face the five challenges mentioned under Objectives, namely, removing boundaries, establishing interdisciplinary programs, redesigning student support systems, emphasizing lifelong learning, and achieving institutional advantage (see Hanna, 2003). Making changes has to go hand in hand with changing paradigms and making sure faculty is willing to exhibit behavior that supports the changes.

Vivaldi faces the challenge of removing its boundaries to reach out to the "new" public. Technology increased and changed communication and interaction between the internals and the externals. Therefore, Vivaldi needs the courage to change its image from the protected academic institution to one of an accessible, culturally enriched real and virtual environment. Moreover, the university has to look into its rigid budget structure when it makes technological changes and incorporates technology into the system. The institution should make sure it provides the necessary resources and educational support for its faculty.

Establishing interdisciplinary and customized programs again means to draw on social capital. Faculty members who work in an environment that encourages citizenship will be able to join forces and respond to a demanding student body. Traditional, engrained processes have to be abandoned to embrace new customized programs and personalized service.

So as to be able to encourage students to be life-long learners, the faculty has to embrace this paradigm, too. Working in an environment that values cooperative behavior supports this focus on learning how to learn. Vivaldi has to specifically strive for achieving institutional advantage. Hanna (2003) points out that the creation of unique or particularly outstanding programs, delivered nationally or worldwide, could make a college unique. For Vivaldi this means using its social capital to produce new programs, structures, and processes. Decision-making should be shared and through the use of cross-functional teams because collaboration with each other and across disciplines will help in the pursuit of organizational goals.

The following table was created to show recommended intervention strategies based on ideas from observations concerning the need for OCB, interviews concerning the need for and the creation of an OCB-friendly environment, and literature that investigates predictors and impact of OCB, specifically Bolino and Turnley (2003) and Schrodtt, Cawyer, and Sanders (2003).

**TABLE 1**

**Formal system building social capital**

**Informal system building social capital**

<p><u>Training and Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sponsor training programs that teach teamwork and cooperation</li> <li>• Initiate training programs that stress the importance of taking initiative</li> <li>• Implement training in how to improve relationships among faculty members and administrators</li> </ul> <p><u>Performance and Benefits</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Link compensation systems to group or organizational level outcomes</li> <li>• Do not reward competitive and non-cooperative behavior</li> <li>• Suggest innovative team-based workshops</li> </ul>	<p><u>Culture</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an organizational culture that appreciates civic virtues, sportsmanship, altruism and conscientiousness</li> <li>• Make sure the culture encourages everybody to be a role model</li> <li>• Discourage impression management</li> </ul> <p><u>Mentor</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instill into new faculty a sense of loyalty and stability</li> <li>• Remember that adequate mentoring can have a positive impact on the socialization of higher education newcomers</li> <li>• Good mentoring fosters collegiality, friendship, protection</li> </ul>
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**CONCLUSIONS**

The purpose of this study was to identify if and how organizational citizenship behavior directly influences Vivaldi State University's performance, and how internal and external challenges could be met relying on the impact that OCB can have on the university's effectiveness. Recommendations are based on the review of relevant scholarly literature including meta-analyses, observations, and interviews. To develop a construct that relates OCB to the effective functioning of the university, the Nahapiet and Ghoshal studies (1998), as well as the theoretical work of Bolino, Turnley and Bloodgood (2002), were applied to the situation. So as to make a connection between the performance of an institution of higher learning and its faculty's behavior, the discussion about structure and strength of interpersonal relationships in social systems (Bolino et al., 2002) was scrutinized and applied to the concept of OCB. The data show that as competitive pressures are increasing and market conditions are changing, organizations, such as Vivaldi, are increasingly dependent on the willingness of employees to do more than what is technically required as part of their job. Therefore, creating social capital would be "valuable because it solves problems of coordination, reduces transaction costs, and facilitates the flow of information between and among individuals" (Bolino et al., 2002).. This theoretical model can support the exploration of intervening processes.



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