

Role of Perceived Organizational Support in the Relationship between Role Overload and Organizational Citizenship Behavior

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The researchers in the area of organizational psychology have indicated that behavior at workplace may improve individual as well all organizational effectiveness and efficiency. The present study was conducted to study how perceived organizational support, organizational citizenship behavior and role overload are related with each other and to examine the moderating role of perceived organizational support in the relationship between role overload and organizational citizenship behavior. It was hypothesized that perceived organizational support will moderate the relationship between role overload and organizational citizenship behavior. The Perceived Organizational Support Scale, Organizational Citizenship Behavior Scale and Role Overload Scale were administered on 200 first level managerial personnel of different public and private sector organizations to measure perceived organizational support, role overload, and organizational citizenship behavior. The results indicate that perceived organizational support and organizational citizenship behavior are positively correlated; and perceived organizational support significantly moderates the relationship between role overload and organizational citizenship behavior. The implications of the present study for future researches and its significance in improving the individual as well as organizational effectiveness are also discussed.

Keywords: Perceived organizational support, Role overload, Organizational citizenship behavior.

Organizations cannot survive or prosper without their members behaving as good citizens by engaging themselves in all sorts of positive behaviors. The importance of good citizenship for organizations, understanding the nature and sources of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) has long been a high priority for organizational scholars (Organ, 1988). Every organization depends on countless acts of cooperation, helpfulness, suggestions, gestures of goodwill, altruism and other instances of what we might call citizenship behavior. In recent times, huge amount of studies have examined organizational citizenship behavior and emphasized its importance on organizational outcomes. Several factors such as job satisfaction, justice, and support or trust from the organization and leaders were suggested by many researchers for increasing employees' OCB (Foote & Tang, 2008; Ackfeldt & Coote, 2000; Organ & Lingl, 1995; Williams & Anderson, 1991). There has been considerable interest

recently in the relationship between, perceived organizational support, role overload, and the OCB. This interest is driven by the growing recognition that perceived organizational support and role overload are highly prevalent in the workplace and have an enormous impact on performance, productivity, absenteeism, and disability costs.

Organ (1988) defined OCB as "Individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization. By discretionary, we mean that the behavior is not an enforceable requirement of the role or the job description, that is, it is clearly a specifiable term of the person's employment contract with the organization; the behavior is rather a matter of personal choice, such that its omission is not generally understood as punishable". Organ (1988) has said on the basis of his comprehensive

literature review and empirical studies that OCB included five dimensions namely Altruism, Conscientiousness, Sportsmanship, Courtesy and Civic virtue.

Role overload occurs when work-roles require more time and effort than an individual has for them so that the roles cannot be performed adequately and comfortably (Markham & Bonjean, 1996). French and Caplan (1973) have differentiated role overload in quantitative and qualitative overload. Quantitative overload occurs when there is too much to do in too limited a period of time and qualitative overload refers to a state of being in which work demands exceed capability. The absolute level of work needed to be done (objective overload) is mediated by characteristics of the individual to determine subjective or perceived overload. What is too much for one person may be perceived reasonable by another (Matteson & Ivancevich, 1987). It has long been clear that both work overload and work under load can be problematic (Frankenhauser, 1975; Frankenhauser & Gardell, 1975; Lundberg & Forsman, 1979). Some psychologists suggest a linear positive relationship between stress and performance. Meglino (1977) argues that at low levels of stress, challenge is absent and performance is poor. Optimal performance in his model comes at the highest level of stress. Driskell and Salas (1996) suggest that work-related stress increases motivation and performance. Riley and Zaccaro (1987) said that the impact of stress on performance depends on the nature, intensity, duration, and resource available to the employee to respond adaptively.

Perceived organizational support (POS) refers to the extent to which the organization values employees' contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986). The premise of social exchange theory suggests that resources are more valued when discretionary choice has guided the action, rather than external factors. Therefore, organizational systems such as pay, promotions, and job enrichment are more highly valued when employees sense that the organization has selected the programs out of genuine concern for the recipient (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Marler, Fisher, and Ke (2009)

found those employees with high POS were more sensitive to their manager's expectations, which subsequently enhanced their desire to use the new technology implemented by the organization. In addition, research shows that high levels of POS can create a feeling of obligation among the employees to return their employers' commitment by engaging in behaviors that support organizational goals. Jawahar and Carr (2007) in their study found that when employees perceive high levels of support from their organization, where even the less conscientious individuals feel obligated to and respond in kind toward the organization through contextual performance. POS enhances employees' beliefs and trust (Tremblay, Cloutier, Simard, Chenevert, & Vandenberghe, 2010), commitment (Leveson, Joiner, & Bakalis, 2010) and loyalty to the organization (Coyle-Shapiro & Conway, 2005). POS has been shown consistently to be associated with outcomes that are favorable to the organization. For instance, there is evidence that POS is correlated positively to organizational commitment (Shore & Wayne, 1993), long-term obligations, organizational identification among employees, loyalty (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002), in-role performance (Eisenberger et al., 1986, Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Davis-LaMastro, 1990), trust in organizations (Chen, Aryee & Lee, 2005), organizational citizenship behavior (Moorman, Blakely & Niehoff, 1998), job satisfaction and intent to remain (Stamper & Johlke, 2003).

Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) reveal that employees with high level of POS are more committed to their organizations and more satisfied with their job. It appears that the extent to which the organization perceives that it is supported will be positively associated with the display of OCB directed toward the organization (Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades, 2001; Wayne, Shore, Bommer, & Tetrick, 2002). Cardona, Lawrence, & Bentler, (2004) demonstrated that employees reporting higher perceived organizational support had stronger social attachment to the organization, which then led to increased organizational citizenship behavior. Finally, in the meta-analysis performed by Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002), outcomes of POS included

affective commitment, job satisfaction, positive mood, desire to maintain membership in the organization, and job involvement.

While there is a large amount of indirect evidence suggesting that POS will buffer the role stress-outcome relationship, few researchers have directly examined this possible moderation effect. Leather, Lawrence, Beale, Cox and Dickson (1998) concluded that POS moderates the negative effect of workplace violence (a work stressor) on both job satisfaction and organizational commitment, while George, Reed, Ballard, Colin and Fielding (1993), report that organizational support moderate the negative relationship between exposure to AIDS patients and negative employee moods. Casper, Martin, Buffardi and Erdwins (2002) found that POS moderated the work-family conflict–organizational commitment association. Stamper and Johlke (2003) found that POS moderated the negative relationships between perceived work role stressors and both job attitudes (job satisfaction and organizational commitment) and job performance. Pathak (2012) found that perceived organizational support is a powerful moderator, which lessens the amount of stress experienced and thus leads to higher job satisfaction in managers.

Based on the above conceptualization and review of literature of the available resources the following objectives were proposed:

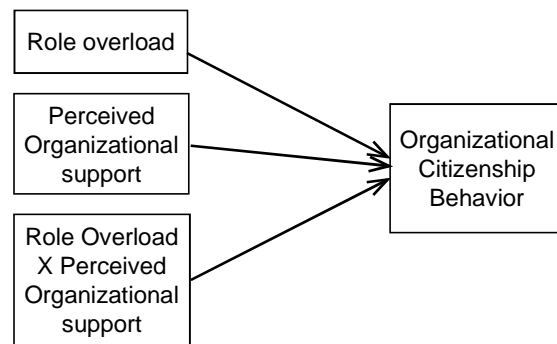
1. To examine the role of role overload in predicting organizational citizenship behavior.
2. To examine the role of perceived organizational support in predicting organizational citizenship behavior.
3. To examine the role of perceived organizational support as a moderator between the relationship of role overload and organizational citizenship behavior.

On the basis of prior findings and literature, the following hypotheses were proposed:

1. Role Overload would be negatively related with OCB.
2. Perceived Organizational Support would be positively related with OCB.

3. Perceived organizational support would significantly moderate the relationship of role overload and organizational citizenship behavior.

Hypothetical Research Model



Method

Design:

The present study follows a correlational design. In the present study, the role overload and perceived organizational support have been treated as main predictors and organizational citizenship behavior as criterion variable. The perceived organizational support has been treated as a moderator variable in the relationship between role overload and OCB.

Sample:

The present study was conducted on 200 first level managerial personnel working in a public sector organization. For this study participants were selected through convenience sampling.

Measures:

In addition to a demographic data schedule (age, gender, education, marital status and organizational tenure) the following measures were administered in the present investigation:

Organizational Citizenship Behavior Scale (Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Moorman & Fetter, 1990): It contains five subscales that purports to measure the five dimensions of OCB as proposed by Organ (1988): (1) Altruism, (2) Conscientiousness, (3) Courtesy, (4) Sportsmanship, and (5) Civic virtue. The scale contains 24 items and used a five point response format.

Item analysis was performed to check the appropriateness of the items for present study. Items total correlation for all 24 items was found satisfactory. All 24 items were selected for further analysis. Internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's Alpha) for whole scale was found to be 0.85. As proposed by the Podsakoff et al., (1990) subscale analysis was also performed. Conscientiousness dimension consists of five items and its alpha was found to be 0.67. Sportsmanship dimension consists of five items and its alpha was found to be 0.71. Civic Virtue dimension consists of four items and its alpha was found to be 0.67. Courtesy dimension consists of five items and its alpha was found to be 0.76. Altruism dimension consists of five items and its alpha was found to be 0.71.

Perceived Organizational Support Scale (Singh & Singh, 2009): It contains 21 items and it measures three dimensions of POS (emotional support, tangible support, and informational support). Internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's Alpha) was found to be 0.81 for emotional support, 0.76 for tangible support, and 0.74 for informational support. Alpha for whole Perceived Organizational Support Scale was found to be 0.86.

Role Overload Scale (Singh & Singh, 2009): It contains 12 items. Internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's Alpha) was found to be 0.78 for five items ROS.

Results

Table 1. Correlation between role overload, POS and dimensions of POS with OCB.

Variables	OCB
Role overload	.134
POS	.312**
Emotional support	.110
Tangible support	.330**
Informational support	.329**

** p>.01

Table 1 shows the coefficients of correlation of role overload, POS (total), and dimensions of POS (emotional support, tangible support,

and informational support) with OCB (total). Results from this table indicate that role overload is positively correlated with OCB (total) and correlation value for them is .134, but this correlation is insignificant. Perceived organizational support (total), and its two dimensions-tangible support, and informational support, are significantly positively correlated with OCB (total) at the .01 level. Correlation value for Perceived organizational support with OCB (total) is 0.312 whereas the correlation value, for tangible support (dimension of POS) with OCB (total) is .330, and for informational support (dimension of POS) it is .329. Although there is a positive correlation between emotional support (dimension of POS) and OCB (total) but this correlation is not significant.

Table 2. Stepwise regression analysis for Role overload, POS (total), dimensions of POS and OCB total

Model	R	R ²	R ² Change	F	p
1	.330 ^a	.109	.109	24.176	.000
2	.390 ^b	.152	.043	9.983	.002
3	.439 ^c	.193	.041	9.975	.002
4	.473 ^d	.224	.031	7.798	.006

a. Predictors: (Constant), tangible support.

b. Predictors: (Constant), tangible support, informational support.

c. Predictors: (Constant), tangible support, informational support, role overload.

d. Predictors: (Constant), tangible support, informational support, role overload, perceived organizational support (total).

Table 2 shows the Stepwise regression analysis for role overload, dimensions of perceived organizational support and OCB total. Results indicate that role overload, POS (total), and only tangible and informational support (POS) explain significant contribution. Role overload explains 4.1 % of total variance in predicting OCB total (F=9.975, p<0.002), POS (total) explains 3.1% (F=7.798, p<0.006), tangible support (POS) explains 10.9% (F=24.176, p<0.000) and informational support (POS) explains 4.3% (F=9.983, p<0.002) of total variance in predicting OCB total.

Table 3. Moderated regression analysis for OCB, POS and Role overload.

Variables	OCB				
	R	R ²	R ² Change	F	p
Role overload	.134	.018	.018	3.606	.05
POS	.357	.127	.109	14.353	.00
Role overload x POS	.369	.357	.009	10.304	.01

- a. Predictors: (Constant), role overload.
- b. Predictors: (Constant), role overload, POS total.
- c. Predictors: (Constant), role overload, POS total, role overload X POS total.
- d. Dependent Variable: OCB total.

Table 3 shows moderated regression analysis for POS as moderator in the relationship between role overload as predictor variable and OCB as a criterion variable. Result from this table indicates that POS is found to be a significant moderator in the relationship between role overload and OCB (F= 10.304, p<.01).

Table 4a. Moderated regression analysis for the emotional support (dimension of POS), role overload, and OCB.

Model	OCB				
	R	R ²	R ² Change	F	p
Emotional Support	.110	.012	.012	2.445	.120
Role overload	.173	.030	.018	3.050	.050
Emotional Support x Role overload	.185	.034	.004	2.306	.078

- a. Predictors: (Constant), emotional support
- b. Predictors: (Constant), emotional support, role overload.
- c. Predictors: (Constant), emotional support, role overload, role overload x emotional support.
- d. Dependent Variable: OCB total

Table 4b Moderated regression analysis for the Tangible Support (dimension of POS), Role overload, and OCB.

Model	OCB				
	R	R ²	R ² Change	F	p
Tangible Support	.330	.109	.109	24.176	.000
Role overload	.363	.132	.023	14.983	.000
Tangible Support x Role overload	.397	.157	.025	12.194	.000

- a. Predictors: (Constant), tangible support.
- b. Predictors: (Constant), tangible support, role overload.
- c. Predictors: (Constant), tangible support, role overload, tangible support X role overload.
- d. Dependent Variable: OCB total.

Table 4c: Moderated regression analysis for the Informational Support (dimension of POS), role overload, and OCB.

Model	OCB				
	R	R ²	R ² Change	F	p
Informational Support	.329	.108	.108	23.953	.000
Role overload	.391	.153	.045	17.775	.000
Informational Support x Role overload	.392	.154	.001	11.860	.000

- a. Predictors: (Constant), informational support.
- b. Predictors: (Constant), informational support, role overload.
- c. Predictors: (Constant), informational support, role overload, informational support X role overload.
- d. Dependent Variable: OCB total

Table 4 a, b, and c shows that when further moderated regression analysis has been applied in a combined way regarding on dimensions of POS and role overload as a predictor and OCB as criterion, it was found that in a combined way all these three dimensions and role overload

significantly predict OCB, but significant result is not found in case of emotional support.

Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of present study was to examine the role of perceived organizational support and role overload in determining organizational citizenship behavior. The first objective of our study was to examine the effect of role overload on organizational citizenship behavior. It was hypothesized that role overload would be negatively related with organizational citizenship behavior. Results of correlational analysis indicate that role overload was positively related with OCB total, but this correlation was not significant. Therefore, the results of our study do not support the hypothesis that role overload would be negatively related to organizational citizenship behavior. A number of studies also support this result because citizenship is a type of performance (cf. the contextual performance and citizenship discussions by Borman & Motowidlo, 1997; Organ, 1997. In his study, Meglino (1977) argues that at low level of stress, challenge is absent and performance is poor. Optimal performance in his model comes at the highest level of stress. The results of the studies conducted by Erin, Chang, Miloslavac, and Johnson (2011), Arsenault and Dolan (1983); and Hatton, Brown, Caine and Emerson (1995) also supported the positive relationship of stress and performance. Motivated executives would perform their work properly either it is in role behavior or extra role behavior (OCB).

The next objective of this research was to examine the effect of perceived organizational support in organizational citizenship behavior. The hypothesis framed for testing the relationship between perceived organizational support and organizational citizenship behavior was that perceived organizational support would be positively related with organizational citizenship behavior. Results of correlational analysis indicate that the perceived organizational support was positively and significantly correlated only with OCB. Results of stepwise regression analysis also support this hypothesis. Results of correlation between dimensions of perceived organizational support and organizational citizenship behavior (total) indicate that emotional support, tangible support

and informational support were significantly and positively correlated with organizational citizenship behavior.

Stepwise regression analysis showed that perceived organizational support significantly predicts organizational citizenship behavior. Tangible support has emerged as the most important dimension of perceived organizational support of organizational citizenship behavior than other dimensions of perceived organizational support. A number of studies also supported this positive relationship between perceived organizational support and organizational citizenship behavior. Organ and Konovsky (1989) argued that the employees' perception of organizational support create a sense of trust that the organization will fulfill its obligation by acknowledging and rewarding efforts they make on its behalf, and it is expected that this sense of trust also increases employee's organizational citizenship behavior. Organ (1988) noted that employees' positive attitudes towards the organization, such as perceived organizational support, may be even more closely related to their extra role behaviors than to in-role behaviors. Wayne et al., (1997) said that employees appear to seek a balance in their exchange relationships with organizations by demonstrating attitudes and behaviors commensurate with the amount of commitment they feel the employer has for them.

Graham (1991) reported that being an effective organizational citizen is one way that an employee may reciprocate the support he/she perceives is being provided by the organization. In turn, making suggestions for improvement, helping co-workers, and other types of organizational citizenship behavior incur obligations that the other party will reciprocate. Eisenberger et al., (2001) also found that employees with higher level of perceived organizational support felt more obligated to help the organization reach its objectives, and thus, engaged in more organizationally spontaneous behaviors, a form of organizational citizenship behavior. Rhodes and Eisenberger (2002) concluded that the relationship between perceived organizational support and extra-role performance directed to the organization was higher than other categories of performance. Thus, it is likely that higher levels

of perceived organizational support will lead to increased organizational citizenship behavior. Therefore, the results of our study supported the hypothesis that perceived organizational support would be positively related to organizational citizenship behavior.

The next and last objective of this study was to examine the role of perceived organizational support as a moderator between the relationship of role overload and organizational citizenship behavior. It was hypothesized that perceived organizational support would moderate the relationship of role overload and organizational citizenship behavior. The results of moderated regression analysis prove this. A number of studies have found that POS moderates the relationship between stressors and personal- and work-related outcomes. Zhou and George (2001) found that creativity in dissatisfied employees was highest when continuance commitment and POS for creativity were both high.

Moreover, DeCarlo, Teas, and McElroy (1997) found that the relationship between salespersons' expectancies and performance was moderated by attributions of organizational support. If the employee's needs are met with perceived sincerity, employees have been found to reciprocate POS by shifting their attention to accomplish organizational goals through increased efforts and extra-role behavior (Eisenberger et al., 1990; Eisenberger et al., 1986). Researchers have suggested that this felt obligation for reciprocity may motivate employees to improve their job performance. Indeed, Wayne, Shore, and Liden (1997) reported that organizational citizenship behaviors, often associated with contextual performance (Organ, 1997), were an outcome of POS in their study of over 1,400 salaried employees. Bradley and Cartwright (2002) found that POS moderated the relationship between job stress and health of nurse's. Finally, Stamper and Johlke (2003) have also found that POS among sales personnel attenuated the negative relationship between role ambiguity and job satisfaction in addition to role conflict and intention to stay.

Implications

The study gives us a view that Perceived Organizational Support is an antecedent of OCB

as well it is a moderator between two important organizational variables i.e., Role Overload and Organizational Citizenship Behavior. Therefore, organizations need to create a supportive culture and atmosphere in order to make managers of organization more supportive and more committed to the organization. This study may contribute in enhancing the production, effectiveness of organizations as well as psychological wellbeing and mental health of employees. It may play an important role in counseling as well as HR practices.

Directions for Future Research

Future research should examine other occupations/professions as well as determining the applicability of these results to different levels in the organization. Another direction for future research is to study the antecedents and outcomes of OCB through longitudinal data. Longitudinal research would further improve our understanding of OCB by investigating how OCB is developed among employees over time and whether the effects of OCB on work outcomes would diminish or strengthen over time.

In addition, while in this study and most of the other POS research, the focus is on how employees reciprocate on the organization's favorable treatment, the other side of the reciprocal relationship is neglected. Thus, an interesting question is whether employee attitudes and behaviors in reaction to previous organizational support can influence management's decisions on how much support is provided to employees. Collection of longitudinal data is likely to be helpful in addressing these issues. Other direct and indirect antecedent variables related to OCB should also be included in future studies.

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Received: June 18, 2014
 Revised: October 28, 2014
 Accepted: December 11, 2014

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