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From Isolation to Connection: How Organizational Citizenship Can Revive Workplace Culture

Dr Sheikh Ali Azzran Sh Said

Lecturer, College of Built Environment


The modern workforce faces a relentless rush to meet the ever-increasing demands of employment in today's hypercompetitive, fast-paced work environment. The global race for productivity and efficiency has led to an environment where employees are often overwhelmed by heavy workloads, reduced social interactions, and a growing sense of isolation. The resulting spike in stress levels and mental distress has become a significant concern, raising questions about the sustainability of current work practices.

The digital age, with its emphasis on convenience, has further exacerbated these challenges. The shift from physical to virtual interactions, while offering certain benefits, has weakened the bonds that once held communities and workplaces together. The rise of remote work, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has marked a turning point in how organizations approach work culture. As many employees found themselves working from home during prolonged lockdowns, a hybrid work model emerged as a viable alternative to the traditional office setting.

This shift in work culture has brought about a noticeable change in the employee experience. What was once a dynamic and collaborative environment has become increasingly dull, mechanical, and independent. The collegial bonds that once fostered teamwork and mutual support are eroding, leaving many employees to rely more on themselves than on their co-workers. The decline in interpersonal connections has made it difficult for organizations to maintain a sense of unity and shared purpose.

In this evolving work environment, organizational citizenship has become more crucial than ever. Organizational citizenship refers to the voluntary, discretionary behaviours that employees engage in to support their co-workers and contribute to the overall success of the organization. These behaviours go beyond the basic requirements of the job and play a key role in fostering a positive and harmonious workplace.





Organ's (1988) research identified five types of behaviour that exemplify organizational citizenship: altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, and civic virtue. Altruism involves helping co-workers with their tasks, while conscientiousness refers to going beyond the minimum job requirements. Sportsmanship is about maintaining a positive attitude even in difficult situations, and courtesy involves being considerate and respectful to others. Civic virtue encompasses the willingness to participate in the governance and improvement of the organization.

For organizations to thrive, employees must be willing to exert additional effort and be open to adopting new work methods. Leaders, in turn, should provide comprehensive support, implement employees' suggestions effectively, set high standards, and commit more resources to work-related matters. When employees feel trusted and supported, they are more likely to engage in cooperative behaviours, such as assisting co-workers and performing actions that benefit the group.

A key factor influencing organizational citizenship is the fit between employees and their work environment. Research has shown that an employee's perception of how well they fit with their job and organization affects their attitudes and behaviours. This fit is not limited to the specific tasks of a job but extends to how the organization shapes the group or community, influencing individuals on a broader level. A sense of self-identity and alignment with organizational values can motivate employees to engage in behaviours that benefit the organization.

However, not all employees may feel this alignment. Some individuals may possess the skills and abilities to help their co-workers or customers, but they may not be inclined to do so if they associate more with the job than with the organization. While they may appreciate the salary and benefits, they may not see the value in engaging in discretionary behaviours that benefit others. In contrast, employees whose values match those of the organization are more likely to recognize the importance of organizational citizenship for organizational effectiveness.

Understanding why employees engage in organizational citizenship behaviours is essential for organizations looking to foster a positive work culture. Past research has paid little attention to the

underlying psychological processes that connect an employee's perception of fit with their job and organization to their engagement in these behaviours. However, it is clear that a work environment that acknowledges employees' need for meaning, purpose, and connection can lead to beneficial outcomes for both the individual and the organization.

The concept of workplace spirituality is one approach to fostering a supportive work environment. Workplace spirituality refers to the efforts made by an organization to help employees find purpose in their work, develop strong connections with their co-workers, and align their personal values with those of the organization. It involves recognizing that employees have an inner life that is nourished by meaningful work and community.

According to Robbins and Judge (2011), an awareness of workplace spirituality is crucial for understanding employee behaviour in the modern workplace. Milliman, Czaplewski, and Ferguson (2003) argue that the literature on workplace spirituality has often focused on individual spiritual experiences at work rather than on how workplace spirituality influences work attitudes and behaviours. However, it is anticipated that a work environment that acknowledges both the mind and soul of employees will result in positive outcomes, such as increased job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behaviours.

For workplace spirituality to be effective, it must be embraced at all levels of the organization. Top management must clearly communicate the organization's philosophy that workplace spirituality is essential for long-term organizational effectiveness. Training programs on listening and interpersonal skills can also aid in creating a supportive environment where employees feel valued and connected.

The shifting work culture, driven by global hypercompetition and the digital age, has highlighted the importance of organizational citizenship and workplace spirituality. As organizations navigate the challenges of remote and hybrid work models, they must focus on fostering a sense of community and purpose among employees. By promoting organizational citizenship behaviours and embracing workplace spirituality, organizations can create a positive work environment that supports employee well-being and drives long-term success.

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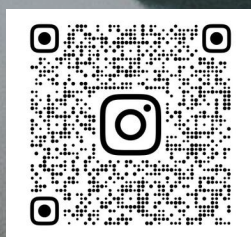
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