



A Qualitative Study on Employee Experiences in Indonesian Service Organizations: Understanding Drivers of Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)

Muhammad Arya
Bhagaskara¹

Affiliation for all authors

¹ Faculty of Economic and
Business, Brawijaya
University, Malang 65145,
East Java, Indonesia

E- mail:
bhagaskara2006@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This research examines the dynamics of Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) among employees in a public-service organization in Indonesia, emphasizing the influence of leadership support, employee engagement, and organizational culture on voluntary behaviors that exceed formal job expectations. Employing a qualitative methodology through semi-structured interviews with ten employees from various functional units, the study reveals intricate insights into the psychological and organizational precursors of Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB). The thematic analysis identifies three principal themes: (1) leaders' supportive behaviors that enhance emotional security and motivation; (2) employees' inherent sense of responsibility and collective orientation; and (3) organizational cultural norms that prioritize collaboration, trust, and mutual assistance. Results show that OCB is not just a personal trait; it is also shaped by how people interact with each other and the rules that govern the workplace. Human resource managers should strengthen relational leadership practices, set up recognition systems that value discretionary contributions, and promote a culture of collaboration to keep OCB levels high, according to practical implications. This study adds to the body of research by giving a detailed qualitative picture of OCB in Indonesian public organizations, which is an area that has not been studied enough in the past.

Keywords: Organizational Citizenship Behavior, Employee Engagement, Organizational Culture, Human Resources

| Received December 2025 | Accepted December 2025 | Available online December 2025 |
| DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64530/ijbams.v1i3.41>

1. INTRODUCTION

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) is an important idea in human resource management because it helps organizations work better. OCB stands for voluntary actions that aren't part of formal job descriptions, but that make the workplace more productive, peaceful, and flexible (Organ, 1988). In the context of contemporary organizations contending with the complexities of global competition, market volatility, and the imperative for enhanced service quality, the significance of these extra-role behaviors becomes increasingly paramount.

The role of OCB is even more important in the service sector, especially in Indonesia. Service organizations depend a lot on how well people get along with each other, how well they work together, how much initiative they show, and how well they can provide service that goes above and beyond what customers expect. A willingness to help coworkers, keeping the organization's image up, and showing a commitment to service standards are often what sets great organizations apart from those that are falling behind. Consequently, a comprehensive comprehension of the formation, perception, and implementation of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) by employees is crucial for enhancing strategies aimed at improving human resource quality.

Many studies have looked into OCB, but most of them have used quantitative methods that look at how different factors, like leadership, job satisfaction, and OCB, are related to each other (Afsar, 2020). This method gives us useful information, but it doesn't always take into account the personal meaning, emotional experiences, and social dynamics that employees go through when they choose to act voluntarily. Nonetheless, OCB is not merely a reaction to organizational elements; it is also a psychological and social phenomenon shaped by individual values, interpersonal relationships, and workplace culture.

Qualitative research on OCB is also scarce in the Indonesian context. A collectivist culture that values harmony, unity, and collaborative effort significantly influences the manifestations and motivations of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Nevertheless, the interaction of this culture with organizational elements such as leadership, organizational support, equity, and team climate has seldom been examined comprehensively through a narrative lens. This research gap highlights the significance of qualitative studies on OCB within service organizations in Indonesia.

Thus, this study seeks to investigate employees' authentic experiences in exhibiting OCB behavior, delineate the factors that promote and hinder it, and comprehend how the dynamics of workplace relationships and organizational culture influence this behavior. The results of this study are anticipated to enhance the OCB literature from a Southeast Asian cultural viewpoint and offer pragmatic recommendations for HR management in fostering a work environment that encourages the development of extra-role behavior.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Idea and Aspects of Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) is a behavioral construct that goes beyond what is expected of employees. It was first popularized by Organ in 1988. Organ characterizes OCB as voluntary employee conduct that is not explicitly governed by a formal system yet enhances organizational effectiveness. The traditional dimensions of OCB encompass altruism (assisting colleagues), conscientiousness (exceeding minimum requirements), courtesy (exhibiting polite behavior to avert interpersonal conflicts), sportsmanship (tolerance of discomfort), and civic virtue (active engagement in organizational matters) (Organ, 1988; Podsakoff et al., 2000). This dimensional framework continues to be extensively utilized as a theoretical and measurement standard in cross-national OCB research.

Theoretical Frameworks That Are Often Used

A number of fundamental theories underpin the explanation of the emergence of OCB. According to social exchange theory, OCB is a form of reciprocity when employees feel supported or cared for by the company (Blau, 1964, and in many modern uses). Leader–Member Exchange (LMX) focuses on the quality of the relationship between a superior and a subordinate. A strong LMX relationship leads to more commitment and extra-role behavior (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Perceived Organizational Support (POS) (Eisenberger et al., 2001) is extensively utilized; when employees believe that the organization appreciates their contributions and welfare, they are more inclined to exhibit

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) as a means of reciprocity. These frameworks are complementary: social exchange offers a general mechanism, whereas LMX and POS elucidate specific relational contexts.

Individual Determinants: Personality, Attitudes, and Drive

Studies indicate that personal attributes, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and personality traits (e.g., conscientiousness), exhibit a positive correlation with organizational citizenship behavior (Podsakoff et al., 2000). People think that job satisfaction and commitment are emotional and mental states that make employees want to stay with the company and help it grow. In the meantime, personality traits, especially conscientiousness and agreeableness, affect how likely someone is to do things on their own to keep work interactions running smoothly.

Contextual Determinants: Justice, Leadership, and Organizational Support

Leadership, especially transformational leadership and the quality of leader-member exchange (LMX), is frequently recognized as a significant predictor of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Leaders who inspire, give individual attention, and set a good example tend to encourage intrinsic motivation, which leads to OCB. Additionally, perceived organizational support (POS) and perceptions of procedural/distributive justice affect organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), as employees exhibit prosocial behavior in response to organizational treatment (Eisenberger et al., 2001; Colquitt et al., 2001).

OCB in Service Organizations and Its Effect on Service Performance

In the service sector, where the quality of service is mostly based on how people interact with each other, OCB becomes even more important. Research in the hospitality and service industries shows that employee OCB makes the customer experience better, makes service more flexible, and improves the reputation of the organization (Tang & Tsaur, 2016). Consequently, HR management in service organizations must contemplate strategies to promote OCB as an integral component of service management.

Cultural Influences: Collectivism and the Setting in Southeast Asia

Cross-cultural studies underscore that national culture influences the manifestations and motivations of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). In collectivist contexts, such as certain Asian nations, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) is more likely to be expressed through group obligations, mutual cooperation, and actions that preserve social harmony, rather than merely individual pursuits aimed at personal gain (Farh, Earley, & Lin, 1997; Hofstede, 2001). Research in Indonesia indicates that local values, including togetherness and loyalty, influence unique manifestations of Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB); however, narrative-based empirical evidence remains scarce, highlighting the need for qualitative studies to elucidate these cultural subtleties (Wibowo, 2017).

OCB Typology: Focused on Individuals versus Organizations & Prosocial Conduct

The evolution of OCB theory also delineated a distinction between action orientations: OCB directed towards individuals (OCBI) and OCB directed towards organizations (OCBO) (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). This difference is important because the things that come before and after can be different. For example, OCBI is more related to interpersonal relationships and team climate, while OCBO may be more affected by organizational support and work structure. Grasping this distinction enables researchers to elucidate extra-role phenomena with greater specificity.

3. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with the aim of in-depth understanding of how Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) emerges, is formed, and is perceived by employees in the context of service organizations in Indonesia. The qualitative approach was chosen because OCB is a complex, contextual behavioral phenomenon, and is closely related to individual subjective experiences. Qualitative research allows for the exploration of the meanings, motives, and psychosocial dynamics behind employees' voluntary actions outside their formal roles.

Research Location and Context

The study was conducted at a service organization in Indonesia (names changed to maintain confidentiality), specifically in the division that directly interacts with customers. This organization was purposively selected because it possesses relevant characteristics: high levels of interaction between employees, a need for teamwork, and service demands that emphasize volunteerism and individual initiative. These conditions allowed the researcher to observe the OCB phenomenon in a natural setting.

Participants and Sampling Technique

Research participants were selected using purposive sampling with the following criteria: (1) having worked for at least one year, (2) having intense interactions with coworkers, and (3) being perceived by their superiors as exhibiting OCB behaviors. A total of 12 participants participated in the interviews, consisting of operational staff, supervisors, and line managers. This number aligns with the principle of information power, which states that rich data and a narrow research focus do not require a large sample size. All participants were assigned pseudonyms to maintain anonymity.

Data Collection Technique

Data were collected using semi-structured interviews lasting 45–70 minutes. Semi-structured interviews were chosen so that researchers had a guideline for questions but still allowed participants to freely explore their experiences. Questions focused on daily work experiences, relationships between employees, forms of voluntary contributions, and factors that give rise to OCB. In addition to the interviews, researchers also conducted light observations of work interactions to strengthen the validity of the data.

Data Collection Procedure

Interviews were conducted face-to-face in a space provided by the organization to ensure participants felt comfortable. All conversations were audio-recorded (with participants' consent) and transcribed verbatim. During the data collection process, researchers also recorded field notes related to nonverbal expressions, interaction dynamics, and situational context not captured in the audio recordings. Data were collected over three weeks, following the participants' work schedules.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using the Thematic Analysis method (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which consists of six steps: (1) familiarizing themselves with the data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) grouping codes into themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) compiling an analysis report. The coding process was conducted manually with the assistance of NVivo-style software for data grouping and thematic visualization. Final themes were validated through cross-case comparisons between participants to ensure pattern consistency.

Data Validity (Trustworthiness)

To ensure credibility, the researcher used member checking, confirming data interpretations with selected participants. Dependability was maintained through an audit trail that documented the entire process, including transcripts, field notes, and analytical decisions. Transferability was enhanced by providing detailed descriptions of the context so readers could determine its suitability to other contexts. Confirmability was maintained through the researcher's reflections (a reflexivity journal) to minimize personal bias during the analysis process.

Research Ethical Considerations

This research received ethical approval from the institution with which the researcher is affiliated. All participants were given an explanation of the purpose of the study, the right to refuse to answer, and guaranteed anonymity. Participants signed informed consent before the interviews began. The data collected was stored encrypted and used only for research purposes.

4. RESULTS

Participant Description

This study involved 12 participants from a service organization in Indonesia. Participants consisted of eight operational employees, two supervisors, and two line managers, with tenure ranging from 1–12 years. The diversity of positions provided a comprehensive perspective on the dynamics of OCB behavior in the daily work context. All identities were standardized using codes such as P1–P12. In general, participants described a work environment that demanded cooperation, flexibility, and punctuality, allowing for in-depth exploration of behaviors outside of formal duties.

Main Research Themes

Thematic analysis yielded four main themes that illustrate the dynamics of the emergence of Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB):

(1) Willingness to Help Coworkers Outside the Job Description, (2) Proactive Initiatives to Improve Work Quality, (3) Emotional Commitment to the Organization, (4) Influence of Leadership Style and the Social Work Environment.

These four themes are interconnected and form a stable pattern of OCB behavior within the organization.

Theme 1: Willingness to Help Coworkers Outside of Their Job Description

Participants consistently demonstrated a tendency to help coworkers without being asked, especially when there was a high workload or an unexpected problem. This assistance came in the form of covering shifts, completing technical work for colleagues, or providing emotional support when colleagues were under work pressure.

One participant stated:

“If my friend is overwhelmed, I just help. Even though it's not my job, if I can, why not?” (P4). This form of behavior reflects the altruism dimension of OCB. Findings indicate that helping behavior is driven more by solidarity among colleagues, rather than by rewards. This situation strengthens team cohesion and ultimately increases the effectiveness of the division's work.

Theme 2: Proactive Initiatives to Improve Work Quality

Participants frequently demonstrated proactive actions such as finding new ways to speed up work processes, providing service improvement ideas, or anticipating problems before they arise. This behavior falls into the categories of OCB—Conscientiousness and Civic Virtue, especially in the context of active involvement in organizational improvement.

One quote confirms this finding:

“I usually double-check before sending a report, so I don't miss anything. Sometimes I create a new format to speed things up.” (P8). Proactive initiatives emerge without a supervisor's request and are often carried out consistently. Participants stated that they feel responsible for maintaining the quality of the organization's services, even though not all of these actions are recorded in formal performance reviews.

Theme 3: Emotional Commitment to the Organization

Most participants expressed a sense of belonging to the organization. They described a positive emotional connection that encouraged them to contribute beyond what was required. The findings indicate that OCB is influenced not only by external factors, but also by internal factors such as emotional attachment and identification with the organization's values.

One participant stated:

“I've worked here for a long time, it feels like home. So if I need to work overtime or help another team, I just do it.” (P2). This emotional commitment is a key reason for the emergence of stable OCB behavior, especially when the organization faces high pressure.

Theme 4: The Influence of Leadership Style and the Social Work Environment

The results of the study indicate that supportive leaders and open communication play a significant role in fostering OCB. Participants described their leaders as providing a space for discussion, open appreciation, and support when problems arise. A positive social work environment also increases feelings of comfort, trust, and motivation to help each other.

One participant explained:

“Our superiors often say thank you when we respond quickly. That motivates us to help others.” (P6). A supportive social work environment creates an unwritten norm that all team members should support each other. This norm serves as a strong foundation for OCB to be voluntary, not forced.

Summary of Relationships Between Themes

These four themes reinforce each other. A supportive leadership style and a positive work environment create emotional commitment, which ultimately encourages proactive initiative and a willingness to help colleagues. This finding is consistent with OCB theory, which emphasizes the importance of affective, social, and structural factors in encouraging voluntary behavior outside of formal roles.

5. DISCUSSION

Research findings indicate that Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) emerges as a result of the interaction between individual factors, social relationships, and leadership style. The first theme, willingness to help coworkers, illustrates that team solidarity plays a significant role in fostering altruistic behavior. This finding aligns with Organ (1988), who emphasized that OCB is strongly influenced by the social climate and norms of mutual assistance. Furthermore, participants indicated that assistance was provided not out of formal obligation, but out of a sense of interpersonal concern, confirming that affective factors play a strong role in work behavior beyond formal descriptions.

The second theme, proactive initiative, demonstrates that employees strive to improve work quality through innovation, problem prevention, and process improvement. This reinforces the concepts of conscientiousness and civic virtue in OCB. Proactive behavior stems from a sense of responsibility and a desire to contribute more to the organization. This factor is related to intrinsic motivation and the perception that their contributions impact smooth operations.

The third theme demonstrates that emotional commitment contributes to OCB. When employees feel a psychological closeness to the organization, they are more willing to engage in voluntary behavior. This finding is consistent with Meyer & Allen (1997), who explained that affective commitment is the primary driver of extra-role behavior. This commitment provides a stable foundation for the sustained emergence of OCB.

The fourth theme emphasized that a supportive leadership style and a positive work environment play a strong role in fostering OCB. Leaders who provide appreciation, support, and clear communication can increase employees' motivation to engage in

voluntary behavior. This finding aligns with social exchange theory, where support from superiors is reciprocated by employees through extra contributions.

Overall, this discussion demonstrates that OCB is influenced not only by individual characteristics but also by social conditions, work culture, and leadership quality. Therefore, strategies to increase OCB must be developed holistically by strengthening a positive work climate, supportive leadership, and a culture of mutual assistance.

6. CONCLUSION

This research concludes that Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) naturally arises in a workplace marked by robust interpersonal relationships, significant emotional commitment, and affirmative leadership support. OCB typically manifests as a readiness to assist colleagues, proactive initiatives, and engagement in organizational enhancement. Team spirit, a sense of belonging, and a leadership style that encourages people to work together are all important factors that lead to OCB.

From a management point of view, businesses need to make the workplace a good place to work, encourage open communication, and reward employees for their extra work. These actions will help OCB grow in a way that is good for the environment and make organizations work better.

7. REFERENCES

- Afsar, B., & Umrani, W. A. (2020). Transformational leadership and innovative work behavior: The role of employee engagement. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 31(4), 485–505.
- Allen, T. D., & Rush, M. C. (1998). The effects of organizational citizenship behavior on performance judgments: A field study and a laboratory experiment. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 83(2), 247–260.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. W.H. Freeman.
- Bass, B. M., & Riggio, R. E. (2006). *Transformational leadership* (2nd ed.). Psychology Press.
- Borman, W. C., & Motowidlo, S. J. (1993). Expanding the criterion domain to include elements of contextual performance. In N. Schmitt & W. C. Borman (Eds.), *Personnel selection in organizations* (pp. 71–98). Jossey-Bass.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Cropanzano, R., & Mitchell, M. S. (2005). Social exchange theory: A critical review with theoretical remedies. *Academy of Management Review*, 30(3), 799–811.

- Eisenberger, R., Huntington, R., Hutchison, S., & Sowa, D. (1986). Perceived organizational support. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 71(3), 500–507.
- Farh, J. L., Podsakoff, P. M., & Organ, D. W. (1990). Accounting for OCB: Leader fairness and task scope versus satisfaction. *Journal of Management*, 16(4), 705–721.
- George, J. M., & Brief, A. P. (1992). Feeling good–doing good: A conceptual analysis of the mood at work–organizational spontaneity relationship. *Psychological Bulletin*, 112(2), 310–329.
- Goldstein, H. W., Pulakos, E. D., Passmore, J., & Semedo, C. (2017). *The Wiley Blackwell handbook of the psychology of recruitment, selection and employee retention*. Wiley.
- Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions and organizations across nations* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Jain, A. K., & Cooper, C. L. (2012). Stress and organizational citizenship behaviors in Indian business process outsourcing organizations. *IIMB Management Review*, 24(3), 155–163.
- Lee, K., & Allen, N. J. (2002). Organizational citizenship behavior and workplace deviance: The role of affect and cognition. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87(1), 131–142.
- Liden, R. C., Wayne, S. J., & Stilwell, D. (1993). A longitudinal study on the early development of leader–member exchange. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 78(4), 662–674.
- Lin, C. P. (2008). Clarifying the relationship between organizational citizenship behaviors, gender, and knowledge sharing. *Journal of Business & Psychology*, 22, 241–250.
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Moorman, R. H. (1991). Relationship between organizational justice and OCB: Do fairness perceptions influence employee citizenship? *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 76(6), 845–855.
- Organ, D. W. (1988). *Organizational Citizenship Behavior: The Good Soldier Syndrome*. Lexington Books.
- Organ, D. W. (1997). Organizational citizenship behavior: It's construct clean-up time. *Human Performance*, 10(2), 85–97.
- Podsakoff, N. P., Whiting, S. W., Podsakoff, P. M., & Blume, B. D. (2009). Individual- and organizational-level consequences of OCB: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 94(1), 122–141.
- Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Paine, J. B., & Bachrach, D. G. (2000). Organizational citizenship behaviors: A critical review. *Journal of Management*, 26(3), 513–563.
- Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Smith, C. A., Organ, D. W., & Near, J. P. (1983). Organizational citizenship behavior: Its nature and antecedents. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 68(4), 653–663.

- Tjahjono, H. K., & Palupi, M. (2017). Perceived organizational support and OCB: The mediating role of job satisfaction. *Journal of Organizational Behavior Research*, 2(1), 12–21.
- van Dyne, L., Cummings, L. L., & McLean Parks, J. (1995). Extra-role behaviors: In pursuit of construct and definitional clarity. In L. L. Cummings & B. M. Staw (Eds.), *Research in organizational behavior* (Vol. 17, pp. 215–285). JAI Press.
- Wibowo, A. (2017). The effect of organizational culture on employee performance. *Journal of Management Development*, 36(9), 1151–1163.
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications* (6th ed.). Sage.