

## Undergraduates' Organizational Citizenship Behavior: The Role of Religiosity

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### Abstract

The paper examines the role of intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity as predictors of organizational citizenship behavior (OCBO and OCBI) among a group of Malaysian undergraduates. The study is quantitative and cross-sectional in nature. The unit of analysis is individual. Survey questionnaires that contained measures of religiosity and OCB were distributed using convenience sampling. Data analyses were conducted using SPSS. Multiple regression analyses were used to test the study hypotheses. Respondents reported to exhibit high levels of OCB and practiced their religion. Intrinsic religiosity was a significant predictor of OCBO, whereas extrinsic religiosity was a significant predictor of OCBI. Data collected was self-reported and cross-sectional in nature. Thus, same-source bias may be present. Second, the sample size was small and selected from a single organization. This affects the generalization of our findings. Future research project should also use other measures of religiosity and OCB and also examine a sample of multiple religions. This study provides higher learning institutions' administrators with some guideline on how to promote OCB among students. This study is significant for at least two reasons. First, this study is among the limited number of studies examining the relationship between religiosity and OCB.

Second, the present study focuses on the variables, which concerned behaviors of 'real-world' significance. If religiosity and OCB can be reinforced in advance, we will be able to develop better future employees.

## **Introduction**

The importance of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) in academic setting have been emphasized by a few researchers (Ang and Ramayah 2010; Allison et al. 2001; Khalid et al. 2012). Empirical evidences showed that OCB is a mean to curb students' academic dishonesty as well as improving their academic performances. Students are future human capital needed by organizations. Therefore, it is important for students at higher learning institutions to attain excellence in academic performance as well as to uphold positive values, ethics and behaviors. With the current competitive situations facing businesses, all organizations need employees who are willing to work ahead of formal duties and responsibilities. Successful organizations have employees who go beyond their formal job requirements and ready to sacrifice their time and energy to be successful on the job assignments. Given the importance of OCB in enhancing organizational, team and individual performance, it is significant to continuously look into ways of inculcating OCB among students.

The readiness of employees to put forth effort beyond the formal obligations of their positions has long been recognized as an essential component of effective organizational performance (Katz and Kahn 1978). In general, OCB enhance performance because these behaviors grant effective ways of managing the linkages among employees of various work units and eventually improve the attainment of the organizational or departmental ultimate goals (Organ, 1988; Smith, Organ and Near 1983). Furthermore, OCB lessens the need to allocate limited resources for maintenance purposes, hence, increase available resources for productive work-related activities. Managers, for example, will be able to dedicate more time on important activities such as decision making, planning, problem solving, and organizational analysis.

With the empirical evidences that OCB contributes to organisational and team effectiveness, previous research have concentrated in identifying factors contributing to OCB. There is still much to learn about what influences the performance of OCB (Penner et al. 1997). Review of current literature reveals scarcity of literature with regards to the relationship between religiosity and OCB. Furthermore, despite an abundance of study carried out on OCB, little is known about OCB in the academic setting. The limited number of study does not allow much generalisation, thereby, warranting further investigation. This study therefore, concentrates on this gap. It focuses on the organizational citizenship behavior and religiosity as the antecedent among students. This study will add more empirical evidence to the current OCB literature.

## **Organizational Citizenship Behavior**

OCB includes behaviors that are not directly and formally compensated by the organization. However, Organ (1988) states that OCB is important to promote the effectiveness of an organization's operations. Previously, OCB was found to have a significant effect on organizational performance. As such, this construct has been intensively studied and tested. To our knowledge, a universal OCB definition and its facets have not been reported. Podsakoff et al. (2000) illustrated the scope of OCB that consist of 7 factors - helping behavior,

sportsmanship, organizational loyalty, organizational compliance, individual initiative, civic virtue and self-development, respectively. Additionally, Williams and Anderson (1991) recommended two factor structure of OCB, namely OCBO and OCBI. They further stated that OCBI are those behaviors that benefit specific individuals, while OCB-O is behaviors that benefit the organization as a whole. In this study, OCB based on the pattern proposed by Williams and Anderson (1991) is utilized.

Despite the importance of OCB among employees, OCB among students has not been studied widely by researchers. Given the evidence of the importance of OCB in predicting organizational, team and individual performance, it is significant to examine OCB among students. This will help us to understand methods to enhance this behavior among students and to prepare them to give significant contributions for their future job. Given the fact that such behavior as OCB needs to be learned and inculcate slowly and gradually, preparing the students with the understanding of the importance of OCB at the earliest possible stage, will at least enable us to develop a better future employees.

Among the examples of OCB that involve the students, include helping other students with difficult course assignments, continuously support the university's core and social activities, avoid complaining when facing inconveniences in campus, and complete duties on or before the expected due dates. If these positive behaviors can be shaped earlier, that is, during their study, we can expect to develop a generation of employees who are capable to make a significant contribution not only to their future employers but also to the nation.

### **Religiosity**

Religiosity can be defined as "the degree to which an individual is a religious person apart from his/her particular religious beliefs and the way that those beliefs are manifested" (Vitell et al. 2008, pp. 602). Individuals' orientation towards religious beliefs should indicate conforming towards a set of principles that provide social controls for individuals (Rohrbaugh and Jessor 1975). One of the most widely used religiosity scales is the religious orientation scale (Allport and Ross 1967). Furthermore, they recommended two distinctive facets of religiosity, labeled as extrinsic religiosity and intrinsic religiosity. The extrinsic dimension refers to utilitarian stimulus that might be the cause of religious behaviors. On the other hand, intrinsic dimension refers to stimulus based upon the natural goals. The extrinsic dimension of religious orientation involve the use of religious for personal interest such as gaining popularity for oneself, attaining business targets or to establish friendship. In contrast, the intrinsic dimension would lead a person to be more pious which leads to abiding religious requirements such as saying prayers or engagement with voluntary community services (Vitell et al. 2008). In other words, the individuals fulfill religious obligation (Allport and Ross 1967). Thus, it is interesting to examine whether different dimensions of religious attachment have different relationship with OCB. Religiosity has been recognized as one of the factors in predicting individuals' differences in a variety of attributes and behavior (Gorsuch 1988; Lau 1989). Previous research have provided evidence of the relationship between religiosity with helping others (Batson and Gray 1981) and tendency to work longer than people who were less religious (Snir and Harpaz 2004). Prior study on religious stimulus proposes that individual with intrinsic orientation is more likely to render assistance and exhibit high level of OCB (Batson and Gray, 1981). Kutcher et al. (2010) found that those who reported that they practice their faith seemed to be engaging in OCB more significantly than those who reported that they did practice their religion.

## **Theoretical Underpinning**

The primary justification explaining why individuals' level of OCB may be influenced by religiosity can be based on the Cognitive Consistency Theory. The Cognitive Consistency Theory advocates that individuals attempt to retain conformity between their behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes (Festinger 1957). There is a tendency for individuals to look for constancy among their cognitions. The word cognition includes knowledge, opinion or belief about the environment, oneself, or one's behavior. Since OCB mirrors voluntary behavior that is beneficial to universities, we would anticipate that religiosity and OCB to be positively related. Compliance with the religiosity should be aligned constantly and characterized other behavior and attitudes. For instance, by demonstrating high level of OCB. Given the relative support for the Cognitive Consistency Theory across a variety of situations and the underlying principle of Cognitive Consistency that people value synchronization among their feelings and behaviors, it is predicted that this theory would provide a support for the religiosity and OCB relationship. Therefore, given the positive nature of both constructs, it can be said that as a person's religiosity increases, the likelihood of OCB will also be increased.

## **Methods**

This study used a cross-sectional survey design. The subjects were undergraduates from an institution of higher learning located in the north of Peninsular Malaysia. The undergraduates were from Faculty of Business Management and Faculty of Accountancy. The researchers obtained consent from several lecturers to access the potential respondents. After a short introduction in which the participants, using convenience sampling, questionnaires were personally distributed and collected in the classroom after the class ended. The researchers have also explained the objectives of the study and students were guaranteed of confidentiality. In total, 237 students took part in the survey. All respondents were Moslem. The actual sample size varies depending on the variables involved in the analyses. Approximately 15.7 percent of participants were males and 84.3 percent females. The mean age is approximately 20.9 years.

Overall, there were 14 items adapted from Williams and Anderson (1991) measuring the performance of OCB that have a specific individual as the target (OCBI) and with those that focus on primarily benefiting the organization (OCBO). The Religious Orientation Scale (Allport and Ross 1967) contains 20 items, 9 to assess intrinsic religiosity and 11 to measure extrinsic traits. The Religious Orientation Scale has been used across different sample of religions (Schneider et al. 2011). The wording of the items for religiosity and OCB were adapted to accommodate the context of the present study. All items were rated on five-point Likert scales. Multiple regression was used to test the relationship between the study variables.

## **Data Analysis and Results**

Table 1 provides the mean for the 20 religiosity items which were measured on a 5-point Likert scale. As can be seen, for the majority of the items, the means are above the mid-point

of 3 indicating that the majority of the respondents are rather high on the religiosity practices. The minimum of 1 indicates that some are not practicing their religiosity. The maximum of 5 indicates that some are highly committed with their religious. Among the statements with the highest mean values are "My religion is important because it answers many questions about the meaning of life" (M=4.63, SD= .59) and "Prayer is for peace and happiness" (M=4.61, SD=.65).

Table 1 Descriptive statistics for religiosity items

No.	Item	Min	Max	Mean	sd
1	I enjoy reading about my religion (I)	1.00	5.00	4.30	.71
2	I go to mosque because it help me make friends (E)	1.00	5.00	3.07	.99
3	I does not matter what I believe so long as I am good (I)	1.00	5.00	3.48	1.14
4	Sometimes I have to ignore my religious beliefs because of what people might think of me (E)	1.00	5.00	1.58	.87
5	It is important for me to spend time in private thought and prayer (I)	2.00	5.00	4.37	.69
6	I have often had a strong sense of God present (I)	1.00	5.00	4.38	.72
7	I pray mainly to get relief and protection (E)	1.00	5.00	4.42	.77
8	I try hard to live all my life according to my religious beliefs (I)	1.00	5.00	4.31	.80
9	What religion offers me most is the comfort in times of trouble and sorrow (E)	1.00	5.00	3.93	1.08
10	My religion is important because it answers many questions about the meaning of life (I)	1.00	5.00	4.63	.59
11	I would rather join a Quran study group than a mosque social group (E)	1.00	5.00	3.42	.75
12	Prayer is for peace and happiness (E)	1.00	5.00	4.61	.65
13	Although I am religious I don't let it affect my daily life (I)	1.00	5.00	2.71	1.23
14	A go to mosque mostly to spend time with my friends (E)	1.00	5.00	2.52	1.00
15	My whole approach to life is based on my religion (I)	1.00	5.00	3.99	.77
16	I enjoy going to mosque because I enjoy seeing people I know there (E)	1.00	5.00	2.80	1.10
17	I pray chiefly because I have been taught to pray (I)	1.00	5.00	3.73	.93
18	Prayers I say when I am alone are as important to me as those I say in mosque (I)	1.00	5.00	3.72	.94
19	Although A believe in my religion, may other things are more important in life (I)	1.00	5.00	2.97	1.17
20	I always go to mosque (I)	1.00	5.00	3.96	1.43

Table 2 below summarizes the mean for all OCB items. On the whole, for most of the items, the means are above the mid-point of 3 indicating that the majority of the students exhibit high level of OCB. Items with the highest means were “I assist others with study-related problems” (M=3.89, SD=.69) and “I pass information to other students” (M=3.85, SD=.81).

Table 2 Descriptive statistics for OCB items

No.	Item	Min	Max	Mean	sd
1	I help others who have heavy work loads - OCBI	1.00	5.00	3.54	.82
2	I help others who have been absent - OCBI	1.00	5.00	2.83	1.02
3	I assist others with study-related problems - OCBI	1.00	5.00	3.89	.69
4	I take time to listen to others problems and worries - OCBI	1.00	5.00	2.93	.97
5	I train new student even though it is not required - OCBI	1.00	5.00	3.37	.87
6	I take a personal interest in other students - OCBI	1.00	5.00	3.65	.89
7	I pass information to other students - OCBI	1.00	5.00	3.85	.81
8	I never skip classes without good reasons - OCBO	1.00	5.00	3.33	.87
9	I give advance notice when unable to come to class - OCBO	1.00	5.00	3.26	.89
10	I do not take extra breaks - OCBO	1.00	5.00	2.93	.90
11	I attend functions that are not required, but that help the University's image - OCBO	1.00	5.00	3.22	1.03
12	I obey university's rules, regulations and procedures even when no one is watching - OCBO	1.00	5.00	3.07	.70
13	I conserve and protects university's property - OCBO	1.00	5.00	3.28	.81
14	I consume a lot of time complaining about trivial matters – OCBO	1.00	5.00	3.07	.84

Descriptive statistics such as maximum, minimum, means, standard deviations, and variance were obtained for interval-scaled independent and dependent variables. The results are shown in Table 3. From the results, it can be seen that the mean on OCBO was about average (3.13). The mean on intrinsic religiosity (3.80), extrinsic religiosity (3.57) and OCBI (3.44) are observed as rather enhanced. The values of minimum and maximum indicate that there are some with low level of OCBI, OCBO and religiosity and some who have high level of religiosity and OCB. The standard deviation for all variables is not high which indicates that most respondents are very close to the mean on all variables.

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics for the Study Variables

Variables	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Intrinsic Religiosity	230	2.63	4.88	3.80	.35
Extrinsic Religiosity	233	1.67	5.00	3.57	.57
OCBI	223	1.88	4.75	3.44	.50
OCBO	230	1.91	4.09	3.13	.34

The psychometric properties of the scales used in this study are presented in Table 4. Cronbach's alpha ranged from .78 to .84, revealing reasonably strong internal consistency for

all variables and are sufficient for use (Nunnally 1978). The intercorrelations of the variables are also shown in Table 4. As can be seen, the measure of intrinsic religiosity ( $r=.16$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and extrinsic religiosity ( $r=.30$ ,  $p < .01$ ) were significantly and positively correlated with OCBI. The positive relationship indicates that high levels of intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity were likely to result in high level of OCBI. Additionally, intrinsic religiosity was significantly and positively related with OCBO. The intercorrelations were also inspected for multicollinearity. All correlation coefficients were below .70. Therefore, variable redundancy did not appear to be of concern (Nunnally 1978).

Table 4 Intercorrelation between Study Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4
Intrinsic Religiosity	(.78)			
Extrinsic Religiosity	.28**	(.80)		
OCBI	.16*	.30**	(.84)	
OCBO	.21**	.04	.24**	(.79)

\*\*  $p < .01$  \* $p < .05$

Cronbach alphas in parentheses

To test whether religiosity influence OCB, multiple regression analyses were done. Linear regression rests on four assumptions: normality, linearity, independence and homoscedasticity (Hair et al. 1998). Evaluation of assumptions of linearity, normality, independence of error terms and homoscedasticity revealed no significant violation of assumptions was found. The results of regressing the two independent variables against the two facets of OCB can be seen in Table 5. As can be seen, intrinsic religiosity ( $\beta=.24$ ,  $p < .01$ ) was a significant predictor of OCBO, whereas extrinsic religiosity ( $\beta=.29$ ,  $p < .01$ ) was a significant predictors of OCBI. Intrinsic religiosity was not a significant predictor of OCBI ( $\beta=.09$ , n.s.) and extrinsic religiosity was not a significant predictor of OCBO ( $\beta=.09$ , n.s.).

Table 5 Multiple Regression

Variables	OCBI		OCBO	
	$\beta$	Sig.	$\beta$	Sig.
Intrinsic religiosity	.09	.22	.24	.00
Extrinsic religiosity	.29	.00	.09	.22
R2	.11		.06	
Adjusted R2	.10		.04	
F value	11.22		5.25	

## Discussion and Conclusions

As noted earlier, previous research have started to report the study of OCB in academic setting. The present study explored the ways in which religiosity influences OCB among undergraduates. We investigated the direct relationships between these variables. Specifically, the results of the study showed that intrinsic religiosity was related positively to OCBO whereas extrinsic religiosity was related significantly and positively with OCBI. Overall, the findings demonstrated that respondents who were more religious were more likely to engage in citizenship behavior. The findings of this study extends previous research by

Kutcher et al. (2010) revealing that religiosity does not only improve job attitudes, but also relate to behaviors such as citizenship behavior. Extrinsic religious orientation is more of a mean to some other end, that is, belief is a motivated external factor. It could be that extrinsic religious orientation can make individual more aware of their peers and more willing to take action for the benefits of others. The extrinsic dimension of religious orientation involves the use of religious for personal needs. For instance, social affiliation, establish friendship or for personal advantage such as gaining popularity for oneself and attaining business targets (Allport and Ross 1967). These may be the reasons that extrinsic religious orientation is related with OCBI – a facet of OCB with individual as the target of the citizenship behavior. On the other hand, the intrinsic dimension would lead a person to be more pious which leads to abiding religious requirements such as saying prayers or engagement with voluntary community services or tends to seek to live day to day life according to her/his religion (Allport and Ross 1967; Vitell et al. 2008). This may be the reason why individual with strong intrinsic religiosity may view engagement with OCBO – a facet with organization as the target of the behavior as part of religious obligation. It is possible that a strong tendency to engage in OCBO (such as conserves and protects university's property and do not take undeserved work breaks) may reflect abiding religious requirements among students. However, further research will be required to shed greater light on the possible causal relationships between these variables.

It can be said that the majority of respondents were reported to have practiced their religiosity and exhibit high level of OCB. Generally, most individual who have been brought up performing a religion or exhibiting positive behaviors will continue to do so into their adult life. These findings are consistent with Conlin (1999), who stated religion has become part of life to many people. In other words, religious have also been integrated into many aspects of individual's life (Gibson 2005). Given the current issues of morale degradation among youngsters, the findings of this study should also relieve the worries of University' administrators and parents. Religion which is considered as a basic value of every society should form other behaviors and attitudes consistently such as by engaging in OCB.

These findings were also consistent with the Cognitive Consistency Theory that states individuals' attempt to sustain harmony between their behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes. High levels of OCBs are consistent with high tendency to practice religiosity. This study contributes to the OCB literature by providing a new evidence of the effects of religiosity on OCB. The present study institutes no support for the effects of intrinsic religiosity on OCBI. It is possible to contemplate that since the bivariate analysis showed a weak correlation between these variables, this relationship is not strong enough to hold up in the multivariate analysis. However, future research needs to reconfirm the present findings before we can accomplish a solid conclusion. What makes the present findings especially appealing is the nature of the variables, which concerned behaviors of 'real-world' significance. If religiosity and OCB can be reinforced in advance, we may be able to shape better future employees. This can be done partly by assessing undergraduates' level of religiosity and OCB and designing related intervention programs to inculcate good values among students. The intervention program such training can be designed and implemented to encourage and uphold positive behaviors such as religiosity and OCB. Unethical behavior is a widespread problem in organizations. Ethical values should be given attention earlier in the educational setting. Universities should seriously look into introducing courses related to business ethics as one of the ways to inculcate positive values among students. It is possible to include OCB as part of the curriculum. Ethical values and behaviors are universal and should be internalized through the

educational process. Moreover, character building should be supported by guides and norms within appropriate learning environment. In this context, educators, administrators and parents should also play their roles effectively. They can instill and uphold positive behaviors among youngsters by continuously advising and act as role models. The content of business management courses may also be enhanced by adding topics such as religiosity, ethics and OCB to prepare the students to deal with the complex future of working situations. This study intensifies the important role that religiosity and OCB may have in shaping future human capitals among current students. Several limitations constrain the interpretation and application of the study's findings. The aim of this study to explore the religiosity and OCB among students from one university limit the findings generalization. Future studies may be benefited from an exploration of a wider range of students at different universities. The reader is cautioned to recognize the restrictions of relying on self-reported data, which may carry a bias of general method variance.

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