ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIORS IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR[*]

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Abstract

Organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) are voluntary behaviors of organization members, going beyond their job descriptions, which aim at assisting coworkers and/or taking care of an organization and its operations. Since 1980s' many researchers contributed to the explanation of their nature, dimensions as well as antecedents, however, less attention has been paid to differences in OCB scale and frequency caused by an organization type. In the paper we verify the hypothesis that employees of for-profit private organizations engage in OCBs more frequently than employees of the public sector. The hypothesis is verified on a basis of a quantitative study conducted among 280 employees of the private sector and 244 employees of local government units. The analysis of the data brings contradictory results. In general, employees of the public sector organizations perform OCB more frequently than employees of the private sector. However, their OCBs are people-oriented. OCBs supporting an organization are more frequent among employees of the private sector.

Keywords: organizational citizenship behaviors, OCB, public and private sector.
JEL Classification: D23

INTRODUCTION

Development of organizational behaviors' discipline within management studies leads to elaboration of specific constructs explaining and describing employee behaviors in an organization. Organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) represent extra-role employee behaviors that going beyond the call of duty support an organization and its members.

They may be directed towards other employees, e.g. through helping them spontaneously, or towards an organization, for instance through suggesting some improvements or protecting the organization's image outside. The importance of those behaviors was recognized back in the 1960s, when Katz (1964) underlined that organizational performance is dependent on everyday spontaneous acts of collaboration, mutual help, altruism and other employee behaviors of that kind. In his opinion, organizations that rely only on formal assignments of organizational roles are not stable social systems.

OCBs are well recognized in management studies, including propositions of their measurement and identification of their antecedents. Surprisingly, less attention has been paid so far to an impact that an organization type, namely private or public, may have on OCB scope and frequency among employees. The issue is particularly relevant as behaviors standing for opposite to OCB, i.e. so-called counter-productive work behaviors (CWB) are proved to appear more frequently in public sector organizations. We hypothesize then that, by analogy, OCBs are more frequent among employees of the private sector.

In order to verify the hypothesis we conducted a study among 524 employees representing both the public and the private sector. The analyses of the data reveal a complex picture of OCBs in those two sectors. While public sector employees in general perform OCB more frequently than employees of the private sector, their acts are primarily oriented toward coworkers. OCBs organization-oriented are more frequent among employees of the private sector.

The article contains four main parts: theoretical background, research methodology, results, discussion and conclusions.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1. Organizational Citizenship Behaviors

Contemporary organizations of various kinds are more often than ever built on team-work. Consequently, their success is dependent on individual initiative and willingness to contribute to the collective results (LePine et al., 2002). Among various constructs identified in management studies, organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) represent and explain particularly beneficial individual employee

behaviors supporting overall organizational performance (Glińska-
-Neweś & Lis, 2016).

One of the first definitions of OCBs was created by Organ (1988), who said that OCB is "an 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" (Organ, 1988, p. 4). In other words, OCBs represent extra-role behaviors and as such belong to the same group as prosocial behaviors (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986), organizational spontaneity (George & Brief, 1992) or contextual performance (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993). In order to distinguish organizational citizenship behaviors from those concepts, Organ proposed another definition stating that OCBs are "contributions to the maintenance and enhancement of the social and psychological context that support task performance" (1997, p. 91). The definition helps also to avoid ambiguity created by terms such as "discretion" or "direct/explicit recognition". To sum up, OCBs are behaviors that: are not included in an employee contract or job description, and are beneficial for organizational efficiency (Smith et al., 1983; Appelbaum et al., 2004; Cichorzewska & Rakowska, 2017). Employees conduct them without expectations of rewards, motivated by intrinsic willingness to support the organization and its development (Organ et al., 2006; Nezakati et al., 2010).

There are different proposals regarding OCB elements and dimensions. Most works on the topic are based on Podsakoff et al. (2000) who identified the following:

1) altruism, which is expressed through voluntary helping workmates in problematic moments in the workplace, such as too heavy workload after long absence;
2) courtesy, i.e. preventing workmates from the occurrence of problematic situations, accompanied by an awareness of own behaviors' impact on others' work;
3) organizational compliance, which means internalization, acceptance and strict adherence to organizational procedures and policies; in practice it means that an individual obeys organizational norms even though nobody can see it;
4) sportsmanship, i.e. readiness to tolerate any inconvenient conditions in the workplace and to cope with them without complaints;
5) organizational loyalty that includes promoting an organization outside, protecting it against external threats and showing commitment to it in hardship;

6) individual initiative, expressed through performing activities surpassing standard requirements, such as proposing improvements for an organization or voluntarily engaging in additional responsibilities;

7) civic virtue, which means willingness to participate in governance process and to take responsibility for the whole organization, including attending organization meetings or voluntarily monitoring the organizational environment to identify potential threats and opportunities;

8) self-development, i.e. voluntary engagement in any form of learning and training in order to gain new knowledge and improve skills and competencies.

While the aforementioned categorization of OCBs is very popular among organization scholars and it is helpful in explaining the construct nature, the framework as the whole is less useful in research. It is due to a fact that while some dimensions, e.g. altruism and courtesy, are well described and their measures have been validated by many researchers, the others are less studied and still under process of operationalization (Organ, 1997; Podsakoff et al., 2000). For this reason in our study we use another framework, proposed by Spector and Fox (2010). These authors are better known and associated with a construct reverse to OCB, i.e. counter-productive work behaviors (CWBs) (Spector & Fox, 2010). CWBs stand for behaviors manifested in order to to harm an organization or its members. In fact, Spector and Fox's interest in CWBs makes an advantage of their approach to OCB. Their Organizational Citizenship Behavior Checklist (OCB-C) (Fox et al., 2012) has been designed to minimize overlap with CWB scale, which was a limitation noted in prior studies (Dalal, 2005; Spector et al., 2010). The proposition includes items related to Podsakoff' at al.'s model, however they are categorized in 2 main dimensions, i.e. behaviors directed toward the organization (OCB-O) and behaviors toward people in the organization (OCB-P). Table 1 presents items that we used in our study.

Table 1. OCB measures used in the study

Item Number	Item
	OCB-O
1	Helped new employees get oriented to the job.
2	Offered suggestions to improve how work is done.
3	Offered suggestions for improving the work environment.
4	Volunteered for extra work assignments.
5	Said good things about your employer in front of others.
6	Gave up meal and other breaks to complete work.
	OCB-P
7	Lent a compassionate ear when someone had a work problem.
8	Lent a compassionate ear when someone had a personal problem.
9	Changed vacation schedule, work days, or shifts to accommodate co-worker's needs.
10	Helped a less capable co-worker lift a heavy box or other object.
11	Went out of the way to give co-worker encouragement or express appreciation.
12	Defended a co-worker who was being "put-down" or spoken ill of by other co-workers or supervisor.

Source: Organizational Citizenship Behavior Checklist. Retrieved from: http://shell.cas.usf.edu/~pspector/scales/ocbcpage.html (access: 26.01.2018).

2. OCB antecedents

Most of the researchers underline 4 main categories of OCB antecedents (Podsakoff et al., 2000; Peyrat-Guillard & Glińska-Neweś, 2010). They include individual (employee) characteristics, task characteristics, organizational characteristics and leadership behaviors. The comprehensive studies reveal that the strongest antecedents of OCBs are: job attitudes, task variables and leadership behaviors. In the first category, particularly job satisfaction, perception of fairness and organizational commitment strongly influence employee willingness to engage in OCBs. Tasks supporting OCB appearance should be intrinsically satisfying and accompanied with feedback. Among leadership characteristics, key antecedents include: supportive leader behaviors, transformational leadership and leader-follower exchange (Podsakoff et al., 1990).

Definitely less attention has been paid to the type of an organization as a factor of OCB. Notably, it is worth investigating whether belonging to the private vs. public sector determines a scope of OCB in

an organization. While extra-role, organization-supporting employee behaviors are relevant in every kind of the organization, the public sector is a sector of public trust and its employees should especially demonstrate higher ethical standards (Ikola-Norrbacka, 2010; Rakowska et al., 2014). The question of the sector influence on OCBs arises particularly because there is a strong evidence that CWBs, constituting the antonym to OCBs, appear more often in organizations of the public sector (Burned & Pope, 2007; Zapf et al., 2003; Leymann, 1996; Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, 1997; Nasir & Bashir, 2012). There are various possible explanations of this phenomenon, including less mobility of employees (Zapf et al., 2003), excessive bureaucracy, depersonalized organizational structures, centralized management and lower salaries that may lead to higher level of employee frustration (Leymann, 1996; Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, 1997, Nasir & Bashir, 2012).

If CWBs occur more often in the public sector organizations, will OCBs be more present in the private sector? In our study we put forward such a hypothesis that *the level of OCBs in the private sector organizations is higher than in the public sector*.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To test the hypothesis we adopted a quantitative approach using a structured questionnaire. It consisted of items adopted from Spector and Fox's OCB Checklist (…) indicated in Table 1. We measured these items with five point Likert frequency scale. This scale is preferred over acceptance scale in such type of research as the acceptance scale may lead a respondent to biases caused by moral judgments. We conducted the study in 2017. In order to gain equivalent samples from both the private and the public sector, we used the convenience sampling, i.e. we sent the questionnaires to students of our Faculty who work, to employees of companies that we cooperate with and to local government units. The research study sample consisted of 524 respondents. Table 2 contains the structure of the research sample.

Table 2. Research sample

		Private sector		Public sector		Total	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Sex	Women	184	65.7	184	75.4	372	69.5
	Men	96	34.3	60	24.6	163	30.5
	Missing data	0	0	0	0	0	0
Age	18–25	182	65.0	53	21.7	246	46.0
	26–35	39	13.9	28	11.5	67	12.5
	36–45	9	3.2	91	37.3	100	18.7
	46–55	16	5.7	5	2.0	21	3.9
	Missing data	34	12.1	67	27.5	101	18.9
Education	Vocational	4	1.4	0	0	4	0.7
	Secondary	41	14.6	11	4.5	52	9.7
	Higher	90	32.1	164	67.2	261	48.8
	During studies	145	51.8	69	28.3	218	40.7
	Missing data	0	0	0	0	0	0
Position held	Managerial staff	21	7.5	0	0	21	3.9
	Office staff	153	54.6	141	57.8	305	57.0
	Shop floor staff	106	37.9	103	42.2	209	39.1
	Missing data	0	0	0	0	0	0
Type of employment	Contract (for specified or unspecified period)	145	51.8	204	83.6	360	67.3
	Civil law contract	115	41.1	16	6.6	131	24.5
	Other	20	7.1	16	6.6	36	6.7
	Missing data	0	0	8	3.3	8	1.5
Working hours	Full-time job	146	52.1	200	82.0	357	66.7
	Part-time job	49	17.5	36	14.8	85	15.9
	Unlimited working hours	85	30.4	8	3.3	93	17.4

N = 535 (private sector = 280/52,3%, public sector = 244/45,6%, missing data = 11/2,1%)
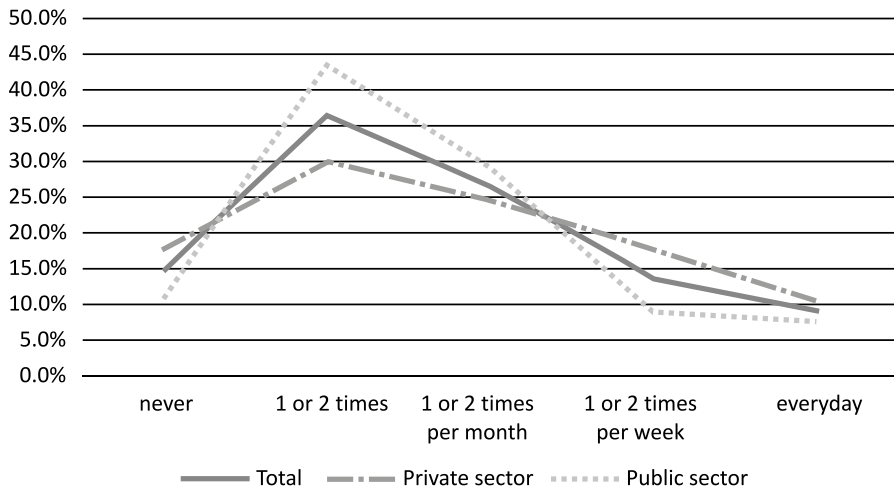
Source: own research.

RESULTS

Table 3 presents descriptive statistics (M, SD) and Cronbach alpha coefficients for the whole construct of OCB as well as for OCB-O and OCB-P with regard to the respondents sector, i.e. private or public.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics

	M	SD	Cronbach alpha
OCB	2.619	0.510	0.918
Private sector	2.576	0.546	0.919
Public sector	**2.589**	0.499	0.885
OCB-O	2.716	0.428	0.753
Private sector	**2.739**	0.447	0.746
Public sector	2.615	0.415	0.703
OCB-P	2.421	0.635	0.817
Private sector	2.371	0.673	0.792
Public sector	**2.398**	0.617	0.808

Source: own research.

The differences in the answer structure of the two samples, i.e. the private and the public sector employees, are depictured in Figure 1 and Figure 2.

Figure 1. Frequency of OCB-O

Source: own research.

Table 3 as well as Figures 1 and 2 show interesting and complex picture of OCB in 2 studied sectors. In general, employees of the public sector perform OCBs more often than employees of the private sector. However, when it comes to detailed OCB dimensions, employees of the

public sector appear to perform primarily behaviors towards coworkers. OCBs that are organization-oriented are more often among employees of the private sector. Moreover, it happens more often in the public sector that employees perform OCB occasionally, while in the private sector employees do this in a more regular manner. At the same time more employees of the private sector admitted that they did not perform OCB at all. In both groups everyday acts of OCBs are rare.
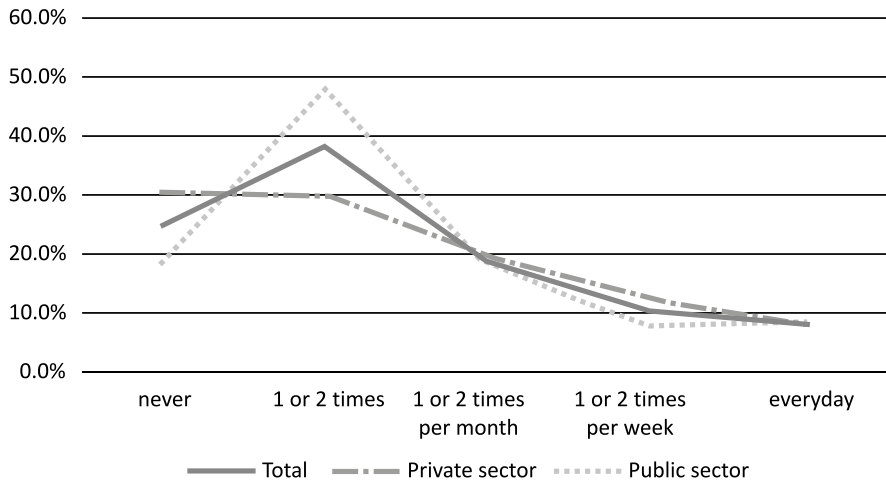

Figure 2. Frequency of OCB-P

Source: own research.

In order to determine if the relation between OCB frequency and a respondent's sector is significant we used chi-square coefficient. Table 4 presents the results of this analysis. All the relations are statistically significant.

Table 4. Pearson chi-square coefficients for OCBs in private and public sector

	Public or private sector and OCBs		
	OCB-O	OCB-P	OCB
Chi-square	60.136	120.301	56.188
df	5	5	5
P	.000*	.000*	.000*

*p < 0.01

Source: own research.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The analyses of the data collected in our survey do not support the hypothesis stating that *the level of OCBs in the private sector orga-nizations is higher than in the public sector*. However, the picture of OCBs in those two sectors is more complex and ambiguous. The private sector employees perform behaviors supporting organization itself more frequently, notably the OCB-Os. It is rarer in the public sector, which stays in line with aforementioned evidence that in the public sector employees are more likely to feel frustration and disappointment leading to acts harming their organization (CWBs). As Nasir and Bashir state, in the public sector "lower level of job satisfaction leads to deviating behaviors such as wasting organiza-tional resources, delaying tasks, wasting time, stealing, etc." (Nasir & Bashir, 2012, p. 247). Accordingly, this situation may lead to fewer acts of manifestation of their care towards an organization (OCB-O) than among employees of the private sector, which has been proved by our study.

The private sector employees seem to be more committed to their organizations and are more willing to do something extra for them. At the same time though, the public sector employees go beyond their call of duty to help coworkers, i.e. they perform OCB-P more often than the private sector employees. This may support a view that less favorable work conditions in the public sector reinforce employee cohesion and their readiness to help each other. In our study, such attitude is less common among the private sector employees, who in comparison with their counterparts in the public sector, appear to be more loyal to their organizations than to coworkers.

Our study has some limitations. First of all, we have not used the random sampling. As the result, the research sample was dominated by people with higher education. Research on a more numerous and diversified sample is required to confirm the findings. Moreover, the quantitative research method unabled us to grasp a broader context of OCB in studied sectors, notably other factors determining frequency of OCBs performed by employees of the two sectors. Nevertheless, we proved that the sector matters and further studies, particularly of qualitative nature, are recommended to investigate the specific relations in the area.

With regard to the practical implications of our study, it shows interesting patterns in employee behaviors of the public and the private sector. Managers should be aware that employees' commitment has different objectives in these two sectors. In the private sector employees are more likely to do some extra activities for their organization, while in the public sector employees are more coworkers-oriented. Thus, managers' efforts made in order to enhance overall employee contribution to organizational performance should be different. Managers in the private sector should focus on building stronger social ties in an organization, while managers in the public sector should focus on strengthening employees' loyalty to an organization.

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ZACHOWANIA OBYWATELSKIE W SEKTORZE PUBLICZNYM I PRYWATNYM

Zachowania obywatelskie (OCB) to dobrowolne zachowania członków organizacji wykraczające poza obowiązki przypisane do danego stanowiska pracy, których celem jest wsparcie współpracowników i/lub samej organizacji oraz jej działań. Od lat 80. XX wieku wielu badaczy starało się wyjaśnić ich naturę, a także zidentyfikować ich wymiary i uwarunkowania, jednak mniej uwagi poświęcano różnicom w OCB spowodowanym przez typ organizacji. W artykule weryfikujemy hipotezę, że pracownicy sektora prywatnego częściej angażują się w OCB niż pracownicy sektora publicznego. Hipotezę zweryfikowano na podstawie badania ilościowego przeprowadzonego wśród 280 pracowników sektora prywatnego i 244 pracowników jednostek samorządu terytorialnego. Analiza danych prowadzi do sprzecznych wniosków. Ogólnie rzecz biorąc, pracownicy sektora publicznego częściej angażują się w OCB niż pracownicy sektora prywatnego, jednak ich zachowania są zorientowane na ludzi. Zachowania obywatelskie wspierające organizację są częstsze wśród pracowników sektora prywatnego.

Słowa kluczowe: zachowania obywatelskie, OCB, sektor prywatny i publiczny.