

# Study of the Role of Personality Factors in Organizational Citizenship Behaviors

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**Abstract** Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) as a non-mandatory cooperation with others significantly influences an organization's performance and social capital. In this paper it has been attempted to study the role of personality traits based on the Big Five model namely, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness to experience and neuroticism in the performing of organizational citizenship behavior, while Altruism, civic virtue, organizational conscientiousness, courtesy and sportsmanship were regarded as the main OCB dimensions. Correlation analysis on data from 56 employees of "Bank Mellat" of Tehran, revealed that there was a significant relationship between personality characteristics and OCB. The present study suggests that conscientiousness, agreeableness and emotional stability positively affect OCB. Also according to the regression model conscientiousness is the best factor to predict OCB. The current research demonstrates that neuroticism is negatively related to OCB, since it diminishes a person's ability to avoid complaining while facing organizational problems.

**Keywords:** Personality Traits, Big Five Model, Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB).

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## Introduction

OCB as a voluntary behavior of individual organizational members, is supposed to enhance overall organizational efficacy. OCB examples include assisting co-workers with their tasks and defending the organization when other employees criticize it<sup>[31,32]</sup>. This kind of behavior can enhance social capital in an organization as a source of sustainable advantage and organizational performance develops consequently<sup>[29]</sup>.

Although previous research on organizational citizenship behavior shows that OCB is critical for organizational effectiveness, little theoretical work details how it might contribute to enhance organizational performance<sup>[42]</sup>.

Moreover, unlike duty behaviors, OCBs are not job-specific and similar sets of OCBs can be exhibited in many jobs, thus these behaviors should serve to improve organizational performance in almost any work setting<sup>[10]</sup>. Since OCB affects individual job satisfaction and organizational commitment, it has been suggested that OCB should become more important for high level managers<sup>[19]</sup>.

Researchers have no common definition for OCB, but there are many factors that can contribute to the determination of Organizational Citizenship Behavior which include Altruism, Conscientiousness, Civic Virtue, Sportsmanship, Courtesy, etc<sup>[5]</sup>. Altruism and conscientiousness are considered to be the two major dimensions of OCB<sup>[20]</sup>.

Researchers have linked personality dimensions to a number of industrial and organizational topics, including absenteeism, employee reliability, leadership, organizational climate, employee satisfaction, work motivation and job scope<sup>[30]</sup>. Due to important organizational consequences, personality has captured the attention of researchers as a predictor of organizational citizenship behavior<sup>[8]</sup>.

Since individual behavior is largely influenced by personality traits, Big Five model as the most widely used personality model, has been used to discuss how personality traits can affect the organizational citizenship behaviors.

## Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Organizational citizenship behavior is an important aspect of job performance that refers to behaviors that promote the organizational network and climate. OCB comprises voluntary behaviors such as help and cooperation with others in the organization<sup>[27,28]</sup>. It develops positive interaction and interdependency among the members of organizations and thus relates positively to the organizational performance<sup>[34]</sup>. It also increases organizational effectiveness by aiding new comers, coworkers, supervisors and the organization<sup>[16]</sup>.

The employees do not receive any compensation or training for OCB and it is not mentioned directly in official rewards system of an organization<sup>[9]</sup>. For such behaviors are not defined in the official job descriptions but contribute to effectiveness and efficiency of an

organization through improving an employee's duties and roles<sup>[7]</sup>.

There is no consensus in the literature about the dimensions of organizational citizenship behavior<sup>[21]</sup>. But most scholars agree on the multidimensionality of OCB<sup>[12]</sup>. So that numerous antecedents of OCB have been examined<sup>[44]</sup>.

### **Altruism**

Altruism is referred to as helping behaviors for supporting a coworker or a colleague who has been absent from work, helping others who have heavy workloads and providing help and support to new employees. Altruism is accounted as a one of the significant antecedents of Organizational Citizenship Behavior<sup>[41]</sup>.

### **Organizational conscientiousness**

Organizational conscientiousness is usually interpreted to reflect the mindfulness that an employee never forgets to be a member of an organization and always obeys organizational rules and procedures even when no one is watching. Conscientiousness is a set of behaviors that causes a person to do tasks more than the basic requirements of the job. And can be an important predictor of organizational citizenship behavior<sup>[17]</sup>.

### **Civic Virtue**

Civic virtue is explained as responsibly involving oneself in and being concerned about the image and life of an organization. This set of manners is demonstrated by voluntarily involvement in political processes and meetings of an organization<sup>[3]</sup>. In fact, civic virtue refers to high levels of trust and voluntary participation in the communities that leads to positives effects on the development of the communities<sup>[35]</sup>.

### **Sportsmanship**

Sportsmanship indicates that people do not complain if they are faced with problems, but have positive attitudes. Sportsmanship supports dialogue and inquiry by avoiding complaining and by seeking for solutions before asking for other people's help<sup>[2]</sup>.

### **Courtesy**

Courtesy means treating others with respect; it allows employees to help their colleagues who are facing problems and give feedbacks when questions are given. This set of polite manners prevents creation of problems at workplace.

Researchers observed some personal differences in the performance of OCB, for example the individuals who were more generous were more likely to involve in OCB<sup>[11]</sup>. Hence, some personality factors may predict organizational citizenship behavior.

## **Personality**

Personality is defined as the complex of characteristics that distinguishes an individual especially in relationships with others. According to Merriam Webster medical dictionary personality includes the totality of an individual's behavioral and emotional tendencies, distinguishing character traits, attitudes or habits.

The five-factor model of personality (FFM) or big five that has its origins in the work of D. W. Fiske (1949) has dominated the field of personality during the last two decades. These five factors are usually labeled as neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience<sup>[13]</sup>.

An impressive body of research supports that five basic dimensions motivate all others and encompass most of the significant variation in human personality. Some study examined the degree to which the dimensions from the five-factor Model of personality influenced motivation to improve work through learning. Findings indicated that these characteristics were significant antecedents of motivation to improve work<sup>[30]</sup>.

## **Hypotheses Development**

### **Major hypothesis:**

H1: Personality is significantly related to OCBs.

There is a strong relationship between personality traits and OCB, also personality characteristics may be related to the perception of OCB as in-role versus extra-role<sup>[6]</sup>.

### **Minor hypotheses:**

#### **Extraversion**

Previous research has identified that extravert individuals who are so active, like to be with others and are energetic, they also have tendency towards taking big risks<sup>[36]</sup>.

Extraverts tend to be gregarious, assertive and sociable. Introverts tend to be reserved, timid and quiet. An individual's level of extraversion is highly transparent in organizations<sup>[24,26]</sup>.

H1a: Extraversion is positively related to OCBs.

#### **Agreeableness**

Previous studies on personality have determined the specific characteristics of individuals high in agreeableness. They are easy to get along with others and have tendency towards cooperation, trusting and interpersonal support<sup>[23]</sup>.

H1b: Agreeableness is positively related to OCBs.

#### **Conscientiousness**

This characteristic is a measure of reliability. A highly conscientious person is responsible, organized, dependable and persistent. Those who score low on this dimension are easily distracted, disorganized and unreliable. This personality dimension is determined with environment<sup>[38]</sup>.

H1c: Conscientiousness is positively related to OCBs.

**Openness**

Extremely open people are creative, curious and artistically sensitive. They have active imagination and tend to try new things<sup>[22,25]</sup>.

H1d: Openness to experience is positively related to OCBs.

**Neuroticism**

Neuroticism is often used to explain a person’s emotional stability and a person's ability to bear up stress. People with positive emotional stability tend to be calm, self-confident and secure. Those with highly negative scores tend to be nervous, anxious, depressed and insecure<sup>[40]</sup>.

H1e: Neuroticism is negatively related to OCBs.

**Research Method**

In this survey research the statistical population comprises the employees of “Bank Mellat” branches in Tehran. The questionnaires were distributed based on a multistage sampling method and collected at bank branches in Tehran. Questionnaires were distributed among 60 people as the sample of the research and 56 usable samples were obtained after excluding the incomplete ones.

The Big Five personality factors were measured using the 44-item questionnaire (Cronbach’s alpha=0.72) rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) (John and Srivastava, 1999).

OCB of the selected sample was assessed with the 32-item questionnaire (Cronbach’s alpha=0.79) developed by Kanovsky and Organ (1996). Responses were made on a five-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

**Results**

Demographic data are demonstrated in Table 1, based on age and gender. Data shows that 73.2% of the staff is male and 26.8% of them is female.

**Table 1: Demographic data of the sample.**

Demographic variables		Percent	Frequency
Gender	Male	41	73.2
	Female	15	26.8
	Total	56	100
Age	Under 40	10	17.9
	40-50	31	55.4
	Above 50	15	26.8
	Total	56	100

SPSS software was used to calculate the correlation coefficients between OCB and personality dimensions. Table 2 indicates the means of responses, the standard deviation of these means and the inter-relationship between OCB antecedents and personality factors.

**Table 2: Pearson correlation between personality and OCB.**

	R(Pearson correlation)	Sig. (P-value)
OCB	0.30	0.027
Personality		

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

According to the data shown in Table 2, H1 is accepted, since the personality is significantly correlated with overall OCB (R=0.30, P=0.027), while the five OCB dimensions, summated to create a measurement of overall OCB, were as follows: 1- altruism, 2- civic virtue, 3- organizational conscientiousness, 4- sportsmanship and 5- courtesy.

Pearson correlations between personality traits and OCB dimensions are demonstrated in Table 3.

**Table 3: Pearson correlations between personality traits and OCB dimensions.**

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1 Altruism	3.79	0.87	1									
2 Organizational Conscientiousness	3.64	0.88	0.58	1								
3 Civic Virtue	3.66	0.94	0.36	0.15	1							
4 Sportsmanship	3.21	0.98	0.01	0.12	-0.03	1						
5 Courtesy	3.84	1.14	0.12	0.04	0.21	0.10	1					
6 Extraversion	3.29	0.33	-0.04	-0.05	0.13	0.06	-0.26	1				
7 Agreeableness	3.65	0.81	0.12	0.25	0.42**	-0.22	0.15	0.01	1			
8 Conscientiousness	3.41	0.98	0.56**	0.59**	0.14	-0.10	-0.02	-0.18	0.37	1		
9 Openness	3.21	0.59	0.02	0.18	0.22	0.15	-0.12	-0.01	0.26	0.07	1	
10 Neuroticism	2.89	0.77	-0.01	-.18	0.17	-0.49**	0.21	-0.21	0.16	-0.08	-0.03	1

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

According to the results there is a significant relationship between personality dimensions and overall OCB. Among personality factors, conscientiousness has the greatest relationship with overall OCB. Results show that there is a positive correlation between agreeableness and civic virtue (R=0.42, P=0.001) so the first hypothesis H1b is accepted. According to the calculations conscientiousness positively correlates with altruism (R=0.56, P=0.000) and also with organizational

conscientiousness (R=0.59, P=0.000) thus, the third hypothesis H1c is accepted. Also the results support the last hypothesis H1e, since a negative correlation is observed between neuroticism and sportsmanship (R=-0.49, P=0.000). No significant correlation was observed between extraversion and OCB factors nor between openness and OCB dimensions, hence H1a and H1d are rejected.

**Table 4: Correlation coefficients between personality and OCB.**

model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. Error
1	0.411	0.169	0.085	0.5245

According to Table 4, the correlation coefficient between personality factors and OCB is 0.411 and personality factors predict 16.9% of the OCB variance.

**Table 5: Regression coefficients.**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	3.121	1.005		3.104	.003
Extraversion	-.131	.227	-.078	-.577	.566
Agreeableness	0.086	.100	.128	.862	.393
Conscientiousness	0.165	.080	.296	2.045	.046
Openness	0.78	.124	.084	.627	.534
Neuroticism	-0.065	.098	-.091	-.664	.510

According to the data above, conscientiousness is the best factor to predict organizational citizenship behavior, so that it has the standardized Beta of 0.296 with the significance of 0.046 while other personality factors have no significant predictability of OCB.

## Discussion

The present research studies the relationship between personality dimensions, as expressed by the Big Five model and OCB factors in the "Bank Mellat" of Tehran. The results confirm and clarify the relationship between personality traits and OCBs.

According to the results, employees high in agreeableness, conscientiousness and emotional stability perform the highest levels of OCB. The results indicate that personality factors of agreeableness and conscientiousness are positively related to major dimensions of OCB, namely altruism, civic virtue and organizational conscientiousness. And neuroticism is negatively related to another OCB dimension i.e. sportsmanship.

The impact of conscientiousness on altruism and organizational conscientiousness refers to its emphasis on commitment and persistence that leads to interpersonal helping and altruistic behaviors which engage in behaviors for the good of the organization. Since agreeableness results in cooperation, group cohesion and compliance with team goals, this personality factor enhances civic virtue by voluntarily involvement in organizational meetings and processes and by participating in organization's activities and functions. These results are consistent with the results of previous researchers who showed that agreeableness and conscientiousness were positively related to organizational citizenship behaviors<sup>[4,15]</sup>.

Furthermore, the interaction of neuroticism and OCB is one of the main contributions of the current research. This is contrary to previous studies which reported weak relationship between that personality factor and OCB dimensions<sup>[24,43]</sup>. One possible explanation for this finding is that individuals who score high on neuroticism tend to disrupt the cooperation, creative atmosphere and team cohesion that are essential elements for job performance.

Since those with highly negative scores on emotional stability are likely to be nervous, anxious and depressed, lack positive attitudes and tend to complain if they face organizational problems.

No significant relationship was observed between extraversion and OCB dimensions. This result is contrary to the results of Moon et al. (2008)<sup>[26]</sup> who reported a significant relationship between that personality factor and OCBs. Also no significant interaction was observed between openness and OCB factors. This result is contrary to the results of Abu Elanain (2007)<sup>[1]</sup> who reported openness as a crucial personality characteristic that would be related to a person's capability to perform OCB.

## Conclusions

Organizational citizenship behaviors enhance organizational performance as a critical source of sustainable organizational advantage. Previous researchers have demonstrated that there is a positive and significant relationship between social OCB and capital, so that an increase or decrease in OCB directly affects organization's social capital. Hence, with regards to the importance of OCB in organizational performance and social capital, in the present research it has been attempted to investigate the effect of personality traits on different dimensions of organizational citizenship behavior. Results of this study confirm the relationship between personality factors and OCB dimensions.

In summary, the findings of this research suggest that when evaluating how effective, employees are in performing OCBs, conscientiousness, agreeableness and emotional stability will be influential factors, while conscientiousness is the most important parameter affecting OCB. Hence, regarding the significant role of an individual's personality in job performance, the present study suggests that employee selection process could target applicants who are high on those traits, in order to enhance OCB and social capital of organizations.

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