

AN EMPIRICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR IN EXPLAINING ACADEMIC SUCCESS Some Evidence from East Malaysian Sample

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Management researchers have consistently reported the significant role of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) in predicting individual success in organizational settings. This topic, however, has been largely ignored in the business education environment. Given the demonstrable benefits of OCB enactment in terms of influencing performance evaluations and organizational rewards, we emphasize the importance of examining the role of OCB in predicting student performance and their eventual career success. This endeavor holds important implications for students who are on the threshold of entering the industry. Using a self-administered questionnaire, we collected data from a total of 177 undergraduate students from two different schools in a Malaysian public university. Analysis reveals that of the three distinct dimensions of OCB, only one (consisting of altruism and courtesy items) has influences on both measures of student performance (i.e., productivity and cumulative grade point average). Implications of these findings are discussed.

Keywords: academic success; organizational citizenship behavior; East Malaysia.

Introduction

Business school educators are primarily responsible for preparing their students for successful careers in industries (Allison et al. 2001). Among the many indicators of successful careers are securing a good position, displaying commendable work performance, and enjoying swift career advancement and achievement. Researchers have in recent years identified some key skills and behaviors that contribute to such success. These skills and behaviors are collectively referred to as organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) (Allison et al. 2001).

The concept of OCB is not new in organizational settings. It is seen as employees' behaviors that go beyond formal duties and responsibilities that can ultimately contribute to both individual and organizational success. These voluntary behaviors include assisting co-workers or superiors, willingness to compromise inconvenience at workplace, complying with organizational rules, policies and procedures, and active involvement in organizational development (Katz and Kahn 1978). This topic has in fact been extensively researched in management across a number of sample types (e.g., managers, military personnel, sales personnel, and blue-collar workers) for over two decades. What has been consistently reported in this mountain of research is the link between OCB and individual success in organizational settings (e.g., Allen and Rush 1998; Allison et al. 2001; MacKenzie et al.

1991; Podsakoff and MacKenzie 1994; Podsakoff et al. 2000).

Despite the importance of OCB enactment in predicting students' eventual career success, the area of OCB remains largely unexplored empirically in the education context (Allison et al. 2001; DiPaola and Hoy 2005). A review of the extant literature unearths only a handful of studies (e.g., Allison et al. 2001; DiPaola and Hoy 2005; DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran 2001; Jurewicz 2004; Vigoda-Gadot et al. 2007) that examined OCB in the academic setting. For instance, Vigoda-Gadot et al.'s (2007) study proposes and validates a scale of Group-level OCB (GOCB) using Israeli teachers and their principals as respondents. Even fewer studies (e.g., Allison et al. 2001; DiPaola and Hoy 2005; DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran 2001; Khalid et al. 2010) are found to specifically examine the association between OCB and individual success in the academic setting. DiPaola and Hoy (2005) note a significant relationship between student achievement and the OCB levels of the faculty members in the high school sample studied. In a same vein, Khalid et al. (2010) find that university professors' performance of OCB predicts students' academic performance.

Allison et al.'s (2001) study, on the other hand, examined the role of students' enactment of OCB in explaining their academic success. They find OCB, as a whole, to be significantly and positively linked to two measures of student performance: (1) productiv-

ity and (2) cumulative grade point average (CGPA). They also report that some undergraduate students perform OCB, while a considerable number do not. There is clearly a paucity of OCB studies in the Malaysian higher education context. Hence, the current study is an attempt to shed some light on the following questions:

- (a) Do Malaysian undergraduate students similarly engage in OCB, and if they do, to what extent is the enactment of OCB among these students? and
- (b) Does OCB significantly contribute to the academic performance/success of these undergraduate students?

It should be noted that our study adopts the stance that OCB enactment will be a key contributor to student academic and future career success. Given that, the findings of the current study can contribute in the following ways. Should the findings reveal that only some students engage in OCB, then efforts must be intensified at promoting and enhancing the enactment of OCB among students. Also, given the importance of OCB in influencing students' future success, educators should then encourage those students who have yet to do so to begin engaging in OCB, and those who already have to sharpen these skills.

The framework of this paper is as follows. We first discuss some issues pertaining to OCB conceptualizations in the international context, highlighting the fact that OCB remains an elusive

concept across samples and cultural settings. This is followed by a brief discussion on OCB studies in organizational settings, contrasting them with those in the academic context so as to elucidate the research gaps prevalent in the OCB literature. Against this backdrop, we present the research methods, analyses, and findings of our study. Finally, we offer some suggestions for future research in light of the potential limitations of our study.

Organizational Citizenship Behavior: Conceptualization Issues

According to its proponents (Organ 1990), organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) is “those organizationally beneficial behaviors and gestures that can neither be enforced on the basis of formal role obligations nor elicited by the contractual guarantee of recompense.” It is extra-role behavior that is voluntarily performed “above and beyond the call of duty” (Barksdale and Werner 2001). In other words, it extends beyond in-role behavior (IRB) of which is expected and required as part of one's job responsibilities. It has been empirically demonstrated that OCB is distinguishable from IRB and other forms of employee behavior (Barksdale and Werner 2001).

Researchers in the U.S. have proposed variations of OCB in terms of conceptualization and measurement. Podsakoff et al. (2000) note that about 30 forms of citizenship behavior have

been developed, and they can be generally categorized as: (1) helping behavior, (2) sportsmanship, (3) organizational loyalty, (4) organizational compliance, (5) individual initiative, (6) civic virtue, and (7) self-development (Lo and Ramayah 2009). Nevertheless, the concept of OCB is more commonly viewed as comprising five dimensions, namely: (1) altruism, (2) courtesy, (3) conscientiousness, (4) sportsmanship, and (5) civic-virtue (e.g., MacKenzie et al. 1991; MacKenzie, Podsakoff and Fetter 1993; Organ 1990; Schnake and Dumler 2003). *Altruism* refers to voluntary behavior that helps other organizational members. *Courtesy* represents behavior that prevents problems

from occurring. *Civic virtue* reflects political organizational participation. *Sportsmanship* characterizes behavior that avoids complaining and/or aggravating unpleasant situations. Finally, *conscientiousness* refers to behavior that goes beyond minimal role requirements and expectations. In contrast to altruism that stands to benefit the individual at whom help is directed, the effects of conscientiousness are more encompassing (Organ 1988). It should be noted here that Allison et al. (2001) propose and validate a similar five-dimensional OCB scale to better reflect OCB enactment in the business education setting. Table 1 provides sample questions from this scale.

Table 1. Sample Questionnaire Items

Variable	Sample Questionnaire item	Source
Altruism	S(he) willingly gives of his/her time to help other students who have school-problems related	Allison et al. (2001)
Courtesy	S(he) is mindful of how his/her behavior affects other students.	Allison et al. (2001)
Civic-virtue	S(he) attends and actively participates in school meetings.	Allison et al. (2001)
*Sportsmanship	S(he) always finds fault with what the university/school is doing. (*item is negatively worded)	Allison et al. (2001)
Conscientiousness	S(he) turns in homework, projects, reports, etc. earlier than is required.	Allison et al. (2001)

Previous OCB research in other parts of the world has similarly shown an invariance of specific OCB measures across samples and cultural settings. Lievens and Anseel (2004), for instance, report that the forms of OCB predominantly studied in the U.S. seem to hold relatively well in a Dutch-speaking context although there are some differences. The researchers used a Dutch translation of the OCB measure of Konovsky and Organ (1996). A recent study by Lo and Ramayah (2009) to determine the applicability of Organ's (1988) OCB measure to the Malaysian context could only establish a four-factor construct comprised of civic-virtue, conscientiousness, altruism, and courtesy. Meanwhile, another Malaysian study (Khalid et al. 2009) using Podsakoff and MacKenzie's (1994) five-dimension scale reveals a new dimension of OCB, known as *patience*, alongside four more common dimensions—helping behavior, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, and civic virtue. In a disability study, Ang (2004) finds that the supervisors sampled have a simpler conceptualization of their subordinates' OCB enactment gauged using a modified 15-item measurement from the 24-item Organizational Citizenship Behavior Scale by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, and Fetter (1990). Specifically, only two dimensions of OCB emerge from the data, namely: (1) *meritorious OCB* (containing sportsmanship and conscientiousness items) and (2) *civic-virtuous OCB* (containing civic-virtue items).

Whether they were conducted in the West or elsewhere, these previous studies evidently show a lack of consensus on the dimensionality of OCB. However, this observation is not surprising as some authors (e.g., Kidder and McLean Parks 2001; Van Dyne et al. 1995) have posited that many conceptualizations of OCB are possible across persons, occupations, and tenures in organizations.

At this point of time, it is worth noting that a considerable number of OCB studies have tended to label OCB as a multidimensional construct. According to Law, Wong, and Mobley (1998), however, a construct can only be defined as multidimensional when it consists of a number of interrelated attributes or dimensions and exists in multidimensional domains. The four-dimensional construct of LMX known as LMX-Multidimensional measure (LMX-MDM) (Liden and Maslyn 1998) is a good case. Although the scale was originally developed to capture four distinct dimensions of LMX (i.e., affect, professional respect, loyalty, and contribution), its proponents have suggested that these dimensions fall under a second-order factor, thereby making the scale suitable for overall LMX as well as LMX dimensions (Erdogan et al. 2004).

On the contrary, the proponents of OCB (e.g., MacKenzie et al. 1993; Organ 1988; Podsakoff and MacKenzie 1994) have neither clarified nor classified the relations between the overall construct and its dimensions. Hence, such constructs are considered not

well developed and as such, "...one cannot derive the overall construct from its dimensions and can only conduct research at the dimensional level..." (Law et al. 1998). The aforementioned underscores an important point, which is that the dimensionality of OCB remains elusive and that this concept warrants further investigations across different samples and cultural contexts in future research.

Organizational Citizenship Behavior and Academic Success

Since its introduction around two decades ago by Bateman and Organ (1983), the area of OCB has commanded a great deal of attention that in turn resulted in the proliferation of research and conceptual development on the topic (e.g., MacKenzie et al. 1991; Organ 1988, 1997). In fact, much of the current knowledge on OCB comes from the contributions of Organ and colleagues in the past decade or so. These past OCB studies too have largely used Western samples. It is only recently that Malaysian researchers (e.g., Ishak 2005; Khalid 2006; Khalid et al. 2009; Khalid et al. 2010; Lo and Ramayah 2009; Nasurdin 2000; Nasurdin et al. 2003) have begun examining the topic of OCB more closely. For instance, in investigating the links among OCB, turnover intentions, and absenteeism among hotel employees, Khalid (2006) finds that OCB dimensions differently predict these two forms of withdrawal behaviors. Similarly,

Khalid et al. (2009) report a significant relationship between OCB and turnover intention across gender. Ang (2004) finds that subordinates' enactment of civic-virtuous OCB results in higher promotion ratings.

While the amount of empirical work on the antecedents of OCB and its impacts on organizational outcomes has been substantial, researchers have only recently begun investigating the consequences of OCB on individual outcomes. Past studies in organizational settings have provided substantial evidence that OCB enactment does indeed bring a positive impact on a number of individual work outcomes (Podsakoff et al. 2000). Among these are favorable performance evaluations and the attainments of organizational rewards that include pay raises and promotions (Allen and Rush 1998; Ang 2004; MacKenzie et al. 1991; Podsakoff and MacKenzie 1994). Moreover, it has been found that as employees advance to a higher level of organizational responsibility and stature, engaging in OCB becomes more important (MacKenzie et al. 1999). It follows that OCB may prove instrumental to the attainment of an individual's career goals. Perhaps more importantly, previous studies (e.g., Podsakoff et al. 2000) that compared the effects of OCB (extra-role) with in-role performance have demonstrated that the performance of OCB by employees has an equivalent, if not greater, impact on their performance ratings. Various studies have also provided evidence that managers not only consider OCB

when evaluating performance, but also frequently reward it (e.g., Borman and Motowidlo 1997; Krilowicz and Lowery 1996). These findings collectively underscore how important it is for both educators and students to gain insights into OCB and the critical roles it may play in the students' future career success.

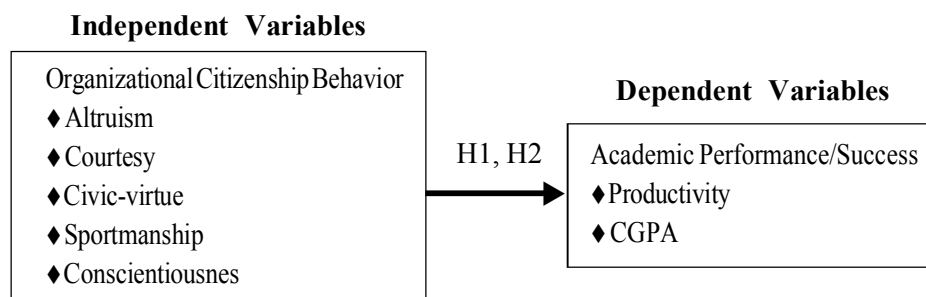
OCB studies have typically adopted the social exchange theory as the theoretical underpinning. Chadwick-Jones (1976) proposes that the social exchange theory "deals with the social process not merely as a matter of rewards and costs but as a matter of reciprocal behaviors, different degrees of reciprocity, unequal power, and social conditions for interpersonal behavior—as complementary in some situations, competitive in others—and in yet others, altruistic."

Similarly, the social exchange theory can be applied to support the role that students' OCB plays in explaining their academic success. When a student engages in discretionary behaviors such as altruism (e.g., helping other students who have school-related problems, helping fellow students

with their school projects, etc.) or conscientiousness (e.g., attending class on time, submitting assignments earlier, etc.), these behaviors can be consequential for their academic performance in terms of CGPA and productivity. For instance, helping and teaching fellow students with school-related problems allow a student to capitalize on the benefits of the learning-by-teaching interactions (Martin 1985, cited in Grzega 2006). The students' own learnings are as such reinforced, resulting in him or her faring better in examinations. Additionally, meritorious behaviors such as attending classes on time and turning in project papers earlier than required are generally rewarded by the instructors/lecturers by grading the students' works favorably. As exemplified by the scenarios above, performing OCB can subsequently influence the students' academic performance.

In the education context, Allison et al. (2001) report significant and positive associations between global OCB and two measures of student performance: (1) productivity and (2) cumulative grade point average (CGPA).

Figure 1. Model Depicting the Hypothesized Relationships in the Study



The study also indicates that certain dimensions of OCB, namely civic-virtue, sportsmanship, and conscientiousness, significantly predict the productivity measure. Meanwhile, only sportsmanship and conscientiousness are found to be positively and significantly related to student CGPA. Given the above literature, it is hypothesized that:

H1: Organizational citizenship behavior is significantly and positively related to student productivity.

H2: Organizational citizenship behavior is significantly and positively related to student CGPA.

Methods

Sample

The population of the current study is drawn from undergraduate students in a public university located in the Federal Territory of Labuan, Malaysia. The university houses two schools: (1) business, and (2) informatics science.

Data were collected through a self-administered questionnaire distributed to second-year students (127 business students and 102 informatics science students). A short briefing on the purposes of the study was given before the researcher personally administered the questionnaire. The students were also told that their participation in the study were voluntary but strongly encouraged. Respondents were also given written and spoken assurances that

Table 2. **Respondents' Profile**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
School		
Business	108	61
Informatics science	69	39
Gender		
Male	59	33.3
Female	118	66.7
Ethnicity		
Malay	71	40.1
Chinese	51	28.8
Indian	11	6.2
Bumiputera (Sabahan & Sarawakian)	44	24.9

Note: N= 177

their individual responses would be held confidential.

A response rate of 77.3 percent was obtained, with a total of 177 usable questionnaires from 108 business students and 69 informatics science students. As shown in Table 2, the majority of the student sample was female (118 or 66.7%) with a median age of 22 (M= 21.9, SD= 0.96). The respondents identified themselves as Malay (71 or 40.1%), Chinese (51 or 28.8%), Bumiputera (indigenous ethnic groups) (44 or 24.9%), and Indian (11 or 6.2%). The average cumulative GPA was 2.71 (SD= 0.36), whereas the average

GPA for the previous semester (term GPA) was 2.70 (SD= 0.47). The average credit hours reported were 51.65 (SD= 10.04).

Measures

To avoid the effect of social-desirability response bias, peer assessment of OCB enactment is preferred to self-rated OCB. Self-serving bias may result in OCB scores clustering at the positive end of scale, a phenomenon termed as the “ceiling effect” by Chattopadhyay (1999). Another rationale for using peer rating is that these peers (who were fellow classmates of the respondents) are assumed to be in a better position to rate the OCB enactment of the student respondents compared to the instructors/lecturers. This is because students may tend to show their good sides to people, particularly those higher in authority (e.g., obeying university rules and regulations, attending and actively participating in school meetings, etc.). Conversely, they are likely to be more candid regarding their behaviors with their own friends/peers (e.g., choosing not to obey university rules and regulations in the absence of professors).

The 17-item scale employed by Allison et al. (2001) in a similar study is accordingly modified to suit Malaysian students’ academic work environment as well as to reflect peer rating. It should be noted that Allison et al (2001) drew the items from scales developed by Podsakoff and MacKenzie (1994) and MacKenzie et al (1993). The final version of the scale for the current

study consists of 15 items with five OCB dimensions (i.e., altruism, courtesy, civic-virtue, sportsmanship, and conscientiousness), having a total of three items each (see Appendix).

Since this scale has been appropriated to the academic setting for the purposes of this study, providing revised definitions of the five OCB dimensions is clearly warranted here. Accordingly, we adapt Allison et al.’s (2001) definitions, whereby *altruism* is seen as voluntary helping behavior that includes helping fellow students with school-related problems such as completing an assignment or writing a report. *Courtesy* is defined as behavior that tries to prevent problems with others such as being mindful about one’s own behavior that would affect other people. Volunteering help to organize or participate in school activities such as campus social events, sports events, and club/school meetings depicts *civic-virtuous* behavior. *Sportsmanship* represents behavior that includes refraining from complaining about trivial matters such as classroom equipment malfunctions or finding faults with what the university/school is doing. *Conscientiousness*, on the other hand, includes attending classes on time, submitting assignments early, and obeying university rules and regulations.

Following Allison et al. (2001), two measures of student academic performance/success are used, which are productivity and CGPA. Productivity is computed as the product of a student’s course load (assessed in credit

hours) and term GPA from the previous semester. Allison et al. (2001) adopted this measure of productivity as an estimate of performance that would include both quantity and quality characteristics of standard measures of organizational performance.

Preliminary Analysis

To verify the discriminant validity of the OCB instrument in this study, a factor analysis is performed on all 15 items. No clear factor emerges initially, and as such a specified factor analysis using a varimax rotation to extract three clean factors is resorted to. The decision to extract three factors is based on the examination of the scree plot. The first factor consists of three altruism items (one item is eventually dropped due to high cross loadings) and three courtesy items. This factor is accordingly named *Consideration* since altruistic and courteous behaviors are likely to be performed out of thoughtful considerations for the needs and interests of other people.

All items for the civic-virtue and sportsmanship dimensions load on the appropriate, a priori factors. Civic-virtue items make up the second factor, and the third factor consists of all sportsmanship items. However, all conscientiousness items have to be dropped from the final scale due to high cross

loadings. We can only speculate that this dimension is plausibly not pertinent among the students sampled. Table 3 provides the details of the factor structure.

With eigenvalues exceeding 1.0, the three-factor solution accounts for a total of 44.71 percent of the variance; factor I contributes 16.46 percent, factor II 15.89 percent, and eventually factor III 12.36 percent. Factor loadings are acceptable with the highest of 0.75 and the lowest of 0.51.

The internal reliability of this scale is then examined. We find that Cronbach's values fall marginally on the recommended threshold of .60 (Nunnally and Bernstein 1994; Sekaran 2003). However, it can be argued that low Cronbach's values (e.g., .5) are quite common for scales having less than 10 items (Pallant 2001). In addition, since the OCB scale used in this study has less than 10 items in each dimension, this finding is acceptable. Specifically, factor I which has five items yields a Cronbach's value of .65. However, courtesy item 3 is subsequently dropped to give a higher Cronbach's value of .67. Factors II and III show Cronbach's values of .59 and .61, respectively. Table 4 provides the detailed statistics. Each dimension of the OCB scale is scored by taking the average rating of its component items.

Table 3. **Organizational Citizenship Behavior: Rotated Factors, Item loadings, and Reliabilities**

Items	Factors		
	I	II	III
Factor I: Consideration			
AL3: He/she is always ready to lend a helping hand to those around him/her.	0.67	0.26	0.27
CR2: He/she takes steps to try to prevent problems with other students in the class.	0.67	0.14	-0.05
AL2: He/she is willing to take time out of his/her own busy schedule to help other students with their schoolwork or projects.	0.65	0.37	0.09
CR1: He/she is mindful of how his/her behavior affects other students.	0.54	-0.05	0.07
CR3: He/she does not abuse the rights of other students.	0.51	-0.21	0.24
Factor II: Civic-virtue			
CV2: He/she attends and actively participates in school meetings.	0.06	0.69	0.13
CV1: He/she attends special classes, other meetings, or campus social events that students are encouraged but not required to attend.	0.03	0.67	-0.13
CV3: He/she reads and keeps up with university announcements, memos, and so on.	0.07	0.67	0.17
Factor III: Sportsmanship			
SP1: He/she always finds fault with what the university/school is doing.	0.14	0.20	0.75
SP2: He/she always focuses on what is wrong with his/her situation rather than the positive side of it.	-0.11	-0.03	0.74
SP3: He/she uses a lot of time complaining about trivial matters.	0.28	0.07	.64
Eigenvalue	3.51	1.80	1.39
Variance (%) (Total: 44.71%)	16.49	15.89	12.36
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin MSA		0.74	
Bartlett's test of sphericity		512.676**	
Reliability (Cronbach's alpha)	0.65	0.59	0.61

Note: $N=177$; ** $p<0.01$; Items are grouped for presentation purpose; Underlined loadings indicate the inclusion of those items in the factor; AL = Altruism; CR = Courtesy; CV = Civic-virtue; SP = Sportsmanship; Item CR3 in Factor I was subsequently dropped to increase Cronbach's alpha value to .67.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics, Zero-order Correlations and Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients

Factors	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Predictor variables</i>							
1 Consideration	3.69	0.57	(0.67)				
2 Civic-virtue	3.45	0.71	0.33**	(.59)			
3 Sportsmanship	30.23	0.77	0.26**	0.15*	(.61)		
<i>Criterion Variables</i>							
4 Productivity	143.49	50.15	0.24**	0.07	0.02	(SIM)	
5 CGPA 2.71	0.36	0.29**	0.07	0.02	0.86**	(SIM)	
No. of items	-	-	4	3	3	-	1

Note: N=177; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; SIM=Single item measure; OCB=Organizational citizenship behavior; CGPA=Cumulative grade point average.

Hypotheses Testings and Findings

Consistent with Allison et al.'s (2001) study, the current study finds that Malaysian students similarly engage in OCB. Table 4 shows that the enactment of OCB among these students is moderately high, with the means of the three dimensions of OCB exceeding the scale midpoint of three on the 5-point scale. Interestingly, an independent-samples t-test finds that while the business students and informatics science students do not vary with respect to their enactment of the consideration and civic-virtue dimensions, there is a significant difference in the dimension of sportsmanship ($t=0.245$; $p=0.015$). Specifically, business students are perceived by their peers to exhibit a higher level of sportsmanship ($M= 3.34$; $SD= 0.75$) when

compared to their counterparts in the informatics science school ($M= 3.05$; $SD=0.77$). This finding is enlightening such that it supports a general observation among the academic staff of this university that the business school's students are generally more "docile" and "passive" in comparison to their counterparts in the informatics science school who are known to be more vocal in the class.

To test the hypothesized relationships, we conduct separate regression analyses for both measures of student performance (assessed as productivity and CGPA). It should be noted that we do not examine the effect of global OCB on these measures as did Allison and colleagues (2001) in their study since it has been cautioned that we should not obtain the OCB global construct from its dimensions (Law et al. 1998). This is because the proponents

of OCB (e.g., MacKenzie et al. 1993; Organ 1988; Podsakoff and MacKenzie 1994) have neither clarified nor classified the relations between the overall construct and its dimensions, and as such research can only be conducted at the dimensional level (Law et al. 1998).

Given that the factor analysis on our data reveals a three-factor solution, the OCB construct is accordingly segregated into three dimensions so that the OCB-performance relationship can be examined more closely. These dimensions are then entered into the model. Table 5 tabulates the regression results. As shown in the table, consideration ($\beta = 0.32$; $p = 0.000$) has an association with the first measure of

student performance, i.e., productivity. Again, this dimension ($\beta = 0.32$; $p = 0.000$) is found to significantly and positively predict student CGPA, the second measure of student performance.

The results demonstrate that only the consideration dimension appears to significantly and positively predict both measures of student performance. These results, to some extent, substantiate previous studies which report that the enactment of OCB has demonstrable benefits not only in organizational settings (e.g., Podsakoff et al. 2000) but also in the academic context (e.g., Allison et al. 2001). That being said, the low R^2 values for the models should be noted.

Table 5. Hierarchical Regression Results for the Relationships between OCB Dimensions, Productivity, and CGPA

Criterion Variables	Productivity		CGPA	
	Std. Beta	t-value	Std. Beta	t-value
<i>Predictor variables</i>				
OCB dimensions				
Consideration	0.32**	3.97	0.32**	40.03
Civic-virtue	0.01	-0.03	-0.03	-0.38
Sportsmanship	-0.07	-0.96	0.01	0.09
R^2	0.10	0.10		
Adjusted	0.08	0.08		
R^2F	60.08**	60.13**		

Note: $N = 177$; ** $p < 0.01$; OCB = Organizational citizenship behavior.

Discussion

As noted previously, past studies have consistently reported that organizational OCB is correlated with a number of important outcomes. Interestingly, the present study indicates that, to some extent, the performance of OCB and its positive consequences similarly exist in the academic setting. Since there is little research done on the role of OCB in influencing academic success, the comparison of our findings with those in the relevant literature is limited. Nevertheless, we can still posit that our findings are somewhat consistent with that of Allison et al. (2001). Specifically, we find that not only do the majority of Malaysian students engage in OCB as do their Western counterparts in Allison et al.'s (2001) study, but they also stand to enjoy the benefits of doing so with respect to enhanced academic performance. The OCB dimension of consideration is found to contribute to both student productivity and CGPA. However, the associations between the other two OCB dimensions, namely civic virtue and sportsmanship, and academic success could not be established in this study.

These findings could be attributed to the fact that altruism and courtesy, which make up the consideration dimension, do take place in the Malaysian context. The Malaysian society has been known to be one that embraces collectivistic and courteous behaviors (Abdullah 1992; 1996). Hence, when students engage in altruistic and

courteous acts, such as showing thoughtful and considerate gestures towards their peers and lecturers to prevent problems from occurring, these displays of behaviors seem to resonate well with the Malaysian values and as such are viewed as merits. Therefore, it is highly plausible that students who demonstrate high levels of consideration for others reap the benefits of doing so in terms of their academic performance.

The non-significant relationships among civic virtue, sportsmanship, and student performance could be possibly due to the fact that the Malaysian students relatively engage less in these dimensions of OCB (see Table 4), and as such the benefits cannot be fully tapped.

As mentioned earlier, the enactment of OCB becomes more critical as employees advance in organizational responsibilities and statuses. Hence, it makes a good sense to give students who are on the threshold of entering the workforce an early head start in developing and honing these skills. Given that, we concur with Allison et al.'s (2001) suggestion that the OCB enactment among university students should be endorsed and supported in much the same way as we encourage our students to practice good time management or effective studying skills with the aim of enhancing their academic success. There are several practical suggestions for achieving this in the context of Malaysian higher education, including: (1) conducting seminars

or mini-courses on OCB; (2) incorporating the OCB in classes/team activities; (3) providing online (or in-class) assessments of OCB (self-rating, peer-rating, as well as instructor-rating) so as to raise awareness of the OCB engagement as well as to indicate areas for improvements; and (4) incorporating the components of OCB into course evaluations. In sum, we hope that the findings of our study may encourage educators and students alike to engage in OCB for its short-term academic benefits as well as its more long-term career impacts.

Limitations and Future Research

This study merely draws sample from a university in Malaysia. Thus, the issue of generalizing the findings to other universities has to be considered. Also, future research should be conducted with respondents from other disciplines of study to see if the link between OCB and academic performance varies across various academic disciplines. Also, OCB ratings could be obtained from instructors/lecturers besides peers/fellow students for validation and comparison purposes. It should be added that since students' OCBs are perceptual measures (the same rule applies to organizational settings), this poses an issue of subjectivity. This is perhaps another limitation of our study. Finally, a longitudinal study would perhaps offer a closer examination of the role of OCB in influencing students' academic performance from

the beginning until the end of their academic pursuits.

Conclusion

Research on OCB has produced some interesting insights into organizational settings such that OCB has a strong, positive impact on employee performance evaluations and general career success. To some extent, this study adds to the stream of research by indicating that in the Malaysian educational environment, one OCB dimension, which is consideration, has a positive and significant influence on Malaysian university students' academic performance. Specifically, we have established the link between consideration OCB and student academic success just as management researchers have correlated the OCB to individual success in the organizational settings. Hence, it is imperative to make educators and students aware of these influences.

Educators' role would be one that endorses and supports the use of these behaviors by their students, whereas the students themselves should improve these skills to enhance their success in their impending professional careers. Equally noteworthy is that more studies to investigate the role of OCB in predicting academic success should be conducted such that the OCB-academic success relationship can be further explored and established given the OCB's short-term academic benefits as well as its more long-term career impacts.

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Appendix

OCB Scale for Student Peer Rating

He/she...

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Altruism | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. willingly gives of his/her time to help other students who have school-related problems.2. is willing to take time out of his/her own busy schedule to help other students with their schoolwork or projects.3. is always ready to lend a helping hand to those around him/her. |
| Courtesy | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. is mindful of how his/her behavior affects other students.2. takes steps to try to prevent problems with other students in the class.3. does not abuse the rights of other students. |
| Civic-virtue | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. attends special classes, other meetings, or campus social events that students are encouraged but not required to attend.2. attends and actively participates in school meetings.3. reads and keeps up with university announcements, memos, and so on. |
| Sportsmanship | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. always finds fault with what the university/school is doing.2. always focuses on what is wrong with his/her situation rather than the positive side of it.3. uses a lot of time complaining about trivial matters. |
| Conscientiousness | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. turns in homework, projects, reports, etc. earlier than is required.2. returns phone calls from other students/faculty and respond to other messages and requests for information quickly.3. obeys university rules and regulations even when no one is watching. |

Note: Scale is adapted from Allison et al.'s (2001) study; **negatively** worded items in the sportsmanship dimension are accordingly reverse-coded.