

Perceived Procedural Justice and Organizational Citizenship Behavior: Evidence from a Security Organization

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Abstract : Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) is voluntary employee behavior that contributes to the organization beyond formal job requirements. It can take different forms, such as helping teammates (OCB toward individuals; hence, OCB-I), or staying after hours to attend a task force (OCB toward the organization; hence, OCB-O). Generally, OCB contributes substantially to organizational climate, goals, productivity, and resilience, so organizations need to understand what encourages it. This is particularly challenging in security organizations. Security work is characterized by high levels of stress and burnout, which is detrimental to OCB, and security organizational design emphasizes formal rules and clear hierarchies, leaving employees with less freedom for voluntary behavior. The current research explored the role of Perceived Procedural Justice (PPJ) in enhancing OCB in a security organization. PPJ refers to how fair decision-making processes are perceived to be. It involves the sense that decision makers are objective, attentive to everyone's interests, respectful in their communications and participatory - allowing individuals a voice in decision processes. Justice perceptions affect motivation, and it was specifically suggested that PPJ creates an attachment to one's organization and personal interest in its success. Accordingly, PPJ had been associated with OCB, but hardly any research tested their association with security organizations. The current research was conducted among prison guards in the Israel Prison Service, to test a correlational and a causal association between PPJ and OCB. It differentiated between perceptions of direct commander procedural justice (CPJ), and perceptions of organization procedural justice (OPJ), hypothesizing that CPJ would relate to OCB-I, while OPJ would relate to OCB-O. In the first study, 336 prison guards (305 male) from 10 different prisons responded to questionnaires measuring their own CPJ, OPJ, OCB-I, and OCB-O. Hierarchical linear regression analyses indicated the significance of commander procedural justice (CPJ): It associated with OCB-I and also associated with OPJ, which, in turn, associated with OCB-O. The second study tested CPJ's causal effects on prison guards' OCB-I and OCB-O; 311 prison guards (275 male) from 14 different prisons read scenarios that described either high or low CPJ, and then evaluated the likelihood of that commander's prison guards performing OCB-I and OCB-O. In this study, CPJ enhanced OCB-O directly. It also contributed to OCB-I, indirectly: CPJ enhanced the motivation for collaboration with the commander, which respondents also evaluated after reading scenarios. Collaboration, in turn, associated with OCB-I. The studies demonstrate that procedural justice, especially commander's PJ, promotes OCB in security work environments. This is important because extraordinary teamwork and motivation are needed to deal with emergency situations and with delicate security challenges. Following the studies, the Israel Prison Service implemented personal procedural justice training for commanders and unit level programs for procedurally just decision processes. From a theoretical perspective, the studies extend the knowledge on PPJ and OCB to security work environments and contribute evidence on PPJ's causal effects. They also call for further research, to understand the mechanisms through which different types of PPJ affect different types of OCB.

Keywords : organizational citizenship behavior, perceived procedural justice, prison guards, security organizations

Conference Title : ICIOP 2018 : International Conference on Industrial and Organizational Psychology

Conference Location : Vienna, Austria

Conference Dates : June 14-15, 2018