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Organizational Citizenship Behaviours in For-Profit, Public And Nonprofit Organizations*

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Abstract

Organizational citizenship behaviours (OCBs) are behaviours that go beyond the formal role and are organizationally functional. Research results point to the existence of relationships between OCBs and factors connected with job characteristics and the functioning of the organization. But will organizations of different types: for-profit, nonprofit and public show different levels of OCBs? Literature review conducted to this end found that so far this has only been examined for for-profit and public entities, leaving out nonprofits (NPOs). The purpose of the article is to determine whether there are differences in the level of OCBs between for-profit, public and nonprofit organizations. A cross-sectoral study (a survey) was conducted in 2022. The sample consisted of employees representing three types of organizations. It was conducted using the OCB scale developed by Spector. It was found out that for-profit, public and nonprofit organizations show different levels of OCBs. The highest level of OCB-P (toward people in the organization) was reported in NPOs, while the highest level of OCB-O (toward organization) - in public entities.

Keywords: Organizational Citizenship Behaviours; for-profits; public organizations; nonprofits

Introduction

Organizational citizenship behaviours (OCBs) are behaviours that support the psychological and social context of work (Organ, 1997). Research results point to the existence of relationships between OCBs and factors related to job characteristics and the functioning of the organization (Podsakoff et al., 1996a, 1996b; Turnipseed, Murkison, 1996; Moorman et al., 1998; Kim et al., 2013). But will organizations representing different sectors: for-profit, public and nonprofit show different levels of OCBs? Literature review conducted to this end found that this variable has only been tested for for-profit and public entities, leaving out nonprofits (Glińska- Neweś, Szostek, 2018; Sharma et al., 2011).

The subject of the study was the organizational citizenship behaviour as manifested by the employees of different types of organizations. The purpose of the article is to determine whether there are differences in the level of OCBs between for-profit, public and nonprofit organizations. The research hypotheses were formulated as follows: H_1: The level of OCB-O in nonprofits is higher than in for-profits. H_2: The level of OCB-O in nonprofits is higher than in public organizations. H_3: The level of OCB-P in nonprofits is higher than in for-profits. H_4: The level of OCB-P in nonprofits is higher than in public organizations. To achieve the research purpose and to verify the hypotheses, a survey study was conducted.

The article is divided into 6 sections. The introduction offers a synthetic presentation of the research gap and the purpose of the article. Subsequently, the results of literature review regarding OCBs and differences between for-profit, public and nonprofit organizations were outlined. The following sections contain a description of the methodology of our own research and the obtained results (in relation to the findings of other authors). The conclusion

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provides a general summary of the article, its results and findings, research limitations and suggestions for future studies.

Literature review

Organizational Citizenship Behaviours

In the literature there are several concepts encapsulating behaviours aimed at helping colleagues or supporting the organization as a whole. In addition to Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (Bateman, Organ, 1983; Smith et al., 1983; Organ, 1988; Organ, Konovsky, 1989), they include: Prosocial Organizational Behaviour (Brief, Motowidlo, 1986), Whistle-Blowing (Dozier, Miceli, 1985), Extra-Role Behaviour (Van Dyne et al., 1995), Organizational Spontaneity (George, Brief, 1992), Contextual Performance (Borman, Motowidlo, 1997), Citizenship Performance (Borman et al., 2001).

Initially, OCB was defined using two dimensions, namely that (Bateman, Organ, 1983; Smith et al., 1983; Organ, 1988; Organ, Konovsky, 1989): (1) it goes beyond the requirements of the role (is extra-role), (2) it is organizationally functional. According to Organ (1988), OCB is an individual behaviour that is discretionary, not explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization. OCB is perceived as individual behaviour that nonetheless has a cumulative effect on the performance of employees, work teams and the organization as a whole. However, the discretionary aspect of the definition proposed by Organ raised doubts among researchers. It was pointed out that citizenship behaviour may be expected by supervisors and co-workers, and therefore formally recognized and rewarded. Some studies found that this type of behaviour is taken into account by managers, e.g. in the processes of recruitment (Podsakoff et al., 2011) and employee evaluation (MacKenzie et al., 1993). Morrison (1994), meanwhile, found that the boundary between in-role and extra-role behaviour is not clear and that OCB is a function of how employees define their job responsibilities.

Graham (1991; cf. Van Dyne et al., 1994) use the 'political heritage of citizenship' as a departure point and put forward a conceptualization of organizational citizenship that includes traditional in-role job performance behaviours, organizationally functional extra-role behaviours, and political behaviours. In other words, organizational citizenship behaviour is an enlarged form of job performance (and is not only extra-role). Van Dyne et al. (1995), however, recognize that the distinction between in-role and extra-role behaviours has an important theoretical value (despite the application difficulties to precisely distinguish between the two forms) and classify OCBs as affiliative and promotive extra-role behaviours.

Organ (1997) would later modify his original definition to state that OCB supports the social and psychological environment in which task performance takes place. The definition of OCB has thus evolved: from the original idea that it was somehow outside of the job and not recognized or rewarded, towards more modern definitions that view OCB as a behaviour that supports the organizational context (Spector, Fox, 2010). As observed by LePine et al. (2002; cf. Organ, Ryan, 1995) this transition brought the definition of OCB into line with that of contextual performance proposed by Borman and Motowidlo (1997).

The literature not only defines OCBs, but also identifies the different dimensions of these behaviours. Smith et al. (1983) mention to this end altruism and generalized compliance. Organ (1988), for his part, lists five dimensions: altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, and civic virtue. Graham (1991) – as already mentioned – referencing political sciences, distinguishes: organizational loyalty, organizational obedience, organizational participation. In many publications, the point of reference is the typology proposed by Podsakoff et al. (2000) who, on the basis of literature review, identified the following dimensions: helping behaviour, sportsmanship, organizational loyalty, organizational compliance, individual initiative, civic virtue, self-development. The Citizenship Performance taxonomy proposed by Borman et al. (2001): personnel support (helping, cooperating, courtesy, motivating), organizational support (representing, loyalty, compliance), conscientious initiative (persistence, initiative, self-development). Some researchers also deliberately limit the number of OCB dimensions in their typologies. Van Dyne et al. (1995; cf.: Podsakoff et al., 2013; MacKenzie et al., 2011) propose a division into 'Affiliation-Oriented Behaviours' and 'Challenge-Oriented Behaviours'. Meanwhile, Williams and Anderson (1991) refer to behaviours that: benefit the organization in general (OCBO) and immediately benefit specific individuals and indirectly through this means contribute to the organization (OCBI).

Differences between for-profit, public and nonprofit organizations

Nonprofits represent different institutional orders. Moore (2000) found that the differences between these organizations depend on two key variables: defining source of revenues and the value produced by organizations. Public organizations implement a politically mandated mission, meet the needs of citizens and their aspirations, and the source of their income is taxes. For- profits provide financial returns to shareholders and value in use to buyers, and the source of their income is proceeds from sales. Lastly, NPOs strive after social purposes and the satisfaction of donors, and they rely on charitable contributions for their funding. There are also other significant institutional disparities between organizations representing the three sectors. They were presented in the formula of 'Ideal types', e.g. by Anheier (2005) (Table 1).

Table 1: Ideal – typical comparison of nonprofits, government agencies, and businesses

	Business firm	**Government agency**	**Nonprofit (member serving and public serving)**
Objective function	Profit maximization	Social welfare maximization	Member, client group benefit maximization
Outputs	Private goods	Public/collective goods	Club, collective and private goods
Distribution criteria	Exchange	Equity	Solidarity
External orientation	External, indiscriminate (customers)	External, indiscriminate (public, citizens)	Internal and external, discriminate (members and target client groups)
Goals	Specific, clear	Complex, ambiguous	Complex, diffuse, clear
Structure	Formal	Formal	Informal, formal
Accountability and control	Owners/shareholders	Voters through elected officials	Members, board
Decision-making	Hierarchical	Indirect: democratic Direct: hierarchical	Democratic, hierarchical
Participants	Quasi-voluntary (economic needs)	Automatic/coercive	Voluntary/ quasi-voluntary
Motivation	Material	Purposive	Solidary/purposive
Resourcing	Commercial	Coercive (taxation)	Donative/ commercial
Size	Large	Large	Small, medium

Source: Anheier, 2005, p.184

The considerations presented are supplemented by the results of available comparative empirical research to further highlight the differences between the three types of organizations, e.g. in the following areas:

1. *Managers*. Comparative research has shown that managers of the three types of organizations are marked by different career motivations (Lee, Wilkins, 2011) and managerial sorting (LeRoux, Feeney, 2013). Differences are also observed in terms of values and values congruence (Miller-Stevens et al., 2015; Miller-Stevens et al. 2018).
2. *Personnel*. Studies have also shown differences between employees, including in terms of: values (Mirvis, 1992; Lyons et al., 2006; Miller-Stevens et al., 2015), motivations (De Cooman et al., 2011), job attitudes (e.g. job satisfaction, organizational commitment, loyalty social support) (Goulet, Frank, 2002; Borzaga, Tortia, 2006; Lyons et al., 2006; Hamann, Foster, 2014; Stater, Stater, 2019). NPOs base their activities on voluntary work and differences are reported regarding disposition (Elshaug, Metzer, 2001; Mitani, 2014) and attitudes (Laczo, Hanish, 1999; Pearce, 1993; cf. Liao-Troth, 2001) between paid and volunteer workers.
3. *Work Organization*. The workplace is shaped differently depending on organization design (Ben-Ner, Ren, 2015) and work practices (Kalleberg et al., 2006; McNamara et al., 2012). In the latter, differences have been observed, e.g. in the use and organization of teamwork (Kalleberg et al., 2006; Benevene et al., 2011; Seiler, Bortnowska, 2020), as well as in the use of flexible work alternatives (McNamara et al., 2012; cf. Matz-Costa, Pitt-Catsouphes, 2010).
4. *Organizational Culture*. The available partial research results allow the conclusions regarding the differences in the organizational culture of the three sectors (Bercea et al., 2019; Sarros et al., 2011; van der Wal et al., 2008; Emanuele, Higgins, 2000). For example, nonprofits scored higher on a socially responsible cultural

orientation than for-profits, whereas for-profits scored higher on a competitive cultural orientation (Sarros et al., 2011). In addition, managerial positions in nonprofits tend to be held by women, which may imply a more feminine dimension of the organizational culture of the NPO sector as compared to for-profits (Claus et al., 2013). Referencing van der Wal et al. (2008), the existence of different value systems in for-profit and public organizations can also be pointed out.

5. *Services*. Differences between the discussed entities in terms of production and quality of services can be indicated as well. Public and nonprofit organizations offer services of similar quality that are superior to those offered by their for-profit counterparts (Amirkhanyan et al., 2008). In Scandinavia, there are differences in the perception of the quality of services and the satisfaction they produce (Trætteberg, Fladmoe, 2020); the same holds true for the co-production between users and employees (professionals) in the production of goods (Larsson et al., 2022).
6. *Image and Reputation*. Comparative studies of the three sectors have found that nonprofit organizations enjoy the friendliest image, while public organizations are perceived as the least competent and have the poorest reputation (Pepermans, Peiffer, 2022). Research on employee image shows that volunteers tend to be perceived in a better light than paid employees, while paid employees are perceived as more competent (Peiffer et al., 2020).

Finally, no comparative studies have been identified between for-profit, public and nonprofit organizations with regard to OCBs. Comparative analyses have only been conducted for public and for-profit organizations (Glińska-Neweś, Szostek, 2018; Sharma et al., 2011). Having said that, the presented differences between the three types of entities prompt an assumption that such differences will be identified.

Methods

The research process consisted of the following stages: literature analysis, research gap identification, formulation of research questions and hypotheses, sample and research tools selection, data collection and analysis, formulation of conclusions, indication of research limitations and future directions.

The cross-sectoral study was conducted in 2022, in Poland's Lubuskie Voivodeship. The sample consisted of employees representing three types of organisations: for-profit, public and nonprofit[1]. The survey included three hundred respondents, a hundred from each type of entity mentioned.

There were more women (60.67%) than men among respondents. The average age of participants in the research was 37.9. Most (34.67%) had less than 3 years of work experience in the current organization, slightly fewer - more than 10 years (33.33%) or between 4 and 10 years (32%).

Most representatives of enterprises and public organizations held executive positions (79.5%). More than a third (37.5%) were employed in large entities, more than a quarter (25.5%) – in medium-sized entities. The fewest number worked in small (22.5%) or micro (14.5%) organizations. Most representatives of nonprofit entities were board members (43%). Every fourth (26%) was a paid employee. Members of organizations (19%) and volunteers (12.00%) were less represented. They were mainly employed in associations (79.00%) or foundations (18.00%). More than every third nonprofit representative (38%) worked in an entity with 10 or fewer employees, and slightly fewer respondents - in an organization hiring 11 to 20 (31%) or more than 50 people (22%). Those employed in entities employing from 20 to 49 people were the least numerous (9%).

NPOs acting in the area of social and humanitarian aid, rescue (50%) and/or health care (33%) were the most numerous. There were relatively many representatives of entities involved in education and upbringing, R&D activities, scientific research (28%), as well as in sport, tourism, leisure, hobby (26%), local development (22%), culture and arts (18%). Least represented were respondents engaged in environmental protection (9%), support for nonprofit organizations and civic initiatives (8%) and/or religion (3%).

In the course of our own research we used – similarly to e.g. Glińska-Neweś and Szostek (2018) - the twelve-item OCB scale developed by Spector (retrieved from: http://shell.cas.usf.Edu/~pspector/scales/ocbcpage.html, access: 26.01.2018). Respondents were asked to select one of the answers on a five-point scale. Six items concerned behaviours directed toward the organization (OCB-O), and others six – behaviours toward people in the organization (OCB-P).

[1] The sampling was non-random. No list of employees working in organizations of Lubuskie Voivodeship was available.

Data analysis was performed using the Statistica software. The internal consistency was confirmed using standard Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Cronbach, 1951), having assumed for the scale in question the value of 0.804436776[2].

Results

It follows from the research that for both the OCB-O and OCB-P subscales the respondents awarded min. 6 and max. 30 points. The mean score for the OCB-O subscale was 17.83, and for the OCB-P – 17.30 (N=300).

The percentage share of respondents who awarded particular numbers of points is shown in Fig. 1 (OCB-O) and Fig. 2 (OCB-P), respectively.

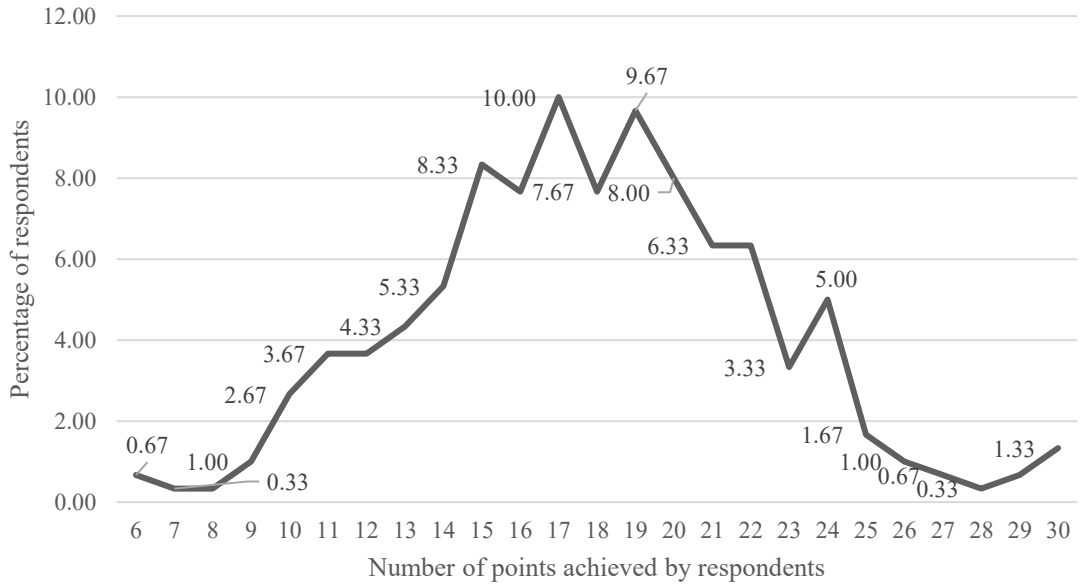


Fig. 1. Share of respondents and points awarded in the OCB-O subscale

Source: own study

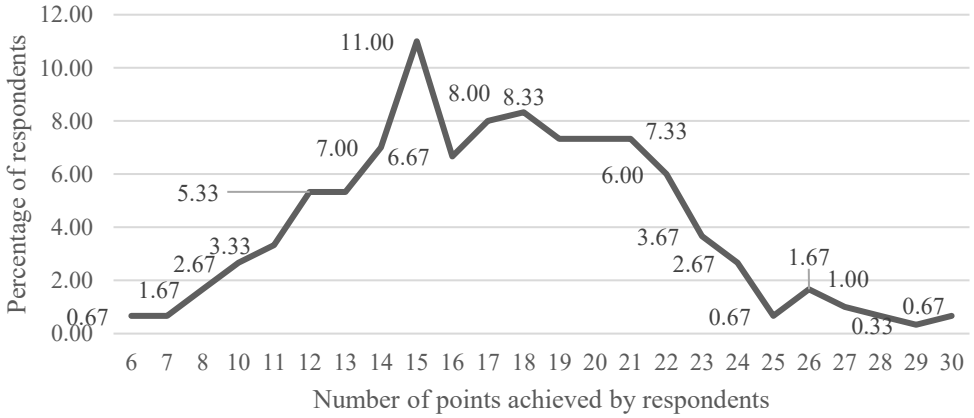


Fig. 2. Share of respondents and points awarded in the OCB-P subscale

Source: own study

[2] The scales forming part of the tool should exhibit a value of the α-Cronbach's coefficient larger than 0.7. Questionnaires whose α-Cronbach's coefficient is smaller than 0.6 should not be used (Brzeziński, 2011).

The average ratings for both subscales in each of the three types of organizations were then compared (Table 2).

Table 2: Minimum, maximum and arithmetic mean values for OCB-O and OCB-P subscales in three types of organisations

OCB	For-profit (N=100)			Public (N=100)			Nonprofit (N=100)		
	Min	Max	Arithmetic mean	Min	Max	Arithmetic mean	Min	Max	Arithmetic mean
OCB-O	8	29	17,02	9	26	17,55	9	29	17,42
OCB-P	6	26	16,46	7	30	17,22	6	30	17,36

Source: own study

Differences between the arithmetic means obtained for both analyzed subscales were not significant, with the lowest value being 16.46 and the highest value being 17.55. The mean values proved slightly higher for the OCB-O subscale for each of the three types of organizations, with the smallest difference having been observed in NPOs. The bottom values were higher for this subscale.

The lowest averages, both in OCB-O and OCB-P, were reported in for-profits (17.02 and 16.46, respectively). In the case of the OCB-O subscale, the highest average rating was recorded in public organizations (17.55). Meanwhile, in nonprofits, the highest arithmetic mean was observed for the OCB-P subscale (17.36).

The number of participant-awarded points in the OCB-O subscale - broken down by the type of organization (Fig. 3), while the corresponding data for the OCB-P subscale is shown in Fig. 4.

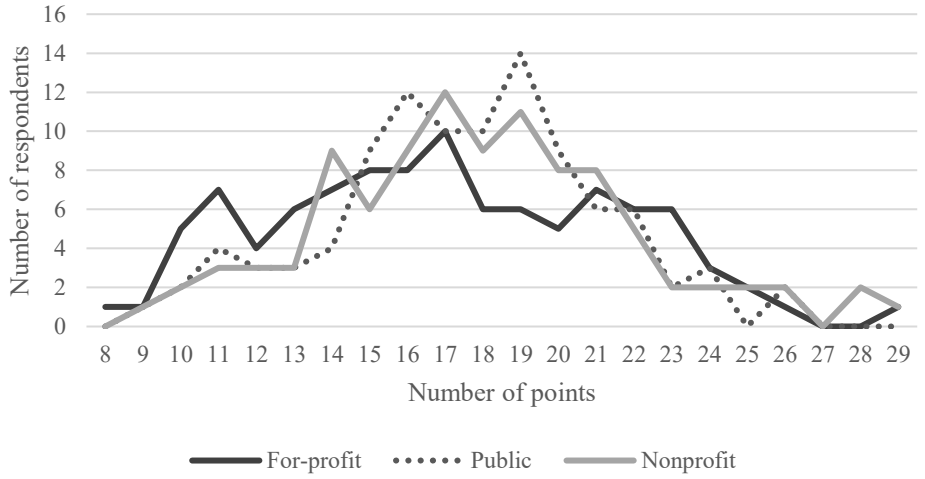


Fig. 3. Number of points awarded by participants in the OCB-O subscale for each type of organization
Source: own study

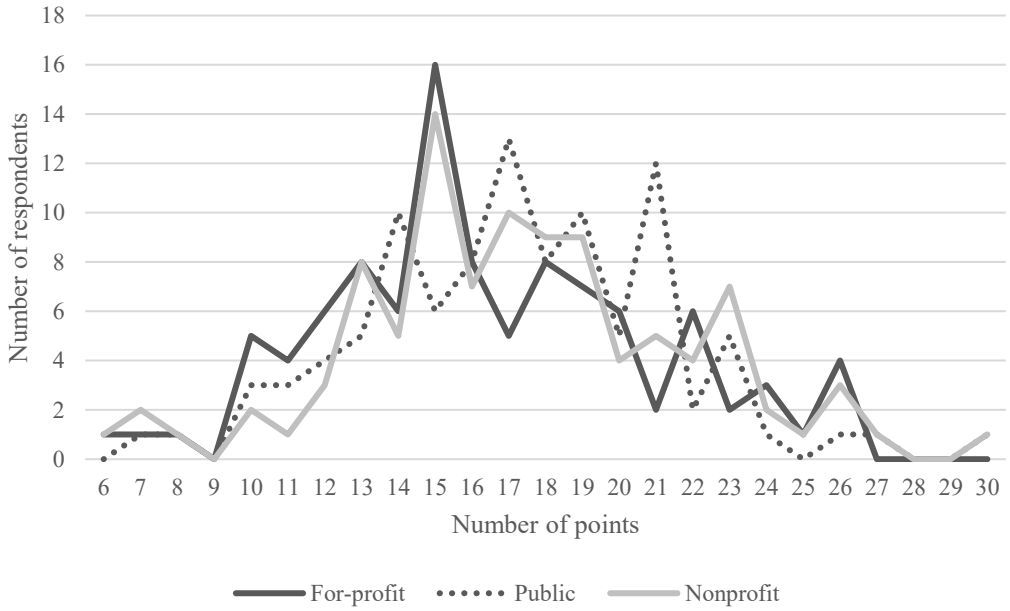


Fig. 4. Number of points awarded by participants in the OCB-P subscale for each type of organization

Source: own study

The basis for confirming the hypotheses H_3 and H_4 was found - the OCB-P rate was the highest in NPOs. On the other hand, the OCB-P rate in nonprofits was higher than in for- profits, but lower than in public organizations. Thus, a basis was established to confirm the hypothesis H_1, but not H_2.

Discussion

The conducted research demonstrated that public organizations had a higher level of OCBs than for-profits. Thus, the obtained results are consistent with the findings of Sharma et al. (2011), although it should be noted that those authors did not specify which tool they used to gauge OCB. When we compare the results of our research with those of Glińska-Neweś and Szostek (2018), who used the same scale, a certain contradiction becomes evident. They found that employees of public organizations engaged in OCBs more often than employees of commercial organizations, but that their OCBs are people-oriented. The results of our research indicate that public organizations outperform for-profits both in terms of OCB-P and OCB-O.

The research endeavored to include NPOs in these comparisons. By comparing OCBs in for-profits and nonprofits, it can be observed that the level of both OCB-P and OCB-O is higher in the latter. Employees of NPOs are more likely than their counterparts in commercial entities to engage in activities aimed at helping their colleagues and supporting the organization as a whole. The higher OCB-P rate can also be assigned to cultural factors. It is necessary to recall that NPOs scored higher on a socially responsible cultural orientation than for-profits, whereas for-profits scored higher on a competitive cultural orientation (Sarros et al., 2011). The organizational culture of NPOs can also be perceived as more feminine (Claus et al., 2013), and therefore more relationship-oriented. Personal factors related to the likeliness to exhibit empathy (Mitani, 2014), extraversion (Elshaug, Metzer, 2001), and job attitudes (Benz, 2005; Mirvis, 2006; Borzaga, Tortia, 2006; Melnik et al., 2013) may play a part as well. Benz (2005) found that NPO employees are more satisfied with their work than those working for commercial enterprises. Similar findings were also arrived at by Mirvis (2006) and Borzaga and Tortia (2006). Melnik et al. (2013) found that overall job satisfaction is strongly linked with individual perceptions of the work environment, and that nonprofit work is associated with greater overall job satisfaction. As we know from previous research (Bateman, Organ, 1983; Smith et al., 1983; Williams, Anderson, 1991; Organ, Ryan, 1995), job satisfaction is positively correlated with OCBs. It may also be of significance that nonprofit staff seem more willing to 'offer work' than personnel at other organizations (Almond, Kendall, 2000).

Having said that, certain ambiguity arises when the three sectors together are considered collectively rather than in pairs. While the highest level of OCB-P is found in NPOs, the highest level of OCB-O is found in public

organizations. Why do employees of public entities report the highest level of OCB-O? We leave this question unanswered, suggesting further verification of and deepened qualitative inquiry into this research problem.

Conclusions

The results of the research demonstrate that for-profit, public and nonprofit organizations are characterized by different levels of OCBs. The highest level of OCB-P was reported in NPOs, while the highest level of OCB-O – in public entities. This means that the basis was found to confirm the hypotheses: H_1, H_3 and H_4, but not H_2.

It is necessary to point out some of the limitations of this research. The study was only quantitative and not qualitative, while the research relied solely on respondents' statements. The sample was selected purposively, which means the findings cannot be generalized, and the study involved only Polish organizations, meaning it was embedded in a specific cultural context that should be accounted for when formulating conclusions. Additionally, the research was not a longitudinal study, but a cross-sectional one. The data was lagged, which does not allow for strong causal inference. Moreover, the use of questionnaire-based research may have triggered a common method bias.

Understanding why OCBs differ between different types of organizations requires more in-depth qualitative studies and the use of techniques based on direct contact, which would help to capture its nuance more thoroughly. Future research using longitudinal data is also recommended. It is also worth continuing research on the differences between for-profit, public and nonprofit organizations in the area of OCBs.

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