



Faculty of Economics and Business

**The Relationship between Affective Commitment, Perceived
Organizational Support and Organizational Citizenship Behavior in
Private Enterprises**

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The Relationship between Affective Commitment, Perceived Organizational Support and Organizational Citizenship Behavior in Private Enterprises

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DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. Except where due acknowledgements have been made, the work is that of the author alone. The thesis has not been accepted for any degree and is not concurrently submitted in candidature of any other degree.

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ABSTRACT

Organisational citizenship behavior (OCB) continues to be a significant and fascinating phenomenon for organisations in the face of swift changes within dynamic business environment. This study examines the factors influencing (OCB) among employees in private high-tech enterprises in Guangzhou, China. Despite being considered a mature concept, not much is known about the associations of perceived organizational support (POS), affective commitment (AC), and OCB in dynamic fast-paced working environment. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the impact of POS and AC on OCB. It also investigates the effect of POS on AC, and the mediating role of AC between POS and OCB. Employing a quantitative research approach, data were collected from a sample of 398 employees. Data analysis, conducted using SPSS version 27, yielded several key findings. First, both POS and AC positively influence OCB; second, POS has a positive effect on AC; and third, AC partially mediates the relationship between POS and OCB. These findings underscore that strengthening POS and fostering AC among employees enhances job satisfaction and motivation but also reduces turnover rates. This aids in talent attraction and retention, boosting organizational competitiveness, and fostering OCB. These insights offer valuable guidance for human resource practitioners and policymakers in designing effective workplace policies. The study concludes that OCB development remains critical to modern private enterprises' growth. Future research is encouraged to explore additional dimensions of OCB and their complex interactions with AC, to expand the sample to other major provinces in China, to conduct qualitative studies focusing on OCB among younger employees, and to employ longitudinal methods for deeper insights.

Keywords: Organizational citizenship behavior, perceived organizational support, affective commitment, private enterprise

***Hubungan Antara Komitmen Afektif, Perjamuan Organisasi yang Dirasakan Dan
Tingkah Laku Kewarganegaraan Organisasi Dalam Perusahaan Swasta***

ABSTRAK

Tingkah laku kewarganegaraan organisasi (OCB) merupakan suatu fenomena yang penting dan memiliki tarikan di dalam organisasi yang berhadapan dengan perubahan pantas dalam persekitaran perniagaan yang dinamik. Kajian ini menyelidiki faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi OCB dalam kalangan pekerja di syarikat teknologi tinggi swasta di Guangzhou, China. Walaupun OCB dianggap sebagai satu konsep yang matang, masih banyak yang tidak diketahui mengenai hubungan antara sokongan organisasi yang dirasakan (POS), komitmen afektif (AC), dan OCB dalam suasana kerja yang pantas dan dinamik. Maka, kajian ini bertujuan untuk meneliti kesan POS dan AC terhadap OCB, kesan POS terhadap AC, serta peranan mediasi AC antara POS dan OCB. Menggunakan pendekatan penyelidikan kuantitatif, data dikumpul daripada sampel 398 pekerja di syarikat teknologi tinggi swasta di Guangzhou. Analisis data menggunakan SPSS versi 27 menunjukkan beberapa penemuan penting. Pertama, POS dan AC kedua-duanya mempunyai pengaruh positif terhadap OCB; kedua, POS mempunyai kesan positif terhadap AC; dan ketiga, AC sebahagiannya memediasi hubungan antara POS dan OCB. Penemuan ini menekankan bahawa memperkukuh POS dan memupuk AC dalam kalangan pekerja bukan sahaja meningkatkan kepuasan kerja dan motivasi, tetapi juga mengurangkan kadar keluar masuk pekerja, membantu dalam menarik dan mengekalkan bakat, meningkatkan daya saing organisasi, dan memupuk OCB. Penemuan ini memberikan panduan berharga kepada pengamal sumber manusia dan pembuat dasar dalam merancang dasar tempat kerja yang berkesan. Kajian ini menyimpulkan bahawa pembangunan OCB adalah penting untuk pertumbuhan syarikat swasta moden. Kajian masa depan disarankan untuk meneroka

dimensi tambahan OCB dan interaksinya yang kompleks dengan AC, memperluaskan sampel ke wilayah utama lain di China, menjalankan kajian kualitatif yang memfokuskan kepada OCB dalam kalangan pekerja muda, dan menggunakan kaedah longitudinal untuk mendapatkan pemahaman yang lebih mendalam.

Kata kunci: *Tingkah laku kewarganegaraan organisasi, sokongan organisasi yang dirasakan, komitmen afektif, syarikat swasta*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AC	Affective commitment
OC	Organizational commitment
OCB	Organizational citizenship behavior
PCT	Psychological contract theory
POS	Perceived organizational support
SET	Social exchange theory

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In the current era of rapid economic advancement, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) has become a prominent focus in organizational behavior research. OCB refers to voluntary actions beyond formal job requirements that enhance a company's performance, foster a positive work culture, reduce conflicts, and stimulate innovation (Bismala, 2019). Behaviors such as helping colleagues or suggesting improvements contribute to an organization's positive reputation and cost savings. Management's attention to OCB is crucial, as leaders set examples that encourage employees to engage in these behaviors, thus influencing performance management, team dynamics, and employee engagement (Ng et al., 2021). By emphasizing OCB, managers help cultivate a thriving work environment, ultimately enhancing the organization's success. Numerous studies have shown that perceived organizational support (POS) and affective commitment (AC) can influence employees' OCB, whether as direct factors (Nabilla & Riyanto, 2020; Purwanto et al., 2021; Teresi et al., 2019) or as mediating variables (Cheema et al., 2019; Dahiya, 2022; Freire & Gonçalves, 2021). Further research suggests that strong OCB is supported by high work motivation, which positively influences work behaviors (Widarko & Anwarodin, 2022).

This research investigates the correlation between perceived organizational support, affective commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior. Additionally, it seeks to determine whether affective commitment mediates the relationship between perceived organizational support and organizational citizenship behavior. This chapter begins with an

introduction and background to the study. It is followed by the problem statement, general and specific objectives, and the significance of the study. It also defines the variables under examination and outlines the scope of the study.

1.2 Background of the Study

According to data released at the press conference on the construction and reform of the Guangzhou industrial worker team, as of 2021, there were approximately 11.63 million employees in Guangzhou, of which around 4.4 million industrial workers. The total number of skilled professionals reached 3.53 million, including 1.24 million highly skilled. This makes up 35.07% of the total and positions Guangzhou as one of the highest-ranked cities in China in terms of qualified workforce. By 2022, Guangdong boasted 15.71 million private enterprises (including self-employed businesses), ranking first nationwide with a 7.0% increase over 2021, laying a solid foundation for stable and high-quality economic growth in the province (Xu, 2023).

According to the report on the supply and demand analysis of the human resources market in Guangzhou for the first quarter of 2023 (Guangzhou Human Resources and Social Security Bureau, 2023), the total registered supply and demand was 4.49 million, including 2.07 million job seekers and 2.41 million job openings, with a job vacancy-to-job seeker ratio of 1.16. The report additionally highlights a minimal job scarcity in the manufacturing sector due to a decline in average wages. Furthermore, uncertainty persists regarding labor supply and demand recovery at both macro and micro levels.

High-tech enterprises, as primary drivers of technological advancement, serve as crucial nodes in integrating innovation, industry, and capital chains, significantly enhancing cities' core competitiveness. Guangzhou has over 12,300 high-tech enterprises, with 22

companies included in the 2023 Hurun Global Unicorn List - The fastest growth rate in China and the fourth-highest total nationwide (Fang, 2023). Additionally, Guangzhou has 153 domestic listed companies, with 116 being high-tech enterprises, accounting for nearly 76% of listed companies.

In the context of economic recovery and a fragile job market, it is especially imperative to focus on OCB among private enterprise employees. Understanding employees' current behaviors and the factors influencing them can help promote OCB within enterprises. Following an analysis of 594 knowledge workers across 107 high-tech enterprises in China, Jia et al. (2019) found that perceived organizational support (POS) significantly influences employees' OCB. Many studies in China also show that employees' OCB is impacted by affective commitment (Donglong et al., 2020; Li & Xie, 2020; Zhang et al., 2023).

Research on OCB is extensive worldwide. Some studies reveal that POS influences OCB; workers who feel fully supported by their organization tend to develop a sense of obligation, enhancing their display of OCB (Pandora & Ward, 2021). Nabilla and Riyanto (2020) surveyed 72 respondents from outsourcing companies and concluded that POS significantly impacts OCB. Purwanto et al. (2021) demonstrated that affective commitment among company members has a significant positive effect on OCB. Azila-Gbettor et al. (2020) found that students' self-esteem positively predicted their OCB and commitment to their university. Purba et al. (2015), using data from a cement factory in Indonesia, showed that affective commitment partially mediates the relationship between extroversion and OCB at both the individual (OCB-I) and organizational levels (OCB-O), as well as the relationship between emotional stability and OCB-O. These studies underscore that AC can act as a mediator in various contexts.

In summary, the current literature and data underscore the importance of OCB as a crucial factor in enhancing organizational cohesion and performance, particularly within high-growth areas like Guangzhou. With a substantial workforce and a high concentration of skilled professionals, private enterprises in Guangzhou are uniquely positioned to leverage employee commitment and support. This will increase productivity and innovation. Given the mixed findings from prior studies on the relationships between POS, AC, and OCB, this study aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of these dynamics. This is within Guangzhou's private enterprises. By examining how POS and AC influence OCB, this research seeks to offer actionable insights that contribute to both academic discourse and practical strategies for workforce development. This is in high-tech and other rapidly growing industries in China.

1.3 Problem Statement

In the fields of organizational psychology and human resource management, research on employee behavior has gradually expanded beyond a traditional focus on task performance to encompass a broader scope, including studies on OCB (Shao et al., 2019). The conceptual background of OCB can be traced to a re-examination and expansion of employee behavior scope, aiming to capture contributions beyond formal job requirements (Ocampo et al., 2018). To address modern organizational demands for diverse employee contributions, and influenced by the increasingly global business environment, organizations are placing an increased emphasis on active participation and innovative contributions from employees (Sun et al., 2022). In this context, the present study examines the significance of OCB and its impact mechanisms on both organizations and employees.

In Chinese private enterprises, OCB development faces numerous practical challenges. Firstly, many enterprises overemphasize performance rewards in their incentive mechanisms, often neglecting job fairness and supportive incentives, which negatively impacts employees' emotional commitment (Shen, 2021). Additionally, career development planning is often inadequate in private enterprises, causing employees to feel that their growth opportunities are limited. This reduces their emotional commitment and diminishes positive OCB behaviors (Qiao & Yang, 2021).

In a highly competitive market environment, work stress is generally high in private enterprises, and employees may feel exhausted and anxious due to heavy workloads. This pressure can create a negative perception of organizational support, adversely impacting their OCB (Li, 2023; Wang et al., 2023). Resource shortages are also prevalent in many organizations, especially in terms of limited investment in training, career development, and employee benefits. Such resource constraints contribute to employees feeling unsupported, which diminishes their trust and loyalty toward the organization (Chen, 2024).

Moreover, leaders in many companies tend to focus excessively on performance metrics and organizational goals, often overlooking the emotional support and care employees need (Wang et al., 2023). This lack of support fosters an environment where employees struggle to perceive the organization's significance, thereby reducing their perceived organizational support. Consequently, this decline in POS negatively impacts their OCB performance (Zhang et al., 2020).

With the increase in in-depth research on OCB, numerous influencing factors have been identified, including leadership style (Wasim & Rehman, 2022), organizational culture (Siswadi et al., 2023), individual characteristics (Sari & Ali, 2022), a perception of fairness

(Rehman et al., 2023), incentive measures (Rawabdeh et al., 2019), job satisfaction, work pressure (Pandora & Wardi, 2021), perceived organizational support (Luyiga, 2019), affective commitment (Maria et al., 2020), among others. Given the constraints of research scope and time, this study focuses on examining the association between POS, AC, and OCB. Due to the varying findings in multiple studies regarding the influence of perceived organizational support and commitment on OCB, further validation of their relationship is warranted. This is within the scope of this research.

The findings across multiple studies reveal inconsistencies regarding POS impact on OCB. This suggests that factors such as cultural context may play a role. Research indicates that POS can enhance employees' OCB, as employees who perceive strong organizational support often develop a sense of obligation to reciprocate through increased OCB (Pandora & Ward, 2021). However, conflicting evidence also exists: Ansori and Wulansari (2021) found that POS positively influences OCB as an external motivator, while Jehanzeb (2020), in a study involving 331 bank employees in Pakistan, reported no significant relationship between POS, employee development, and OCB. These discrepancies underscore the need for further research into the relationship between POS, AC, and OCB. This is particularly relevant to the specific cultural and organizational context of private enterprises in Guangzhou, China.

AC's effect on OCB remains a debate topic in the literature. For instance, Kuncoro and Wibowo (2019) found that AC significantly influences OCB, while Bimantara et al. (2022) further suggest that stronger affective commitment enhances perceived organizational support, fostering OCB. Their research indicates a significant positive impact of AC on OCB, a conclusion also supported by Prayitno et al. (2020). Pramesty et al (2021)

present contrary findings. They report a negative and non-significant relationship between organizational commitment and OCB, highlighting that while normative and continuance commitments significantly influence OCB, affective commitment does not. Given these inconsistencies, further investigation of the relationship between AC and OCB within the Chinese context is warranted to clarify these dynamics.

Maria et al. research findings (2020) contradict the assumption that organizational commitment will positively and significantly influence employees' OCB. However, the research results of Khaskheli et al. (2020) are just the opposite. Khaskheli et al. (2020) found that when AC is a mediating variable, it can mediate OCB. It can be seen from this that the relationship between AC and OCB produces different results in a variety of regions and different research object situations. Therefore, it is necessary to further confirm in the context of this study whether AC will play an important role between POS and OCB.

While numerous studies have confirmed the positive effects of perceived organizational support and affective commitment on organizational citizenship behavior, it is worth noting that some studies have reached divergent conclusions (Ansori & Wulansari, 2021; Elmi et al., 2020; Jehanzeb, 2020; Maria et al., 2020; Pandra & Wardi, 2021). Because further exploration is still needed to determine the influencing factors of OCB regarding the impact of POS and AC on OCB. Although many studies have shown that AC as a mediating role can affect the relationship between other variables and OCB. However, there is relatively scarce research on the relationship between POS and OCB using AC as an intermediary role. Further verification of AC's mediating role can provide relevant knowledge and ideas to support organizational development. This can encourage employees to participate in effective OCB behavior.

Building on the identified gaps in existing literature, this study seeks to explore the factors influencing OCB among employees in private enterprises in Guangzhou. Specifically, it analyzes the relationships between POS, AC, and OCB. It focuses on whether AC serves as a mediator in this relationship. By investigating these dynamics, the research endeavors to uncover the complex influences of POS and AC on OCB. This will enhance our understanding of OCB's role in modern workplaces. Furthermore, testing the research model within China can resolve the mixed findings related to academic motivation observed in previous studies. Discrepancies in the literature often arise from cultural and contextual differences. This localized investigation can provide insights into how POS and AC interact to affect OCB. Consequently, the application of this research model contributes to the empirical understanding of academic motivation in a Chinese setting. It enriches the broader discourse on organizational research by offering contextually relevant findings that may inform future studies and management practices.

1.4 General Research Objective

This study examines the relationship between perceived organizational support, affective commitment, and organization citizenship behavior. It assesses whether affective commitment serves as a mediator between perceived organizational support and OCB.

1.5 Specific Research Objectives

Research Objective 1: To determine the relationships between perceived organizational support and organizational citizenship behavior of private enterprises' employees in Guangzhou, China.

Research Objective 2: To examine the relationships between affective commitment and organizational citizenship behavior of private enterprise employees in Guangzhou, China.

Research Objective 3: To determine the relationships between perceived organizational support and affective commitment of private enterprise employees in Guangzhou, China.

Research Objective 4: To verify whether affective commitment will mediate the relationships between perceived organizational support and organizational citizenship behavior of private enterprises' employees in Guangzhou, China.

1.6 Research Questions

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between perceived organizational support and organizational citizenship behavior of private enterprises' employees in Guangzhou, China?

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between affective commitment and organizational citizenship behavior of private enterprises' employees in Guangzhou, China?

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between perceived organizational support and affective commitment of private enterprises' employees in Guangzhou, China?

Research Question 4: Will affective commitment mediate the relationship between perceived organizational support and organizational citizenship behavior of private enterprises' employees in Guangzhou, China?

1.7 Significance of the Study

1.7.1 Theoretical Significance

This study expands our understanding of the relationship between POS and OCB. This study further verifies the impact of POS on OCB by analyzing a sample of employees in private enterprises in Guangzhou. This contribution fills the research gap in the relevant