Workplace attachment and organizational commitment - are they predictors of organizational citizenship behavior? Study on french health care workers

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Abstract: This current research aims to identify the variables which help predict the organizational citizenship behaviour of 150 health care workers (nursing auxiliaries, nurses, and healthcare personnel) in France. More precisely, it confronts the impact of two variables whose connections to the organisational citizenship behaviour are established by the literature: a psycho-organisational variable (organizational commitment) and a psycho-environmental variable (workplace attachment). The results reveal that none of the factors predict the four dimensions of organisational citizenship behaviour, and that the variables which carry an affective component predict the dimension 'helping behavior' of the organizational citizenship behavior, but not the dimensions of 'altruism' and 'civic virtues'.

Keywords: organisational citizenship behaviour, workplace attachment, organisational commitment, helping behavior, health care workers

I. Introduction

Ethical behaviours at work are at the centre of current preoccupations within organisations. Among these are organisational citizenship behaviours, which, according to Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Paine and Bachrach (2000) find their roots in the 'collaboration issue' and hold a privileged position in the literature studying organisational behaviours and on the human resources management.

Since the 1980s, Organ has defined them as „individual behaviours which are not relevant to the tasks or roles prescribed by the job role but rather to a personal choice, therefore helping the general positive functioning of the organisation" (1988, p. 4). More precisely, the organizational citizenship behaviours correspond to a set of individual acts left to the discretion of the employees, which in turn contribute significantly to organizational effectiveness (Paillé, 2006).

Two approaches of organizational citizenship behaviours emerge in literature, Graham's model, and the approach developed by Organ and his collaborators. According to Graham (1991) these behaviours entail (a) obedience towards respecting the rules, norms and organizational

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procedures, (b) loyalty towards the organisation, which leads the employees to value the interests of the organisation at the expense of their own interests and (c) organizational participation, which refers to a personal interest towards the events related to the existence of the organisation. In other words, these behaviours are not part of the tasks given by the job description of the position that the employees hold, nonetheless being appreciated by the human resources department, especially because they favour 'the proper functioning of the social component of the organisation' (Podsakoff & Mackensie, 1997). Consequently, they are very beneficial to the proper functioning and overall success of the company, which proves, if needed, that effectiveness is not exclusively based on initially established objective criteria but also on personal criteria related to the working agents themselves.

Relying on the research conducted by Organ (1988) and the empirical works of Diefendorff, Brown, Kamin & Lord (2002) and Lievens & Anseel (2004) the second approach conceives organizational citizenship behaviour as a multidimensional construct. The number of dimensions composing this construct is still a matter of dispute: some authors (for example, Diefendorff, Brown, Kamin, & Lord, 2002; Lievens & Anseel, 2004; Tansky, 1993) advocate a five-factor structure, namely courtesy, altruism, the search for peace, team spirit and civic virtues; others, such as Podsakoff & Mackensie (1994) and Yoon & Suh, (2003), suggest a three-factor model (Helping behavior, Sportsmanship, Civic virtues). It is worth mentioning that some authors, such as Brief & Motowidlo (1986) distinguish up to 13 different dimensions.

As far as the French studies (Paillé, 2006) are concerned, they seem to be based on a four-factor model:

a) The Helping Behaviour - which consists of offering a more or less durable assistance to a colleague in his/her job duties in order to solve a problem or prevent the emergence of any difficulties.

b) The Civic Virtues - which are characterised by the manifestation of a sustained interest from the part of the employee towards the totality of actions conducted by his/her organisation.

c) Sportsmanship - which refers to the fact of tolerating the inconveniences or abuses related to work without complaining to one's colleagues or a hierarchical superior.

d) Altruism (Paillé, 2006, p. 142) which can be defined as 'a set of voluntary actions aimed at helping a colleague who encounters difficulties in his/her work.' (Paillé, 2006, p. 142).

For various decades, numerous works have been based on the influence of attitudes that people display at work when it comes to organizational citizenship behaviour. Among the most used psycho-

organisational variables, one could quote for example, work satisfaction (Paillé, 2008; Yoon & Suh, 2003), work involvement (Cohen, 2006; Paillé, 2010), but also organizational justice (Colquitt, 2001) and managerial ethics (Koh, Steers, & Terborg, 1995; Konovsky & Pugh, 1994) and most importantly transformational leadership (Pillai, Schrieshem, & Williams, 1999). We have chosen to take particular interest in the organizational commitment given the fact that the literature clearly confirms the relationship between organizational commitment and organizational citizenship (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch & Topolnytsky, 2002; Paillé, 2008, Yoon & Suh, 2003).

Defined as a psychological state defining the connection between an individual and the organisation which hires him (Meyer & Allen, 1991), the organisational commitment has continued to capture the attention of researchers for several decades (Vandenberghe & al., 2009). Having been rediscovered in the 90s, this concept is central to numerous research, such as the one from Allen & Meyer (1997), considered to be a three-dimensional concept (calculated, affective, and normative).

The affective commitment entails one's identification with the values promoted by the organisation, his/her involvement in fulfilling the organisation's objectives and, obviously, the affective commitment in the organisation (Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1982; Paillé, 2004). The calculated commitment is directly linked to the choice of remaining a member of the organisation or not, based on the perceived interest. Finally, the normative commitment can be defined as all the internalised normative pressures which determine the employee to act in favour of the organisation's objectives and interests, and to do so not because it is profitable, but because it is good and moral to act in such a manner (Wiener & Vardi, 1980). These three dimensions of commitment describe different psychological states. Actually, the employees who demonstrate a high degree of affective involvement remain within the organisation because they want to. Those who demonstrate a high calculated commitment remain within the organisation because they need to, and those who demonstrate high normative involvement remain within the organisation because they feel obliged to do so.

For about 15 years, with the recent development of environmental psychology applied to the working field (Probst, Baek & Laditka, 2010; Carloppio, 1996; Rioux, Le Roy, Rubens & Le Conte, in press), research aimed exclusively at the impact of psycho-environmental variables on working behaviours and attitudes have progressively emerged. Thus, we can cite works on space personalisation (Dinç, 2009; Wells, 2000) or privacy (Fischer, Tarquinio & Vischer, 2004) as well as place attachment (Velasco & Rioux, 2010). However, the works which tempted to trace the

psycho-environmental variables which could influence organisational citizenship behaviours are scarce. Nevertheless, one can quote the works of Bakita & Rioux (2011) which bring forward the relationships existing between ethical behaviours (organizational citizenship behaviours, pro-environmental behaviours), place attachment and personal values. We have chosen to take an interest in one of the central concepts in environmental psychology, that of place attachment (Scannell & Gifford, 2010; Lewicka, 2010; Morgan, 2010). Reported to the place attachment theory (Shumaker & Taylor, 1983; Altman & Low, 1992; Bonnes & Secchiaroli, 1995), and based on the works of Bowlby (1969, 1973, 1980) where attachment was considered the desire to maintain a certain proximity to the object of attachment, workplace attachment would be translated as a positive affective bond between an employee and his/her working space, the main feature being the employee's tendency to render that space personal.

Objectives

Certain works have recently shown that psycho-environmental variables could have a stronger impact on the organisational behaviours as compared to the psycho-organisational variables (Wells, 2000; Rioux, 2011; Rioux & Pignault, in press). Our research aims at confronting the impact of two variables whose connection to the organisational citizenship behaviours are established by the literature; a psycho-organisational variable (organisational commitment) and a psycho-environmental one (workplace attachment). We postulate that workplace attachment is a stronger predictor of organisational citizenship behaviours as compared to the organisational commitment.

II. Method
Participants

Our sample is composed of 150 health care workers in a French hospital unit, (31 agents pertaining to category A – health manager, 61 agents pertaining to category B – nurses – and 58 agents pertaining to category C – nursing auxiliaries). The participants are aged between 24 and 56 (M =33; SD= 12.53). 21% of them have less than 1 year length of service in the hospital unit, 45% have a length of service between 1 and 5 years and 34% have been working in the same unit for more than 5 years. 38% of the participants have less than one year length of service in the position occupied, 41% have a length of service of between 1 and 5 years in the position occupied, while 21% have a length of service of more than 5 years in the same position.

Materials and procedure

The designed questionnaire is made up of 4 parts:

- An identification part allowing to distinguish between the socio-demographic (age, sex, level of education) and organizational (length of service within the organisation, length of service in the position occupied, status) characteristics of the studied population.

- The French adaptation (Paillé, 2006) of the organizational citizenship behaviour scale of Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Moorman, & Fetter (1990). This tool comprises four subscales, namely Helping Behavior (4 items. For example, «*Sometimes I try to intervene in order to prevent the emergence of relationship problems with colleagues*»), Sportsmanship (3 items. For example, «*Rather than seeing the positive side of my business, I tend to see what's wrong*»), Civic Virtues (2 items. For example, «*I actively participate in any events related directly or indirectly to my enterprise*») and Altruism (2 items. For example, « *I voluntarily give my time to help others who encounter difficulties in their work* »). Moreover, this four-dimension scale has been validated in numerous researches based on the French population (Paillé, 2007; 2010; Bakita, 2012; Le Roy & Rioux, 2013).

- The workplace attachment scale (WAS) built and validated by Rioux (2006). Its construction is based on the works of Altman and Ginat (1992) who consider that attachment can adopt different definitions of equal importance, depending on the object of analysis (a) the consequences which determine the feelings given by the environment (for example, « *There are places in the organisation to which I am particularly attached* ») or (b) the social and psychological process is produced between a person and his/her environment, namely the reasons of attachment (for example, « *This workplace is a part of myself* »).

Used in numerous researches, in its initial or adapted form according to the place or population studied (for example, Rioux & Mokounkolo, 2005; Velasco & Rioux, 2010; Rioux & Pignault, in press), the WAS has a uni-dimensional structure and presents acceptable psychometric characteristics. For this research, the WAS has been adapted to our population of hospital agents. Thus, the term 'workplace' has been replaced by 'hospital' in certain items, according to the term used by the hospital agents in the informal interviews in order to name their workplace. This new structure of the WAS has afterwards been tested on ten hospital agents (4 nursing auxiliaries, 4 nurses and 2 health managers) in order to verify its clarity and the pertinence of its items.

1.1. The organizational commitment scale, by Meyer, Allen, & Smith (1993), validated in French by Vahe-Hennequin (2003). This scale comprises 18 items determining 3 facets of organisational commitment:

- Calculated commitment (6 items). We can cite as an example the

item « It would be very hard for me to leave my job at this organization right now even if I wanted to »
- Affective commitment; (6 items). For example, « I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organization »
- Normative commitment (6 items). For example, « Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave »

Being intensely used in human resources management, this scale comprises internationally recognised psychometric characteristics. As a matter of fact it has been conceived in order to be modified and adapted to different populations. In this current research the term 'organisation' is replaced by the term 'hospital'.

The evaluation of every item in the three scales is done on a five-point Likert scale.The thus designed questionnaire has been proposed to every participant agent in our sample. It has been filled in on the spot, in the presence of an investigator formally trained in this type of data collection.

III. Results

The organizational citizenship behaviour

A confirmatory factorial analysis was conducted in order to verify the 4 dimensions structure of the organizational citizenship behaviour scale. Absolute adjustment indices appeared (GFI = .92, AGFI = .90; Chi2 is 332,5l (dl=55); Steiger and Lind RMSEA = .06) as well as satisfactory incremental adjustment indices (CFI = .89, NFI = .88). All the parameters of the model are significant to a point of 0.5. These results summarized in the Table 1, lead to the reasonable conclusion that the collected data are adequate to the model.

	N	M	SD	CFA
Sportsmanship	**150**	**3.74**	**.60**	
I spend too much time on tasks that seem insignificant professionally	150	4.18	.70	1.38
Rather than seeing the positive side of my business, I tend to see what's wrong	150	2.99	.34	.89
I tend to exaggerate the problems facing my business	150	4.01	.65	.88
Helping behavior	**150**	**3.73**	**1.10**	
Sometimes I try to intervene to prevent the emergence of relationship problems with colleagues	150	3.72	1.02	1.36
When I see problems with colleagues, I try to influence their relationship to reach a consensus	150	3.81	1.08	1.16
I sometimes act as a peacemaker when colleagues disagree	150	3.69	1.07	1.02

I weigh my actions before doing anything at work that could affect those with whom I work	150	3.71	1.21	.99
Altruism	**148**	**3,24**	**0,99**	
I voluntarily give my time to help others who encounter difficulties in their work	148	3.28	.73	1.24
Even when I am busy, I am willing to take time to help new colleagues become adapted or become skilled	150	3.16	1.22	1.11
Civic virtues	**146**	**2,98**	**1,39**	
I actively participate in any events related directly or indirectly to my enterprise	146	2.87	1.53	1.04
I attend professional events for which my presence is encouraged but not formally required	150	3.12	1.23	.94

Table 1: Average Values, Standard Deviations and Confirmatory Factorial Analysis Obtained on the Dimensions of the Organizational Citizenship Behaviour Scale (N = 150)

The organizational citizenship behaviour is rather high (average 3.42 on a 5 point scale) and is associated to a moderated dispersion of answers (SD=0.93). The results by dimension and by item are presented in table 1. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients range between .79 and .85.

When observing the average values and the standard deviations obtained for each dimension, it is noticeable that the *civic virtues* dimension gets the lowest average (M=2.98) very close to the theoretical average of 3/5 as well as to the highest dispersion rate (SD=1.39). More precisely, the item "*I actively participate in any events related directly or indirectly to my enterprise*" registers the lowest average (M=2.87), but it is the least consensual (SD=1.53).

On the other hand, the *'Sportsmanship'* dimension gets the highest average (M=3.74) and relatively consensual answers (SD=0, 60). It is to be noticed that two items of this dimension, "*I spend too much time on tasks that seem insignificant professionally*" and "*I tend to exaggerate the problems facing my business*" obtain an average higher than 4.00, namely 4.18 and 4.01.

The correlations between workplace attachment and the dimensions of organizational commitment on the one hand and the dimensions of the organizational citizenship behaviour on the other hand.

Workplace attachment significantly correlates to a point of .01 with the *affective commitment* dimension of the organizational commitment scale (r=.53) and with the *Helping behaviour* (r=.48) and *Sportsmanship* (r=.25) of the organizational citizenship behaviours scale. Moreover the *'calculated commitment*' (r=.30) and *affective commitment'* (r=.48) dimensions correlate to a point of .01 with the dimension *Helping behaviour* of the organizational citizenship behaviours scale. Eventually, it is to be observed that none of the variables correlate with the *normative commitment* dimension. The results are shown in table 2.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Helping behavior	1.00						
2. Sportsmanship	.02	1.00					
3. Civic virtues	.07	.07	1.00				
4. Altruism	.18*	.18*	.54**	1.00			
5. WA	.45**	.25**	.06	.03	1.00		
6. CC	.30**	.06	.07	.05	.12	1.00	
7. AC	.48**	.11	.08	.08	.53**	.13	1.00
8. NC	.01	.03	.12	.03	-.04	.13	.01

Table 2: Correlations between the Organizational Citizenship Behaviour, Workplace attachment and Organizational commitment
Note: WA - Workplace attachment"; CC - Calculated commitment; AC - Affective commitment; NC - Normative commitment; *p<.05, **p<.01

The predictors of organizational citizenship behaviours

Due to the fact that the four variables correlate with the helping behaviour dimension, a hierarchical regression analysis was conducted considering this dimension as a criterion. In order to control for demographic and professional characteristics known to be associated with job satisfaction, those variables were entered in a first step. Potential predictors were added in a second step. This model was reviewed and insignificant variables trimmed, so that any variables that did not yield significant coefficients were removed, and the final adapted model was computed. The results are regrouped in table 3.

	β	t value	Probability	Adj.R2 (prob.)
Step 1 Socio demographic and socio professional variables				*.010(ns)*
Age	.17	2.03	.046	
Gender			*ns*	
Educational Level			*ns*	
Status			*ns*	
Length of service (position)			*ns*	
Length of service (organization)			*ns*	
Step 2. Psycho-organizational and psycho-environmental variables				.52 (.000)
Workplace attachment	.57	5.12	.000	
Calculated commitment			*ns*	
Affective commitment	.25	4.36	.000	
Altruism			*ns*	

Table 3: Predictors of the „Helping Behavior" Dimension

Two explanatory variables of the dimension *Helping behaviour* have thus been identified: workplace attachment (β =.57) and the affective commitment (β =.25). Therefore, the more attached the agent is to his/her workplace, the more affectively involved he/she feels in the hospital unit, and, what is more they demonstrate the tendency to help his colleagues (R2 adjusted=.52, p<.001)

IV. Discussion

Our hypothesis aimed at verifying the fact that workplace attachment constitutes a better predictor of the organisational citizenship behaviour as compared to the organisational commitment. It has only partially been verified. Actually, only workplace attachment (β =.57) and the 'affective commitment dimension (β =.25) of the organisational commitment scale allow for prediction of the dimension 'help given to colleagues', workplace attachment thus being a better predictor than the affective commitment (R2 adjusted=.52, p<.001). Moreover, none of the two variables correlates with the dimensions 'civic virtues' and 'altruism' of the organisational citizenship behaviour, and only workplace attachment correlates to a point of .05 with the dimension 'team spirit'.

From a theoretical point of view, we note that the two variables connected to an affective component (workplace attachment and affective commitment) predict the 'help given to colleagues' dimension which fits the content of this construct accordingly. The dimensions 'civic virtues' and

'altruism' of the organisational citizenship behaviour, which are not predicted either by the workplace attachment or by the affective commitment, most likely refer to cognitive and/or ethical components which are still to be identified more precisely.

Finally, let us observe the strong correlation (r=.54, p<.01) between the 'civic virtues' and 'altruism' dimensions, which suggests that our research should be conducted on a larger scale in order to test a three-factor model, the third factor regrouping the dimensions 'civic virtues' and 'altruism' as suggested by the works of Paillé (2006; 2007) and Le Roy & Rioux (2013). A better understanding and knowledge of the impact of psycho-environmental variables on organisational citizenship behaviour could thus contribute to enriching the still actual debate concerning the validity of the organisational citizenship behaviour scale construct.

From a practical point of view, we could note that the caregivers registered high scores (M=3.74 and M=3.73 respectively) on the 'helping behaviour' and 'sportsmanship' dimensions on the one hand, and that these two dimensions could be predicted by their workplace attachment on the other hand. Consequently, knowing the level of workplace attachment of a caregiver could allow for an indirect evaluation of the individual's level of sportsmanship 'and' helping behaviour, two dimensions which consititute the core of his/her work, therefore identifying the person's well-being within the organisation. Workplace attachment would then constitute a valuable indicator for the responsibilities of human resources and managers working in hospital units.

We are well aware of the fact that this research has a certain number of limits. Firstly, it was conducted exclusively in French hospital units and the impact of national employment policies on the attitudes towards work cannot be neglected. Secondly, the reduced sample and the specificity of the health sector, which presently has to face important budget restrictions, suggest that these results have to be treated prudently.

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