Ethical Positioning and Organizational Citizenship Behavior – An exploratory study

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Research question – What are the organizational citizenship behaviors associated with each of the ethical positioning dimensions, as defined by Forsyth (1980)?

INTRODUCTION

Forsyth (1980) stated that the individual differences, regarding moral judgment and behavior, can be seen in terms of two basic and independent dimensions: relativism and idealism.

Therefore, if some individual's ethical codes are more focused on the existence of universal and unbreakable core rules – High level of the idealism dimension – others assume a more skeptical position towards the possibility of adopting universal moral rules, defending the individuality of each situation, assuming the possibility of, for instance, in some situations harming a few people to achieve a positive result – High level of the relativism dimension.

Van Dyne et al. (1995), proposed a classification for the various types of extra-role behaviors that could be found in the literature, according to the following criteria:

Behavior type	Example
Affiliative	Helping a work colleague
Challenging	Criticizing the inefficiency of a leader
Promoting	Sugesting news ways to perform tasks
Prohibitive	Intervening towards preventing a harmful event or reporting a wrong behavior.

Van Dyne & LePine (1998) extended their study of an affiliative / promoting behavior, the helping behavior, and of a challenging / promoting behavior, the voice behavior.

INSTRUMENTS

Two questionnaires were used: the Ethics Position Questionnaire (20 items) (Forsyth, 1980), classifying the subjects in regards to its "ethical profile"; and the Scales of Helping Behaviors and Voice Behaviors (13 items) , developed respectively by Van Dyne and LePine (1998) and Van Dyne *et al.* (1995), evaluating the helping and voice behaviors adopted by workers.

PARTICIPANTS

N = 104 subjects, with the single requisite of having, at least, some professional experience. The sample was constituted by the subjects that filled, voluntarily, the questionnaires that were made available online.

Scales	Cronbach's Alpha
Helping Behaviors	0,768
Voice Behaviors	0,826
EPQ – Idealism	0,750
EPQ – Relativism	0,763

RESULTS

A constant tendency was verified towards the obtaining of higher results, in several of the items from the Voice and Helping Behaviors Scales, on behalf of the absolutist group. There is a positive and significant correlation between the idealism dimension and the adoption of helping behaviors (0,261; p = 0,009). On the other hand, the existence of a significant and negative correlation between these helping behaviors and the EPQ's relativism scale is also verified (-0,215; p = 0,034).

DISCUSSION

The subjects which present a more idealistic tendency show a bigger concern with the well-being of other people, and thus, therefore, the helping behaviors are a manifestation of these humanitarian tendencies revealed by subjects with a high level of idealism. The fact that this trait is associated to the performance of helping behaviors suggests the possibility that this dimension has a predictive effect on OCB.
On the other hand, this investigation showed a negative correlation between the EPQ's relativism dimension and the helping behaviors, suggesting that individuals with a realistic orientation have a smaller tendency towards the adoption of these behaviors. This fact presents itself as another empirical evidence of the influence of individual worker variables in their decision whether to adopt OCBs in their daily work.

REFERENCES

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