

ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR AND COMMITMENT 1

Running Head: ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR AND COMMITMENT

Organizational Citizenship Behavior and Organizational Commitment in Nepal

Thaneswor Gautam

Tribhuvan University Kathmandu, Nepal

Rolf Van Dick

Aston Business School, United Kingdom

Ulrich Wagner

Philipps University Marburg, Germany

Narottam Upadhyay

Tribhuvan University Kathmandu, Nepal

Ann J. Davis

Aston Business School, United Kingdom

Address correspondence to Rolf van Dick, [Aston University](#), Aston Business School, Work Organisation Psychology Group, Aston Triangle, Birmingham B4 7ET, UK, Tel. 0044 (0) 121 359 3611 extn. 5451, Fax. 0044 (0) 121 359 2919, r.vandick@aston.ac.uk

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ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR AND COMMITMENT 2

Abstract

This study examines the structure of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and its relation to organizational commitment in Nepal. Four-hundred and fifty employees of five Nepalese organizations filled out standardized questionnaires. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses revealed two factors of OCB, altruism and compliance, replicating western models of extra-role behavior (Smith, Organ, & Near, 1983). Structural equation analysis showed a positive relation between affective and normative commitment on the one hand and both citizenship factors on the other. Continuance commitment was negatively related to compliance and unrelated to altruism. The findings thus confirmed the structure and usefulness of the concepts in an under-researched geographical area. Findings of the research are discussed within the Nepalese socio-cultural context.

ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR AND COMMITMENT 3

Organizational Citizenship Behavior and Organizational Commitment in Nepal

Organizational commitment (OC) has for many years been identified as a central construct in understanding the relationship between the employee and the employer (c.f. Allen & Meyer 1996). Definitions of the construct indicate its significance in binding the individual both to the organization and to courses of action which are relevant to the target of the commitment (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). With regard to the former, analyses consistently indicate significant correlations between OC and turnover intention (c.f. Randall 1990). With regard to the latter, further relationships have been identified between components of OC and a range of discretionary and extra-role behaviors (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001) including organizational citizenship behavior (OCB, e.g. Organ & Ryan, 1995). This paper explores the structure of, and relationships between, organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior in a rarely studied socio-cultural context; Nepal.

As used here, organizational commitment is a psychological state that categorizes the employee's relationship with the organization, it is understood as a commitment to the entire organization. Three components of commitment have been identified, each of which ties the employee to their organization but the nature of the "psychological-bonding" is different. Affective commitment (AC) ties people through their emotional attachment, involvement, and identification with the organization. Continuance commitment (CC) depends on employees' awareness of the costs of leaving the organization. Normative commitment (NC) rests on employees' obligatory feelings towards coworkers or management. Each component might have different antecedents and, while all lead to a reduced intention to leave the organization, result in different outcomes for employees' discretionary extra-role behavior (e.g., Gautam, van Dick & Wagner, 2001). Organizational citizenship behavior as noted above is one example of discretionary behavior which has been identified as being linked to OC. OCB is taken to be a positive outcome of a committed workforce, characterized by voluntary extra-

ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR AND COMMITMENT 4

role contributions of employees that are not recognized by the formal organizational reward system (Organ, 1988). While general relationships between OC and OCB are relatively well documented, (Meyer, [Stanley](#), [Herscovitch](#) & [Topolnytsky](#), 2002) there remain issues meriting further investigation. First, the cross-cultural applicability of the constructs both of OC and OCB remains open to debate. The structural invariance of OC in different cultures has been a focus of a number of studies in recent years (c.f. Vandenberghe, 2003), typically presenting culture-specific analyses. For example, both Chen and Francesco (2003) and Cheng and Stockdale (2003) broadly support the three component model in relation to Chinese samples. Ko, Price and Mueller (1997) in contrast are less convinced both of the reliability of continuance commitment in their South Korea data, and of the utility of retaining normative commitment as a separate scale. Lee, Allen, Meyer and Rhee (2001) suggest an oblique four-factor model provides the best fit of their data, also collected in South Korea.

The role of normative commitment also raises questions in both western and non-western settings. Whereas both affective and continuance commitment are rooted primarily in the individual's association with the organization, normative commitment arises both from interaction with the organization, and also from more cultural and familial socialization processes whereby the individual learns the appropriateness of concepts such as loyalty, obligation and self-interest. Chen and Francesco (2003) suggest an enhanced significance for normative commitment in collectivist cultures, where group expectations and social performance are comparatively more significant issues than individual attitudes and attachments. This finding has received some support from Wasti (2003), looking at commitment in a Turkish context. Chen and Francesco further argue that the "rootedness" of the NC component might give rise to it having a moderating effect on the relationship between affective commitment and performance.

Randall (1993) presents a range of hypotheses regarding the relationships between

ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR AND COMMITMENT 5

organizational commitment and Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions, suggesting commitment is likely to be greater in more individualistic and less authoritarian (lower power distance) countries. Cheng and Stockdale (2003) further explore Randall's hypothesized relationships across three different national contexts. Moreover, the role of normative commitment as an antecedent of OCB is rarely discussed. This is particularly pertinent for the current study because, as highlighted by Paine and Organ (2000), the meaning, perception and classes of OCB may vary from culture to culture. The cultural context for the present paper is one that has rarely before been investigated. The study was carried out in Nepal, a country with a relatively small but diverse population. Nepal is broadly collectivist and high in both power distance and uncertainty avoidance. The aims of this paper are twofold. First, it seeks to examine the structure of organizational citizenship behavior in an under-researched socio-cultural setting. Second, it seeks to explore the structure of relationships between OCB and OC in this context. Organ's (1988) two factor construction of OCB is taken as the starting point, those factors being altruism and compliance. Based on previous findings, the theoretical assumptions underlying the present study are that organizational commitment relates to organizational citizenship behavior, and specifically that normative commitment will be associated with OCB in the collectivist context of Nepal.

Smith, Organ, and Near (1983) defined OCB as individual contributions in the workplace beyond role requirement and contractually rewarded job achievements. To this extent OCB can be described as discretionary (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001), contextual (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997) or extra-role performance. The hypothesized components of OCB have attracted research attention. Some authors propose a five-factor model of OCB consisting of conscientiousness, altruism, civic virtue, sportsmanship and courtesy (Organ, 1988). Other models assume two main factors: (a) Altruism, representing those forms of OCB that provide aid to specific persons, e.g., direct team members, and (b) compliance,

ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR AND COMMITMENT 6

which pertains to more impersonal contributions to the organization as a whole (Organ & Ryan, 1995; Smith et al., 1983). A number of studies have appeared which explore the construct validity of organizational citizenship behavior (Allen et al., 2004), and currently the two component model seems to dominate. However, the concept has been developed primarily in western socio-economic contexts and remains relatively untested elsewhere. This is significant for at least two reasons. First, it may be that OCB is enacted differently in different cultural contexts – that what it means to be a “good citizen” may vary. Second, underlying cultural values may place greater or lesser emphasis on the appropriateness of organizational citizenship behavior. In relation to the first of these issues, the five component model appears to demonstrate values specific to western individualistic cultures (i.e. sportsmanship, civic virtue and courtesy all appear to be “emic”), while the two-component model captures more universal or “etic” constructs. Assuming the two components are indeed etic, it may be that cultural values placing collective interest ahead of the individual might generate more organizational citizenship behavior, a suggestion to some extent supported by Paine and Organ (2000).

In their recent meta-analysis, Meyer et al. (2002) found affective and normative commitment substantially correlated with both unidimensional measures of OCB ($\rho = .32$ for affective commitment, and $\rho = .24$ for normative commitment), and with both altruism and compliance (ρ 's between .20 and .26). However, of particular significance to the current study is the separation reported by Meyer et al. of studies carried out within North America from those carried out outside North America. Looking only at North American studies, the correlations between AC, NC and unidimensional OCB reduced to .26 and .10, respectively, whereas the comparable correlations for non-North American studies were .46 and .37. Continuance commitment was unrelated to OCB ($\rho = -.01$). Thus, the present study also expects to find strong positive relations between OCB and affective and normative

ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR AND COMMITMENT 7

commitment and a negative or zero correlation between OCB and continuance commitment. However it extends these findings into an examination of the relationships between the components of OC and the components of OCB in a specific cultural context.

Nepalese socio-cultural context

Nepal is a landlocked country bordered by China/Tibet to the north and India to the south, with ~~a population of around 25 million and an~~ annual per capita income of around \$270 (MOF, 2004). ~~Bordered by China/Tibet to the north and India to the south, it~~ has been influenced waves of immigration from both of its much larger neighbors, and its hostile geography has fostered considerable cultural diversity within its borders. Its population of around 25 million comprises ~~comprising~~ more than 60 different ethnic groups; (CBS, 2002).

Few systematic assessments of the culture of Nepal have been undertaken (for exceptions see Agrawal, 1977; and Caplan, 1990). However a number of observations can be made about the nature of Nepalese culture. Given the influences of religion, historical migration patterns, and the predominantly tribal structure and agricultural economy of the country, Nepalese society is primarily collectivistic. The strictures of social class limit the acquisition of status ~~through these links~~. As such, and in line with Kanungo and Jaeger's (1990) culture profile of developing countries, Nepalese society is high in Power Distance. This derives from the dominant religion and power structures, and recognition of ascribed status and "face" is an important feature of social interaction. ~~Status is predominantly ascribed rather than achieved (Trompenaars, 1993).~~—Uncertainty avoidance similarly is high, continuous change and the importance of status making risk-taking and innovation unnecessary and unadvisable. Until recently, public sector jobs have been more highly valued than private sector ones because of the security they confer (Agrawal, 1977), although the organizational climates in both public and private sector are similar (Pradhan, 1999). Nepalese employees are committed to their workplace but generally show low levels of

ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR AND COMMITMENT 8

morale and participation. Dissatisfaction among Nepalese employees is commonly observed (Gautam, 2004; Koirala, 1989; Upadhyay, 1981).

Relating these features of the Nepalese cultural context to the concept of OC, it would be expected that organizational commitment generally would be highly salient; that AC and NC would be more highly correlated than commonly reported from North American samples; and that CC will have moderate salience. Given the relatively underdeveloped nature of the country, extensive skill shortages, the precarious state of development and uncertainty avoidance, CC is likely to be salient. However, the role of the primary collectives in determining identity may moderate this, coupled with the widely practiced joint family system.

This paper sets out to test the dimensionality of organizational citizenship behavior and to examine its linkage with organizational commitment in this Nepalese context. The organizational commitment data and its structural properties are reported in more detail in Gautam (2004). Given the Nepalese context described above, it was anticipated that OCB would be an accepted facet of individual behavior in organizations and therefore that baseline levels of OCB would be high. The following hypotheses were generated regarding the structure of and relationships between OC and OCB.

1. Altruism and compliance will be broadly similarly construed as in Western studies of OCB, these being broadly etic constructions of OCB components.
2. Altruism and Compliance will be significantly correlated, as both would be congruent with the culture of Nepal, altruism predominantly through the collectivistic outlook and compliance through the high power distance, hierarchical societal structures.
3. Normative commitment will be significantly related to both altruism and compliance, due to the dominant role of socially-constructed norms rather than individually-constructed attitudes (Markus & Kitayama, 1991) and the formality of social hierarchy

ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR AND COMMITMENT 9

in Nepal. Organ and Ryan's (1995) meta-analysis was unable to examine this relationship as there were at the time insufficient studies that had incorporated measures of normative commitment and OCB. Chen and Francesco (2003) found no direct effect of NC on OCB but that it moderated the AC-OCB relationship in China.

Method

Participants

Standardized questionnaires were filled out by 450 employees of five Nepalese organizations (representing banking, telecommunication, and television broadcasting). The questionnaires were administered to participants by the human resources department of each organization (response rate: 92%). Participation in the survey was voluntary, but as might be expected in such a context, the vast majority of employees chose to comply. This response rate, while unusual in Europe and North America, is quite common in studies carried out across Asia. Lee et al., (2001) report a response rate of 87% from a South Korean sample, Cheng and Stockdale (2003), Chen and Francesco (2003), and Chen, Tsui and Farh (2002), all working in China, report response rates of 90.5% between 74% and 80% and 74% to 84% respectively. Demographic characteristics of the respondents comprised 79% male, mean age 33.6 years ($SD = 6.29$), 70% were married, 78% had graduate degrees, 62% were assistants, and 38% supervisors. Mean organizational tenure was 9.47 years ($SD = 5.97$).

Measures

Given that the measurement of OCB in Nepal has not previously been reported in the literature, 11 initial interviews were carried out with Nepalese experts to explore their operational understanding of the concept of OCB in Nepal (cf. Paine & Organ, 2000; Wasti, 2003). It was anticipated that the more complex constructions of OCB (in particular, the 5-factor model) is predominantly emic and therefore would not transfer to a Nepalese context. The majority of the experts agreed on the operational meaning of OCB, the interpretation for

a Nepalese context being very close the two dimensional structure proposed by Smith et al. (1983). However punctuality, a component of the compliance dimension, was not considered by the experts to be as appropriate in the Nepalese context by the expert. Due to tThe perception of time in Nepal is as a rather flexible and punctuality in particular is not a valued behavioral trait. As such concept in Nepal all experts agreed that this item would be no valid indicator to assess the meaning of extra-role behaviobehavior.

It was decided to administer the two-factorial short version scale to replicate the OCB in line with Becker and Randall (1994). A nine-item scale, omitting the item relating to punctuality, was derived from the scales of Smith et al. (1983) scales to capture OCB (e.g., Altruism: "I help others who have heavy workloads", Compliance: "I do not spend a lot of time in idle conversation"). This ties in with the limited existing literature addressing OCB in Asia (Chen & Francesco, 2003).

Affective, continuance, and normative components of Meyer, Allen, and Smith's (1993) organizational commitment questionnaires were adopted to assess organizational commitment. A Nepalese version consisting of translated scales was administered to most subjects (n=365) along with an English version in a sub-sample (n=84). Subjects' responses were found virtually free of translation biases (Gautam, 2004). Participants had to indicate their agreement with each item on six point Likert scales (endpoints: 1 "totally disagree" to 6 "totally agree").

Results

Means, standard deviations, inter-correlations, and internal consistencies for each scale are presented in Table 1.

insert Table 1 about here

The OCB scales are significantly correlated. They also show significant positive relationships with affective and normative commitment scales but fail to show any significant

association with continuance commitment.

Factor Structure

Initially, an exploratory factor analysis (principal components, followed by varimax rotation) was conducted. The analysis revealed a two-factor solution with high loadings (minimum 0.57) on each of the expected factors with negligible cross-loadings on each of the alternative factors (maximum 0.25). The Eigenvalue of the Altruism scale was 3.40, and of the Compliance scale, 1.70 (other factors below 1). The cumulative percentage of variance explained by the two factors was 56.7%.

A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to confirm the dimensionality of OCB (using EQS Version 5.7b). First, we tested a uni-dimensional model, then a two-factor orthogonal solution and finally a two factor solution with altruism and compliance as separate but correlated dimensions. The final model fit the data well ($\chi^2 = 119.72$, $df=26$, CFI=.92, AGFI=.91, GFI=.95, $\chi^2/df = 2.2$, RMSEA=.06) and significantly better than either the uni-dimensional ($\Delta\chi^2 = 332.57$, $df=1$, $p<.01$) or the orthogonal model ($\Delta\chi^2 = 62.08$, $df=1$, $p<.01$). Each loading was found to be significant and substantial for their respective factors. Hence, both types of factor analyses confirmed the proposed two-factor solution of OCB in the present study. This supports the first two of our hypotheses.

Based on the theoretical assumptions about the relation between commitment and citizenship behavior, a structural equation model was designed and tested assuming three correlated factors of organizational commitment as latent predictors and two correlated factors of OCB as latent criteria. A summary of the results produced is presented in Figure 1.

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This analysis indicates significant loadings on all variables of each latent predictor and latent criteria factors. Factors of OC are significantly correlated, as are the constructs of OCB.

ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR AND COMMITMENT 12

The overall model fit is not perfect but given the large numbers of indicators and the explorative nature of this analysis can be regarded as sufficient, particularly when considering the RMSEA and ratio of chi-square and degrees of freedom ($X^2 = 1097.86$, $df=314$, $CFI=.85$, $AGFI=.80$, $GFI=.83$, $X^2/df = 3.5$, $RMSEA=.07$).

In general, affective and normative commitment showed positive relations to both factors of OCB. Thus, the results show that OCB can be linked to two components of the three-dimensional commitment concept. Of particular interest, and in support of Hypothesis 3, is the observation that normative commitment is more strongly related to each latent criterion than is affective commitment. Continuance commitment showed a negative relation to compliance and was unrelated to altruism. Both affective and normative commitment showed a stronger linkage to altruism than to compliance.

Discussion

This study set out to examine the structure of organizational citizenship behavior and its relationships to organizational commitment in Nepal. [It extends previous work by examining the relationship between normative commitment and OCB in a non-western context.](#)

Although developed in western cultures, OCB has been found to be equally applicable in the very different socio-cultural context of Nepal. The initial interviews with Nepalese experts suggested that Smith et al.'s (1983) broadly etic two-component construction of OCB would translate across cultures. Local experts were reluctant to endorse the 5-component model of Podsakoff, [Ahearne, and MacKenzie et al.](#) (1997) and Organ (1988) suggesting that components of civic virtue, sportsmanship and courtesy are emic in construction. However, the issue of punctuality does not fit within a Nepalese construction of OCB as time is a rather flexible concept in this cultural context. The two components of OCB were significantly correlated, a finding which is interpreted here as in part culturally-driven. Given Nepal's

dominant collectivistic outlook, consistently high levels of OCB are to be expected. Socially-driven values emphasizing the group over individual concerns are likely to encourage altruistic behaviors benefiting the group. Similarly, high power distance and hierarchical societal structures are likely to generate compliance. Both affective and normative commitment were found to be significant correlated with both OCB components, [while](#); continuance commitment was unrelated to altruism and negatively associated with compliance. Affectively committed people support their colleagues voluntarily because it is their desire or willingness to do so rather than a simple exchange-based relationship with the organization. Normative commitment is a psychological state where employees feel obliged to continue their membership in an organization because of some kind of social, cultural, or contextual norms. [Employees](#) can be expected to perform some extra role behavior to fulfill their obligation or to show their gratefulness towards their respective leaders or peers. Therefore, normatively committed employees are likely to show both altruism and compliance.

Where western and Nepalese societies differ is in patterning of these citizenship behaviors. If Nepalese OCB is more strongly derived from cultural expectations, a sense of obligation or duty, then normative commitment, similarly founded more in general socialization than individual attitude, is likely to be more closely associated with OCB than affective commitment, [as demonstrated](#) in our results. In western contexts, the construction of the self is one of independence from the group, rather than interdependence within it and therefore individual choice derived from attitude might be expected to play a greater role in shaping behavior than a sense of what is required by “the collective”. Nepal is not only more strongly collectivist than most western contexts in which these relationships have been explored, it also has a formally hierarchical social structure and a largely risk-averse population. In total, it is suggested that these contextual factors underpin the development of

normative commitment, which gives rise to citizenship behaviors driven by an overwhelming sense of obligation and duty.

Continuance commitment ties employees with their organization because of their awareness of the cost of leaving, and the availability of alternatives. Given this underpinning, there is no reason to expect that continuance commitment should be linked to organizational citizenship behaviors, and indeed that is the case here. Indeed, the model presented in Figure 21 indicates a significant negative relationship between continuance commitment and compliance.

Limitations and implications

A number of limitations to this study can be identified. First the issue of common method variance needs to be considered given the cross-sectional design of the study based on self-report. Meta-analytic studies of these constructs (Meyer et al., 2002; Organ & Ryan, 1995) suggest that studies relying only on self-report may either inflate correlations or, in a cross-sectional design, might introduce problems of instability in correlations due to situational moderators. For the assessment of employees' commitment, self-report seems to be the most appropriate approach, however future research should aim at gaining independent assessments of OCB. It is difficult therefore to entirely reject this potential difficulty in these data, however the results of both the confirmatory factor analyses and the structural equation modeling do suggest that the indicator variables fit well with the latent constructs which they are intended to measure.

Although participation in the study was voluntary and anonymous, the response rate was very high. In addition, the ratings of organizational citizenship behavior were on the whole very high, suggesting a possible ceiling effect. It is difficult to tell whether this is a statistical artifact, a reflection of a cultural tendency towards affirmation generally, or a true representation of the internalization of organizational citizenship in Nepal.

Clearly, the study does not present a direct cultural comparison of Nepalese and western interpretations of OCB and OC, however the solution to this is perhaps not as straightforward as it may seem at first sight. Vandenberghe (2003) neatly outlines the difficulties between on the one hand designing appropriately “emic” scales that tap into local construction of the self, and on the other using “etic” scales that facilitate direct comparison between different groups. Wasti (2003) took the route of developing integrated emic-etic measures, which limit cross-cultural comparison, while the majority of other authors focus on translating original scales, which may not capture local meaning. This study combines the two approaches; most of the data are derived from direct translations of original scales, but the construction of OCB in Nepal was addressed through the initial interviews and amendments made in direct response to local mores. That the study demonstrates considerable similarities in the structures of OC and OCB, and their relationships with North American data, but with differences that are understandable within the local context, suggests that the prevailing models describe generic constructs that can be specifically interpreted.

To summarize, the pattern of relationships between organizational commitment and OCB is appealing. First, the study demonstrates that the concepts of organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior translate to the Nepalese context, with suitable (and predictable) amendments. Second, the correlated structure of the components of OCB is confirmed. Third, the theorized pattern of relationships between OC and OCB is supported, specifically the positive linkage of OCB components to affective and normative commitment and lack of relationship of continuance commitment. The , and in particular the enhanced influence stronger association of normative than affective commitment with both OCB dimensions in this the Nepalese context, in contrast to western studies, further supports the importance of cultural values in the construction of work-related attitudes and behaviors. .

ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR AND COMMITMENT 16

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ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR AND COMMITMENT 19

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ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR AND COMMITMENT 20

Table 1.

Scale Means, Standard deviations, Reliability, and Intercorrelation

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Alpha</i>	1	2	3	4
Altruism	5.13	0.71	0.71				
Compliance	5.68	0.62	0.81	.32**			
Affective Commitment	5.25	0.76	0.85	.37**	.22**		
Continuance Commitment	3.58	1.16	0.86	.07	-.01	.26**	
Normative Commitment	4.76	0.95	0.81	.33**	.22**	.65**	.39**

Note: ** $p < 0.01$.

Figure 1.

Confirmatory Factor Model of OCB

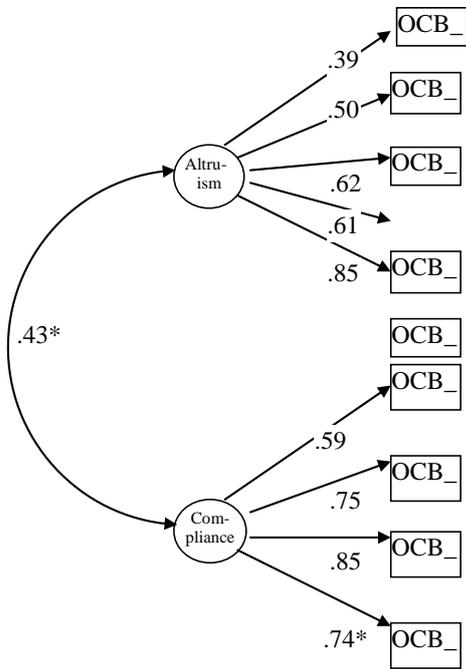
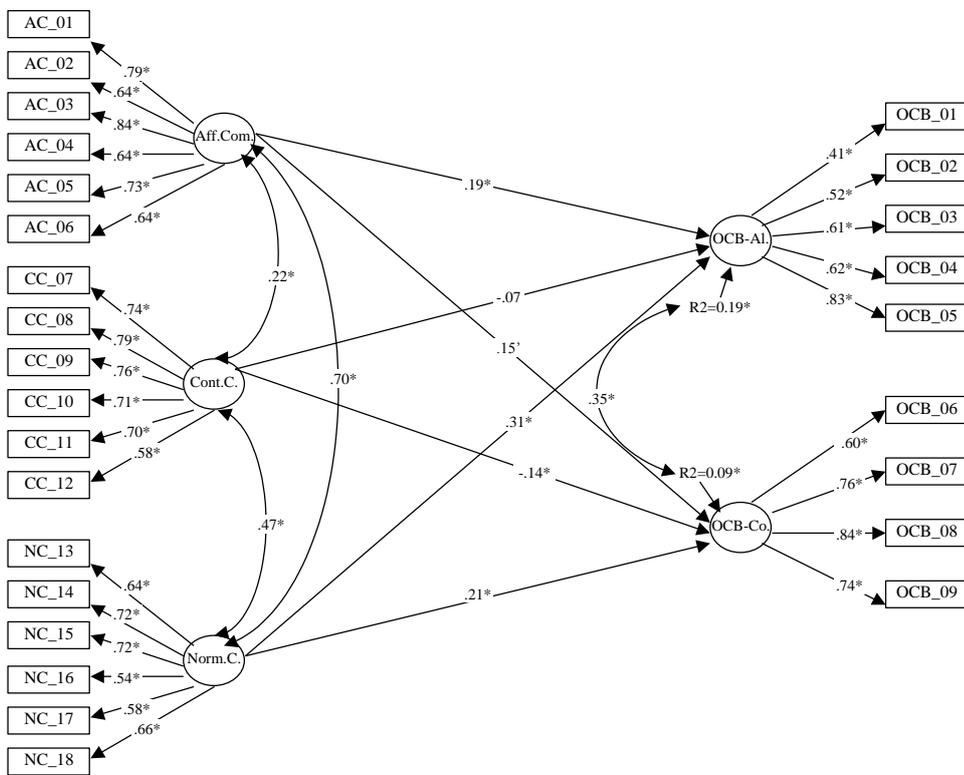


Figure 12.

Structural Equation Model of Commitment and OCB



Indicators of significance *, †.