



Organizational Citizenship Behavior Experienced by Managers in Finland

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Abstract

Finland is going through multiple simultaneous challenges. The national debt is increasing. The limitations of adequate, skilled resources, an aging population, and an increasing number of well-being issues have been identified. There is growing pressure to improve productivity and support the maintenance of the structures of the welfare state by all possible means.

Finnish people are known as reliable and hard-working people with long traditions in volunteer work. Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) refers to individuals going the extra mile, being flexible, and performing more than is formally required. The extra energy invested by individuals contributes to organizational success positively. The target was to understand how OCB is lived in Finnish working life. Particularly, how it is experienced in organizations, what elements encourage and discourage individuals from engaging in OCB, and how can those elements be supported by leadership. Due to their key roles, and positions as role models in organizations, managers were selected as the target group. The managers represented multiple organizations and industries to enable a variety of experiences from work life in Finland to be shared. The theoretical frame was based on OCB literature, servant leadership, and listening as a principle of servant leadership. The empirical data collection for this qualitative research was done using purposive sampling and semi-structured interviews. Ten managers with mature working life experience were interviewed. The encouraging and discouraging elements related to OCB among managers were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. The main target was to find out how the benefits of OCB could be enjoyed while avoiding potential pitfalls. Finally, recommendations for managerial implications were made, suggesting that leaders could support maintaining a proper OCB balance by listening to individuals. The positive implications of OCB can be considered an asset to organizations. The negative, however, could influence various unwelcome consequences, such as OCB fatigue.

Keywords/tags (subjects)

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), servant leadership, listening, encouraging OCB, discouraging OCB, managers, Finland

Miscellaneous (Confidential information)

For example, the confidentiality marking of the thesis appendix. See Project Reporting Instructions, Section 4.1.2.

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Suomalaisten esihenkilöiden kokemuksia organisaatiokansalaisuudesta

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Tiivistelmä

Suomea koettelevat monet samanaikaiset haasteet. Kansallinen velka kasvaa. Osaavan työvoiman riittävyyden varmistaminen, väestön ikääntyminen ja lisääntyneet hyvinvointihaasteet ovat tunnistettuja ongelmia. Samalla tuottavuuden parantamista tarvitaan tukemaan hyvinvointivaltion ylläpitämistä. Suomalaiset tunnetaan luotettavina ja ahkerina työntekijöinä, joille myös vapaaehtoistyö on historiasta tuttua. Organisaatiokansalaisuus viittaa yksilöihin, jotka tekevät ylimääräistä työssä. He ovat valmiita joustamaan ja suorittamaan tehtäviä oman roolinsa ulkopuolelta. Tämä yksilöiden ylimääräinen panostus vaikuttaa yritysten tuottavuuden paranemiseen, kilpailukykyyn ja menestykseen positiivisesti.

Tavoitteena oli ymmärtää organisaatiokansalaisuutta suomalaisessa työelämässä. Tarkemmin, minkälaisia kokemuksia organisaatiokansalaisuuteen liittyy, mitkä tekijät kannustavat ja lannistavat yksilöitä ylimääräiseen tarttumisen suhteen ja miten johtajuudella voidaan tukea näitä tekijöitä. Esihenkilöt ovat organisaatioissa tärkeässä tehtävässä ja roolimallin asemassa, siksi heidät valittiin tutkimuksen kohderyhmäksi. Valitut yksilöt edustivat eri yrityksiä ja toimialoja, mikä mahdollisti laajan ja monipuolisen kokemusten kirjon suomalaisesta työelämästä.

Teoriapohja rakentui OCB-tutkimuksille, palvelevalle johtajuudelle ja kuuntelemiselle osana palvelevaa johtajuutta. Empiria laadulliseen työhön kerättiin käyttäen puolistrukturoitua haastattelua, haastateltavat valittiin harkintaotannalla. Haastatteluihin osallistui kymmenen kokenutta esihenkilöä.

Organisaatiokansalaisuuteen kannustavia ja lannistavia tekijöitä analysoitiin laadullisen sisällönanalyysin avulla. Tavoitteena oli tunnistaa keinoja, joilla mahdollistaa hyödyt, samalla ehkäisten organisaatiokansalaisuuden varjopuolet. Kuuntelemisen tärkeys johtajuudessa nousi esiin toimenpidesuosituksena, sen avulla voidaan tukea tasapainoa organisaatiokansalaisuuden etujen ja haittojen välillä.

Avainsanat (asiasanat)

Organisaatiokansalaisuus, palveleva johtaminen, kuunteleminen, kannustava OCB, lannistava OCB, esihenkilö, Suomi

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1 Introduction

Organizations that manage to attract and attain employees who are willing to go the extra mile possess a valuable competitive advantage. It is considered an asset that is difficult for others to imitate (Bolino & Turnley, 2003). Going beyond the call of duty is known as organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). At the heart of OCB lie a variety of positive employee behaviors such as taking on extra assignments, helping coworkers, and following company rules even when nobody is watching (Podsakoff et al., 2000). Positive behavior influences efficiency, and ultimately the success of organizations (Motowidlo, 2000).

In addition to the positive outcomes of OCB, recent research has drawn attention to its negative side effects. Organizations attempting to maintain high productivity levels with minimum resources have been associated with the threat of OCB fatigue (Fu et al., 2022). Finland, although holding a welfare state status, is facing multiple simultaneous challenges. During difficult times the input of every individual is needed, and the importance of good leadership grows. In this thesis, the aim is to understand how OCB as a phenomenon is experienced among managers in Finnish working life today, and how leadership could support organizations to benefit from all the good outcomes of OCB while avoiding potential risks involved. Next, an overview of the business environment and situation with the workforce in Finland is briefly presented.

1.1 Business Environment and Workforce

Finland has been rated the happiest country in the world for six subsequent years (Hunter, 2023). The happiness measurement is based on the level of GDP, life expectancy, social support, freedom, generosity, and corruption (World Happiness Report, 2023). Finland is the 14th safest country in the world (World Population Forum, 2023). In 2022, Finland ranked fifth in IMD's business efficiency report, thriving in productivity and efficiency, labor market, finance, management practices, and attitudes and values (IMD, 2022). For investors, Finland provides a business environment of political and economic stability equipped with good ICT and general infrastructure. Being a leader in sustainability, Finland targets to be the world's first welfare society with net zero emissions by 2035 (August, 2022). In 2022, Finland reached the highest

scores in the UN annual report on sustainability themes such as no poverty, quality of education, and clean, affordable energy (Sustainable Development Report, 2022). The employment rate in Finland has shown positive development since 2015 and is currently at 73.8% (Clausnitzer, 2023).

Finland has a highly skilled workforce. The Finnish education system is built on values of equity and inclusivity which support maintaining the wheels of the welfare society in motion (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2019). Info Finland (2022) describes Finns as honest, punctual, independent, and equality-seeking employees. Finns appreciate fairness and humanity in their leaders. Focus on setting clear targets, addressing well-being topics, and giving feedback are valued leadership qualities. Poor leadership is the main reason employees leave jobs in Finland (Holma et al., 2023).

Debt, aging population, and labor shortages

Finland is facing numerous challenges. The national debt has grown steadily since 2008, steeply plummeting from 2019 onwards. The government debt relative to GDP was at 74.6% at the end of the second quarter of 2023, having grown by EUR 17 billion compared to the respective period of the previous year (Statistics Finland, 2023). The population is aging rapidly. The population aged 75 and over is expected to increase to over one million, while the number of people aged below 45 continues to decline. The old-age dependency ratio of a country is defined by the size of the population aged 65 years old and over, as a proportion of the population aged 20-64 years. OECD (n.d.) forecasts this ratio to increase from 25% in 2000 to 43% in 2025 in Finland. Although the official general pension age falls between 63-65 years, currently, only around 30% of the Finnish population is working at the age of 61. Research shows that Finland needs work-based immigration to compensate for the retiring workforce, without it the optional scenarios predicted by the Confederation of Unions for Professional and Managerial Staff in Finland (Akava, 2023) are bleak and the welfare society as we know it, could be compromised.

Sectors such as social services, healthcare, education, and construction are already suffering from labor shortages (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, 2022). Overall, 81% of employers in Finland are struggling to find employees with the right skills. The nature of work is changing and shaping the skills requirements of individuals (ManpowerGroup, 2023). Efforts made to attract skilled foreign workers have been modest at best and outpaced by Finland's neighboring Nordic countries (Mäkynen, 2023). The 2023 Finnish parliamentary elections ended in what has been referred to as the most right-wing Finnish government in modern times. Its EU and immigration-sceptic voices have contributed to a growing concern over possible negative implications in international contexts (Mac Dougall, 2023).

How is Finland doing?

Work-related well-being issues can be considered a national threat in Finland (Mäkineniemi et al., 2022). Sickness insurance payments are growing year over year, amounting to as high as EUR 4.6 billion (Kansaneläkelaitos, 2022). According to regular surveys conducted by the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, the work well-being of employees in Finland has been deteriorating for the past 3.5 years (Suutala et al., 2023). Different forms of mental symptoms such as sleep disorders and heart symptoms are growing (Holma et al., 2023). Moreover, job satisfaction, work well-being, and various forms of cognitive disruption are more common among managers than employees. Growing cynicism and voluntary turnover plans have increased in manager roles. Simultaneously, managers reportedly receive less support from their superiors when compared to employees (Mäkineniemi et al., 2022). Despite reduced work well-being, individuals with burnout symptoms often continue to work hard. This may be an indication of high working morals which pushes individuals to continue until they drop (Kaltainen & Hakanen, 2023).

As a cure to the current challenges, The Finnish Institute of Occupational Health calls for improvements to be made to working conditions. Organizations should ensure that unrealistic expectations and contradictory situations are avoided (Suutala et al., 2023). Although hard elements such as wage and benefits are important, soft values like trust among colleagues and managers influence the job satisfaction of Finns (Kaltainen & Hakanen, 2023). A positive working community, a growing sense of belonging, a sense of procedural justice, and acting according to

honorable values are needed. According to Suutala et al. (2023), leadership should become more of a mission of service. Polite communication and listening to each other support positivity in workplaces. Leaders should express their appreciation towards employees. Various practices to support the work-life balance of individuals should be developed and flexibility increased to meet individual needs (Suutala et al., 2023).

Under the current, challenging circumstances, the importance of an adequate, skilled, healthy, and engaged workforce to organizations contributing to the Finnish economy cannot be emphasized enough. While organizations are forced to seek improved efficiency and fight a battle of limited skilled resources, they may be tempted to maximize the utilization of existing resources. This, in turn, may result in unrealistic expectations on individuals, which may come at a cost.

Understanding when the negative of OCB outweighs the positive is essential to avoid potential threats such as well-being issues, reduced job satisfaction, or unwanted voluntary turnover.

1.2 Motivation for the Study

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) refers to employees going above and beyond tasks that belong to their designated working roles. Principally, OCB consists of extra initiatives taken voluntarily with the common good of organizations in mind, not on a quest for personal benefits or in expectation of rewards (Wilkinson, n.d.). All organizations are, to an extent, dependent on extra-role activities conducted by employees (Urbini et al., 2020). Research suggests that OCB contributes to organizational success positively (Rauf, 2016; Bolino & Turnley, 2003; Podsakoff et al., 2000). Understanding OCB both as a researched phenomenon and a vital element in everyday life is beneficial for any organization. Considering the many simultaneous challenges in the business environment, it is essential to harvest the benefits of OCB while preventing it from turning against itself.

This thesis aims to build our awareness of OCB from different aspects. First, the extensive body of OCB research has mainly been conducted using quantitative measures (Xu et al., 2022; Jehanzeb & Mohanty, 2020; Stoffers et al., 2019; Yam et al., 2017). The qualitative method in this thesis allows

deep and rich examples to be shared, increasing awareness of the complexities around OCB and organizational tensions and behaviors. Secondly, this thesis contributes to the relatively small number of research on OCB that is placed in a Finnish cultural setting (Arola, 2020). Thirdly, research has primarily focused on the largest group in organizations: the employees. This thesis gives voice to the managers. Managers are between a rock and a hard place, pressurized by demands from different directions, and at the same time setting an example to followers through their role model position. According to Yaffe and Kark (2011), by nature, OCB can be seen as a social form of behavior. Therefore, managers may influence the OCB willingness of employees around them. The fact that the interviewees will be able to bring a manager and employee perspective to the topic is a valuable addition to understanding the phenomenon.

1.3 Research Questions

This thesis aims to understand organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) as a phenomenon, and how it is experienced by managers working in Finland. Understanding how managers live OCB at workplaces, and what encourages or discourages them to acts of OCB. The research question, supported by two sub-questions, is formed as follows:

How do managers in Finland experience OCB in working life?

- a. What encourages managers to engage in OCB?
- b. What discourages managers from engaging in OCB?
- c. How can encouraging and discouraging elements be supported by leadership?

To answer these research questions, this thesis follows a qualitative strategy. The empirical data is collected by interviewing managers working in Finland. OCB as a phenomenon is not industry-specific, therefore, the variety of companies and organizations represented by the interviewees supports answering the research questions. Ultimately, understanding the phenomenon is only a starting point. OCB deserves to be a more commonly acknowledged part of organizational lives. As the awareness of OCB-related behavior increases, suggestions for leadership support can be made. This thesis aims to propose concrete steps to be taken to support the maintenance of a healthy level of OCB in organizations.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into six main chapters. The introduction sets the scene for the societal problem at hand and justifies the need for the study. The second chapter dives into the definition, antecedents, and consequences of OCB. In chapter three, the theoretical frame is strengthened by leadership. Chapter four contains a description of the chosen methodology, the process of data collection, and data analyses. The results of the empirical study are presented in chapter five. Finally, in chapter six the research questions are answered, the validity and limitations of this thesis are acknowledged, and proposals for future research are made.

2 Organizational Citizenship Behavior

The theoretical frame in this study is built around two key concepts: organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and leadership. In this chapter, OCB as a researched phenomenon is explored. An understanding of OCB's definition, its antecedents, and consequences is built. Recent research connecting OCB to various work outcomes, such as job engagement, satisfaction, and well-being are studied. Specifically, the aim is to understand different elements that are associated with OCB behaviors, both from a motivational and a viewpoint of outcomes.

In this thesis, OCB is studied primarily through the extra-role approach whereby individuals invest energy in doing organizationally relevant tasks that are outside their designated roles. OCB is commonly divided into discretionary behavior potentially benefiting either *organizations* (OCB-O) or mainly benefiting the *individual* members of the organizations (OCB-I) (Urbini et al., 2020). Here, the focus remains on the viewpoint of OCB-O, on organizational benefits.

2.1 Defining OCB

Dennis Organ (1988) named his early OCB research "the good soldier syndrome". The title captures some of the conceptual meaning, referring to an individual contributing to more than is expected of them. Recent OCB studies (Fu et al., 2022; Xu et al., 2022; Banwo & Du, 2020; Lloyd et

al., 2015; Podsakoff et al., 2000) continue to use Organ's initial definition as a foundation in their OCB research:

Individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization. By discretionary, we mean that the behavior is not an enforceable requirement of the role or the job description, that is, the clearly specifiable terms of the person's employment contract with the organization; the behavior is rather a matter of personal choice, such that its omission is not generally understood as punishable. (Organ, 1988, 4).

Some scholars define OCB as a willingness to go the extra mile and perform tasks that go beyond the job requirements (Bolino & Turnley, 2003). They can consist of taking on extra assignments or completing tasks that do not belong to an individual to secure a seamless process flow.

Walumbwa et al. (2010) suggest that an act of OCB could be considered something as simple as sending birthday greetings to a coworker. This could be debated to be polite behavior instead.

Zehir et al. (2013) narrow down altruistic OCB as discretionary behaviors that specifically help another person with an *organizationally relevant issue*. Thus, they propose not all extra actions, like acts of kindness, would be considered OCB. Sharma (2016) suggests OCB to be positive behavior that is relevant to improving the smooth functioning of operations. Displays of positive behavior could be proactiveness and a development-minded approach. It could also be tolerance towards various setbacks at the workplace (Sharma, 2016). The varying emphasis and differences in OCB definitions continue among scholars today. Subsequently, other aspects of OCB-related research results may also vary and add to further confusion (Ocampo et al., 2018).

Ambiguity in defining OCB

Organ's initial OCB definition (1988) received criticism for its vagueness and subjectivity from academia (Motowidlo, 2000; Vey & Campbell, 2004). Criticism pointed towards the complexity of separating OCB between in-role, and extra-role activities. Employees are not always able to separate between the two. Instead, many of the tasks categorized as extra-role behavior based on Organ's (1997) OCB scale are likely to be viewed as in-role tasks by employees (Vey & Campbell, 2004). In today's organizations, few knowledge workers have explicitly set working roles or job descriptions, which increasingly complicates the distinction. In addition to flexible job descriptions the statement 'all other tasks assigned by the employer' appears in many work contracts today.

A decade after his initial definition of OCB (1988), Organ revisited his prior definition, terminology, and models of OCB, clarifying some of the criticized elements. He simplified the definition to behavior that contributes "to the maintenance of and enhancement of the social and psychological context that supports task performance" (Organ, 1997, 91). He clarified what he considered to be soft spots in the initial OCB definition. By *discretionary* Organ refers to activities that cannot be considered a part of a person's working role, but instead are extra activities that an individual is willing to engage in by personal choice. Not engaging in these activities would not be punishable. According to Organ (1997), proving that people engage in certain activities by choice instead of by expectations is challenging. Organ (1997) argues that the ambiguity around the OCB concept lies in the very fuzziness of roles. Roles may be undefined, grey areas exist, yet all tasks need to be handled. Under those circumstances, employees easily feel responsible for everything, and identifying OCB becomes increasingly complex.

The topic of rewards in connection to OCB is another debate among scholars. Criticism concerning Organ's initial OCB definition (1988) pointed to the strictness of ruling out rewards in connection to OCB. Motowidlo (1997) implies that employees' behavior in organizations can be viewed from different angles. One is to merely see work as a steady stream of one action after the other. Another view is to see normal workflows being punctuated by unexpectedly well-completed tasks,

which contribute positively to organizational performance. It is generally accepted that good work is credited in the form of appraisal, feedback, or even rewards to individuals (Motowidlo, 1997).

Organ (1997) specifies rewards with more acceptance than in his initial definition of OCB (1988). He argues that there should be times when employees are rewarded for exceptional behavior. Being rewarded for good performance should not overrule OCB. Ideally, however, initiatives are taken by personal choice, and any benefit sought is for the good of the organization. Not motivated by rewards or personal benefit-seeking. Directly rewarding individuals for OCB would not be *expected*, either.

Finally, an admitted challenge lies in the definition of organizational productivity. OCB refers to behavior that contributes to organizational effectiveness over time. Quantifying, or even identifying a connection between acts of OCB and long-term organizational success is highly interpretational (Organ, 1997). Research may suggest positive predecessors to OCB willingness, such as leaders' listening (Lloyd et al. 2015), but the measurable OCB results are difficult to produce.

2.2 Antecedents of OCB

OCB as a concept and researched topic developed slowly but rooted itself deep and wide in the business world (Ocampo et al., 2018). It first appeared as a study field in social psychology theory as a proposed analytic framework for understanding the complexities of behavioral and motivational problems in organizations (Katz, 1964). According to Katz (1964), three types of behavioral requirements of successful organizations can be distinguished:

- People must be tempted to join and remain in the organization.
- People must carry out their roles and assignments in a reliable manner.
- There must be innovative and spontaneous activity, going beyond the specifications of the roles, when achieving organizational objectives.

Understanding elements and personality traits that seem to best support OCB has remained of interest to scholars. Organ (1988) identified five OCB dimensions that, despite additions and minor adjustments, remain at the core of studies today: altruism, conscientiousness, courtesy, civic virtue, and sportsmanship. Next, each of the dimensions are briefly introduced.

- *Altruism*: employees voluntarily help their coworkers with an organizationally relevant issue, showing selfless concern for other people in their organizations.
- *Conscientiousness*: diligence and taking responsibility, exceeding the minimum role requirements, staying informed of work-related topics, and following rules and regulations.
- *Courtesy*: respectful behavior in organizations, attempting to minimize conflicts and avoid causing unnecessary obstacles to the work of others.
- *Civic virtue*: showing genuine interest and concern for the welfare of the company, initiating organizational improvements, and being actively involved in matters that do not directly belong to a person's role.
- *Sportsmanship*: tolerance towards less-than-ideal circumstances in organizations, willingness to sacrifice own comfort and not resort to complaining (Organ, 1988; Zehir et al., 2013).

Podsakoff et al. (2000) identified 30 potential OCB dimensions altogether, grouping them under seven themes: helping behavior, sportsmanship, organizational loyalty, organizational compliance, individual initiative, civic virtue, and self-development. Overall, the same and similar elements compared to Organ's (1988) suggestions are raised. In empirical OCB studies, researchers tend to group OCB antecedents into four main categories: individual, task, organizational, and leadership traits or behaviors (Podsakoff et al., 2000). Van Dyne et al. (1994) propose that active citizenship in organizations is made up of three dimensions: obedience, loyalty, and participation. These three elements build an interrelated model of behavior that is found at the heart of OCB.

According to Bolino and Turnley (2003), leadership and organizational elements, as well as personal traits such as conscientiousness and empathy, are strong influencers to OCB. Organizations that nurture strong interpersonal connections encourage employees to exceed formal job requirements. The sense of mutual trust enhances employee commitment and

ultimately leads to OCB willingness (Bolino & Turnley, 2003). A summary of factors promoting OCB characteristics with explanations is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Factors promoting OCB (Bolino & Turnley, 2003, 62).

Factor	Example
Job satisfaction Transformational and supportive leadership	Happy workers are good organizational citizens. Employees are willing to go the extra mile when they work for inspirational and supportive managers.
Interesting work and job involvement	When employees are given interesting work assignments and jobs in which they can really immerse themselves, they are likely to go beyond the call of duty.
Organizational support	Employees who feel that their organizations really care about them are more likely to support the organization with higher levels of citizenship.
Trust, organizational justice, and psychological contract fulfillment	Citizenship is likely to occur when employers are trustworthy, fair, and live up to the commitments they have made to their employees.
Employee characteristics	Employees who are conscientious, optimistic, extroverted, empathic, and team-oriented may be more willing to engage in certain types of citizenship behaviors.

Since the turn of the century, OCB studies have increasingly focused on attempting to understand the antecedents of OCB i.e., job satisfaction, job engagement, organizational commitment, communication, and leadership as positive influencers to OCB (Ocampo et al., 2018). Organizations that support the work engagement and job satisfaction of individuals are believed to be fertile environments for OCB. Moreover, HR functions in organizations should be encouraged to utilize different means of training and support to employees to make them feel appreciated.

Employees who feel well taken care of by their organizations are likely to want to reciprocate and complete extra tasks, or perform their duties particularly well (Urbini et al., 2020).

2.3 Consequences of OCB

The decades of OCB research have introduced various viewpoints on the consequences of OCB. Its benefits have been studied across various disciplines (Ocampo et al., 2018), through variable measures. According to Banwo and Du (2020), OCB consequences are frequently categorized into individual, group, and organizational level outcomes. Individual OCB consequences include e.g., reduced turnover intentions and positively contributing to the social setting at the workplace. Group-level OCB refers to the efficiency of a workgroup, which also contributes to organizational-level benefits, such as productivity, and cost efficiency. Organizations fostering employees to go the extra mile hold a competitive advantage which is difficult for others to imitate (Bolino & Turnley, 2023). According to Motowido (2000), a number of positive employee behaviors like helping colleagues and taking on extra tasks enhance the functioning of organizations and ultimately supports their success.

Employee loyalty and enthusiasm contribute positively to organizational efficiency and competitiveness (Bolino & Turnley, 2003). Studies suggest that OCB positivity correlates with lower turnover intentions and improved job performance (Banwo & Du, 2020). According to Rauf (2016), empirical data connecting OCB to organizational success have been exhibited over the past decades. OCB's positive outcomes include e.g., organizational effectiveness, manager and employee productivity, attracting and retaining good employees, and creating social capital (Podsakoff et al., 1997 as cited in Rauf, 2016).

Inherently, some professions may call for more OCB than others. Chu (2021) suggests that employees who generously spread compassion on the job, like nurses, may wear themselves out, experiencing exhaustion, emotional distance, and a low sense of accomplishment. In these situations, the level of spontaneous OCB decreases as individuals start to conserve their resources. In Finland, concerns have been raised about the inadequate resources in the healthcare sector.

Caretakers consider it a part of their job to also talk with their patients but when this time is not allowed, it increases fatigue and a feeling of not being allowed to do their job well (Paavola, 2023).

Potential threats of OCB

Despite the benefits of fostering an OCB-positive environment, the consequences should be approached from both positive and negative angles (Rauf, 2016). In the 21st century, a growing body of research has focused on the challenges of OCB. Specifically, potential risks of OCB to individuals, such as OCB fatigue have been raised (Fu et al., 2022; Banwo & Du, 2020). Finding ways to reduce the negative outcomes of OCB is recommended since they could even become harmful to organizations (Rauf, 2016).

Deery et al. (2017) conclude that not all five dimensions of OCB (altruism, conscientiousness, courtesy, civic virtue, and sportsmanship) bear the same OCB cost for individuals. They propose that individuals performing high levels of conscientiousness, combined with high task performance carry more negative outcomes. In other words, such individuals in organizations may stand a higher risk of OCB fatigue, or burnout. The time individuals devote to extra tasks inevitably takes time away from others. Subsequently, scholars argue that the extra energy invested in one activity is time away from other assignments (Rauf, 2016; Deery et al., 2017). Whether or not individuals consider OCB to be a part of their roles, extra tasks consume hours, energy, and strength. The situation is further complicated when employees are measured against targets, yet also expected to engage in extra activities which take time away from their measured in-role responsibilities (Deery et al., 2017). Therefore, Fu et al. (2022) claim that the positive impact of OCB is achieved at the expense of the health of the individuals. Thus, an unambiguous line cannot be drawn from engaging in extra tasks to the ultimate benefit of organizations.

Fu et al. (2022) argue that individuals do not always conduct in OCB by choice, rather they feel compelled to do so under pressure from the organization, competition between peers, and even fear of punishment for not engaging in acts of OCB. Promotions at work and special rewards, although not expected to connect to OCB, possibly find their way to individuals who are willing to go the extra mile (Bolino & Turnley, 2003). Therefore, employees may be motivated to

demonstrate OCB to impress management. Individuals who contribute to OCB motivated by impression management may politicize the whole workplace (Bolino & Turnley, 2003). As a side effect, these 'super workers' displaying high OCB might make other employees seem lazy in the eyes of management (Banwo & Du, 2020). Furthermore, Banwo and Du (2020) argue that OCB pressure and other negative ingredients may lead to work-life balancing challenges and increase job-related stress among employees. Yam et al. (2017) have studied the different implications of OCB depending on the motivational platform. They conclude that engaging in traditional OCB versus performing OCB for external motives makes a difference, the latter introducing more potential risks.

Ocampo et al. (2018) conclude that some disorganization of the OCB concept has occurred during 21st-century research. Findings related to OCB determinants and dimensions have resulted in contradictory results, and these inconsistencies have added to the confusion among scholars. Terminology has evolved, making terms like job satisfaction, job engagement, and employee behavior virtually interchangeable. As an example, while some scholars report findings of job satisfaction to act as an antecedent of OCB, (Allen & Rush, 1998), others (Alotaibi, 2001) overrule these findings. Scientifically proving that elements such as job satisfaction, engagement, work motivation, or experiences of fair treatment at the workplace would be *directly* related to OCB is highly complex (Ocampo et al., 2018). Nevertheless, the arguments of organizations benefiting from the actions taken by *good soldiers* (Organ, 1988) stand strong even when not unambiguously proven.

3 Leadership

Despite a century of extensive research, a commonly agreed definition of leadership is yet to be reached (Northouse, 2016). The word 'leader' appeared in the English language in the 1300s. Leadership has been passionately studied by scholars and practitioners, even complete societies for over a century (Northouse, 2016). According to Mango (2018), leadership is governed by tens of theories, its founding domains connecting to character, characteristics, people practices, institutional practices, context, and outcomes. Direction, support, trust, and empowerment are examples of features typically connected to leadership.

Some scholars argue that trying to find the correct definition of leadership is pointless (McCleskey, 2014). Leadership can be interpreted the same way as democracy or love: intuitively knowing what the word means does not mean every individual has the same meaning for it (Northouse, 2016). The numerous leadership theories are united by a shared vision of the *importance of leadership*. Similarly, it is a common belief that missing, poor, toxic, or purely inefficient leadership hurts individuals, companies, and even entire nations (Gandolfi & Stone, 2018).

Prevailing leadership styles

The six most common leadership styles are transformational, delegative, authoritative, transactional, participative, and servant leadership (IMD, 2023). Despite similarities, each style is distinguished by different characteristics. In **transformational leadership**, the emphasis is on change. Transformational leaders inspire their followers to achieve their highest potential by having a mutual relationship. Transformational leaders apply their charisma, trust, and coaching to support followers to outstanding results (Bass, 1990). **Delegative leadership** is considered the least intrusive leadership style with leaders delegating initiative to their team members. Delegative leaders are not prone to micromanagement, however, they might not provide too much feedback or support, either. Delegative leadership is considered effective among highly qualified groups within a specific area (Khan et al., 2015). **Authoritative leaders** are considered to be warm, supportive, responsive, and sensitive to followers' needs. Authoritative leadership is connected to collaboration, consensus, and commitment. However, it can also be considered a demanding leadership style, occasionally slipping towards micromanagement (Dinham, 2007).

Transactional leadership focuses on managing people and monitoring task performance, goals are typically set for the short term, and the focus is on improving organizational efficiency (McCleskey, 2014). Transactional leadership style emphasizes structure and is connected to rewards and punishments. Transactional leaders set clear goals and to an extent, leaders and followers form a dependent relationship (Guy Major, 2020). In **participative leadership**, followers are included in decision-making, and this is suggested to improve their motivational model and behavior. A higher level of empowerment may result in improved work performance. It is also expected to foster more trust towards the leader because he/she signals respect for subordinates by including them

in decision-making (Huang et al., 2010). **Servant leadership** puts the needs of the followers first and emphasizes the creation of strong relationships. Servant leaders are individuals who are interactive, develop and empower others, and set an example to others by maintaining high morals in their organizations (Gandolfi & Stone, 2018).

These six leadership styles briefly described do not present an exclusive offering. A short investigation in literature provides closer to 20 different leadership styles, and as Guy Major (2020) concludes, inconsistency in nomenclatures adds to the confusion. On the other hand, scholars widely agree that the most effective leaders obtain the ability to switch between leadership styles. Consorting to the right style for each situation at hand is needed in various, demanding organizational settings (Guy Major, 2020). Agreement also prevails in the belief that the performance of teams can be improved by effective leadership (Yukl, 2015; Huang et al., 2010).

Leadership competencies of the 21st century

Organizations are coping with constant change, uncertainty, and complexities on multiple levels. Those shape the leadership needs of the twenty-first century (Guy Major, 2020). In early leadership studies, leader skills were broadly divided into technical, interpersonal, and conceptual skills (Yukl, 2015). The set of required skills has grown over the years, but the competencies identified in traditional leadership literature are still relevant today. Examples of traditional skills include human orientation, organizational skills, values, cognitive skills, and communication. Cognitive skills have shaped towards the need to analyze large amounts of data, and communication skills extend to social media capabilities that are still a relatively new arena (Guy Major, 2020).

Four recent, emerging leadership skills have been identified as requirements of our times. A sharing leadership style where leaders act as enablers. Handling complexity in unstable environments, between multiple networks and stakeholders. Knowledge in their designated fields, and the ability to share expertise with others. Lastly, global leadership skills to manage an increasingly international world where multiple cultures come together (Guy Major, 2020).

3.1 Servant Leadership

Out of a plentitude of possible leadership disciplines, servant leadership is selected as the second theory base for this thesis. This decision is supported by the researched OCB literature which often connects the phenomenon to various leadership styles, including servant leadership (Walumbwa et al. 2010), the importance of leader-member exchange (Lloyd et al., 2017), empathic leadership (Abu Bakar & McCann, 2016), and organizational justice (Zehir et al., 2013). The selection of servant leadership is also justified by the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health guidelines. They have encouraged implementing servant leadership in Finnish companies to support employee well-being and contribute to extending the careers among the Finnish workforce (Hakanen, 2016).

Defining servant leadership

Servant leadership emerged in 1970 when Robert K. Greenleaf coined it as the *leaders' will to serve first* (Greenleaf, 1970, as cited in Northouse, 2016). Until then, leadership had primarily been associated with strong hierarchies where the leaders were considered people in possession of power. The novelty in Greenleaf's approach was turning the traditional setting upside down: seeing leaders as servants to their teams. At the core of servant leadership is the leaders' will to prioritize other people's needs ahead of their own and focus on enabling individuals to grow. Moreover, in servant leadership, the *will* to serve comes first, and *actions* come second. Servant leadership aims to nurture the growth of individuals, which leads to improved organizational performance and ultimately brings positive outcomes to society (Greenleaf, 2014).

Northouse (2016) describes servant leadership as caring principles. Servant leadership raises followers' performance to their full potential, bringing favorable results to the in-role performance of individuals. It may even cause a ripple effect by encouraging followers to become servant leaders themselves (Northouse, 2016). Spears (2004) proposes that the best way to identify true servant leadership is to ask: are individuals growing as persons, becoming wiser, healthier, and likely to become servants themselves? Servant leaders convey compassion towards employees and that, in turn, is expected to lead to positive outcomes. Displays of compassion are suggested

to facilitate it further in organizations, as compassionate managers may also be more sensitive to follower needs (Paakkanen, 2020).

In servant leadership efficiency is seen as a side product of the right steps taken. Servant leadership is also linked to societal benefits. A leader who listens to the people and allows them to grow will contribute to creating a healthy organization, which will then become efficient, and will ultimately contribute to the company and its surrounding society (Greenleaf, 1970, as cited in Northouse, 2016). Servant leadership focuses on the strengths of individuals and emphasizes listening appreciation, and employee empowerment. Ideally, servant leadership leads to employees becoming servants to each other (Hakanen, 2016). In many fields e.g., high technology, expertise lies in all levels of the organization. All levels are equally valuable, and thus the role of leaders is not to control, but to enable (Räty, 2017).

Servant leadership and ethics

According to Walumbwa et al. (2010), servant leadership differs from other traits in certain idealized notions. Servant leadership emphasizes behaviors such as role modeling, altruism, and inspirational communication. One defining component of servant leadership is high morals. Servant leadership is concerned with the success of all organizational stakeholders. A servant leader achieves success by focusing on the best interest of the followers, without hidden agendas or attempting to charismatically call followers to act according to their wishes. The genuine care expressed by leaders turns into reciprocity on the employees' part. As a form of exchange, employees choose to support and sustain a positive environment in response to the genuine behavior on their leaders' part. Ultimately, employees build a commitment to their supervisors. As a result, among other positive outcomes, organizational citizenship behavior is enhanced (Walumbwa et al., 2010).

Walumbwa et al. (2010) propose that procedural justice is strongly linked to servant leadership. The way followers perceive fair treatment, ethical standards, and values to be met has positive outcomes for organizations. Leaders who set high standards not only enjoy the appreciation of their followers but also create a psychologically safe environment that encourages followers to

voice opinions and development proposals actively. Employees who perceive fair treatment from their leaders are more likely to exhibit acts of OCB (Walumbwa et al., 2010)

Servant leaders represent values and ethics that are morally acceptable. Employees under the influence of ethical leaders are more likely to go above and beyond their call of duty (Mo & Shi, 2017). Through social learning employees emulate the caring and ethical behavior of their leaders in their roles. Additionally, Mo and Shi (2017) suggest that receiving fair treatment leads employees to reciprocate by being more active and willing to engage in OCB.

Trouble and criticism

Servant leadership has been criticized mainly for potential risks related to the lack of authority, and the possibility that the desired state does not meet the reality. When a servant leader is too close to his/her team it may reduce the proactiveness of the team. On the other hand, servant leaders who excessively share power with their teams may neglect to provide required support to employees, leaving them to manage too independently on their own (Northouse, 2016).

Situations between individuals in workplaces can be challenging. The significance of effective communication between servant leaders and group members is believed to support the comprehension of common goals, change management, and development of shared values (Abu Bakar & McCann, 2016). Good communication skills, particularly good listening skills can be utilized to avoid trouble in organizations (Kluger & Itzchakov, 2021). Avoiding trouble as a statement may not transmit the magnitude of potential issues caused by poor communication. As Abu Bakar and McCann (2016) suggest, group OCB willingness may disappear in organizations when leader-member dyadic communication is lacking or poor.

Figure 1 summarizes the ten principles of leadership defined by Spears (2004). The principles are listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community.

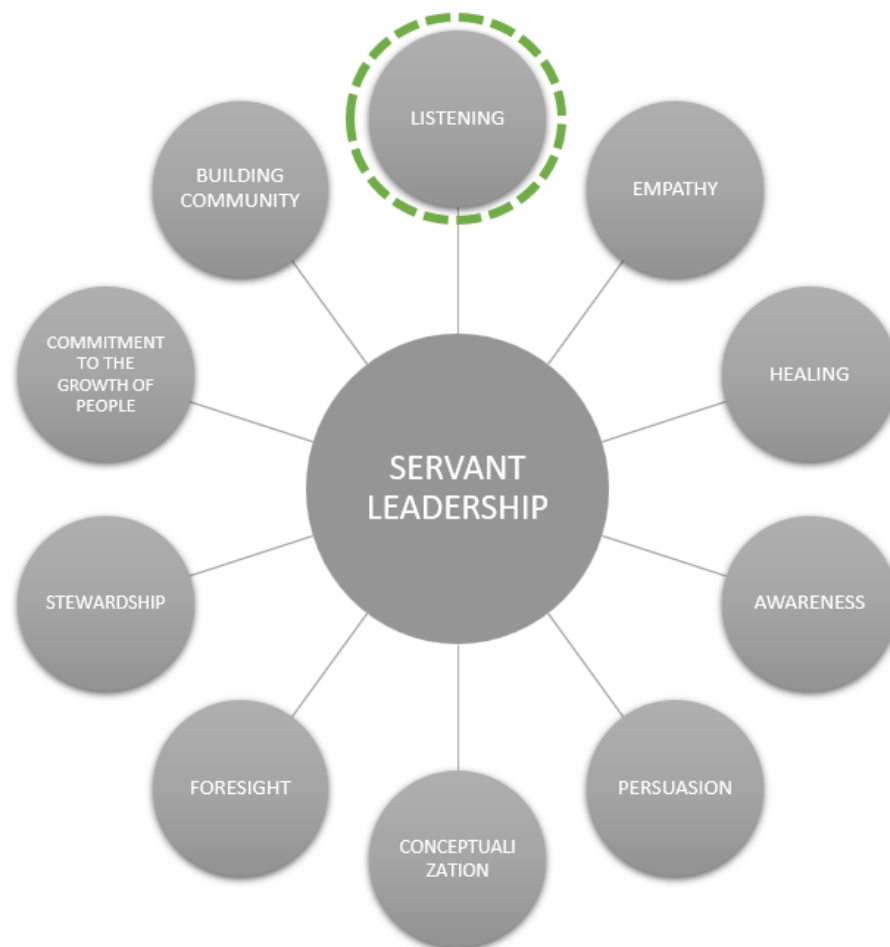


Figure 1. Principles of servant leadership (Spears, 2004).

Out of these principles, listening is next raised into focus, and for specific reasons. Recent research connects listening to positive organizational outcomes, including satisfaction with the leader being enhanced by good listening (Lloyd et al., 2017), and reduced turnover intentions (Bregenzer et al., 2020). Leaders with active empathic listening skills affect the enthusiasm, involvement in work, and emotional energy of employees (Jonsdottir & Kristinsson, 2020). During the interviews, listening was strongly raised by the participants, both in connection to the positive and negative OCB experiences. Thus, the decision to add listening to the theoretical framework is supported by the empirical part of the thesis.

3.2 Listening as a Principle of Servant Leadership

Listening continues to receive relatively little attention in organizational dynamics. Instead of building listening-centric work cultures, it is more typical that the focus turns to strong speakers in organizations. Listening is, however, a skill that the World Economic Forum (2021) refers to as one of the primary soft skills needed to be successful at work. Listening is the key to creating and maintaining positive interpersonal relationships, not only in the professional but personal lives as well (Bodie, 2012).

Servant leaders need to enforce a deep commitment to listening with intent, receptively, and with empathy (Spears, 2004). The likelihood of positive outcomes, such as job performance, commitment, satisfaction, and loyalty increases as the quality of communication between leaders and followers improves (Bodie, 2012). A variety of benefits to organizations have been shown about listening e.g., trust, job attitudes, and employee well-being (Kluger & Itzchakov, 2021). Bregenzer et al. (2020) suggest that listening skills demonstrated by leaders can improve the well-being parameters at the workplace, including job satisfaction. Additionally, employees who perceive their leaders as good listeners demonstrate more creativity and have lower turnover intentions (Bregenzer et al., 2020).

According to Sharifirad (2013), there is a link between leaders' empathic listening skills and employee perceived psychological safety. The importance of social interactions, such as leader-follower relationships, and organizational climate at workplaces, can also be connected to positive work outcomes. According to the results, empathy, listening, and perceived psychological safety are all related to innovative work behavior and employee well-being (Sharifirad, 2013). Leaders' superior listening skills encourage employees to use an active voice without fear of negative consequences. Additionally, when leaders take the time to listen, they build stronger relationships with employees which, in turn, increases job satisfaction and reduces stress levels. A supportive leader can build a psychologically safe working environment. This, in turn, can contribute positively to the learning culture of organizations and lead to questioning old habits and finding creative ways to solve problems (Sharifirad, 2013).

Kluger and Itzchakov (2021) propose that constructive listening is a predecessor to outcomes such as trust, intimacy, and relational satisfaction in e.g., customer service situations. Listening with adaptation encourages the speaker to convey more information, which in turn increases the likelihood of being understood better. Whether listening always comes first is debated by Kluger and Itzchakov (2021). It may also be that after trust has been established, more open communication is formed between manager and employee. However, the authenticity of speakers is likely to increase the interest of the listener. This, in turn, increases the experience of psychological safety in the situation. This should lead to more interesting discourse, improve speaking quality, and ultimately lead to better listening quality as illustrated in Figure 2. This cycle of good may bring the speaker and listener to a state of togetherness, and bring benefits such as clarity, productivity, creativity, and well-being. Benefits are to be harvested for the listener, speaker, and organization alike (Kluger & Itzchakov, 2021).

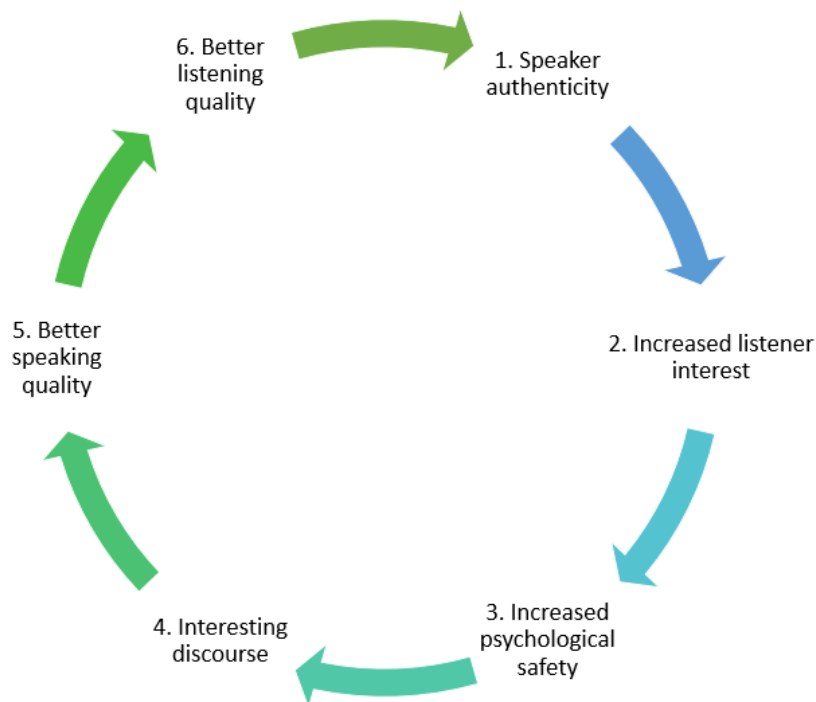


Figure 2. The positive chain of events launched by listening (modified from Kluger & Itzchakov, 2021).

According to Jonsdottir and Kristinsson (2020), the active listening of leaders has a positive influence on employee work dedication and engagement. They further argue that leaders with good listening skills promote the accomplishments, enthusiasm, and energy of employees. This extra energy may materialize into a willingness to go the extra mile, contributing to organizational achievements. Recent research suggests that employee perceptions of managers' listening skills correlate with their OCB willingness positively (Lloyd et al., 2015; Jonsdottir & Kristinsson, 2020; Bregenzer et al., 2020). When employees perceive managers as good listeners, they invest more energy in OCB, have reduced turnover intentions, and experience less emotional exhaustion at work (Lloyd et al., 2015).

Poor communication and the lack of listening may introduce potential risks in organizations. According to Lloyd et al (2017), not being listened to may elicit feelings of not being understood, leading to feelings of disrespect and finally a sense of injustice. Studies often approach the topic of listening skills primarily from the leaders' behavioral point of view. However, the responsibility for successful communication is reciprocal, and not easy to define where communication challenges initiate from in organizations. The complexity of the topic matches its importance.

Researchers typically make recommendations for supervisors to attend trainings to develop their listening skills (Lloyd et al, 2017; Jonsdottir & Kristinsson, 2020). Bass (1990) claims that leadership traits like charisma can be learned, and improving verbal and non-verbal performance of leaders is positively associated with a higher sense of mission which has a positive influence on organizational outcomes. Varis and Jolkkonen (2019) propose an opposite view: that the focus should be shifted toward the recruitment process, emphasizing the social skills and personalities of candidates when hiring new managers. During the recruitment process, hard skills such as a strong financial track record from previous roles are valued over soft skills like emotional intelligence. Moreover, the recruitment process may reflect the value base of top management. They often concentrate on candidates with strong substance knowledge e.g., former industry experience, instead of leadership skills. Detecting soft skills is more challenging than hard skills and measurable prior track records. This, on the other hand, may be used as an excuse for ignoring soft skills, such as listening, in the recruitment process (Varis & Jolkkonen, 2019).

3.3 Summary of Theoretical Framework

OCB has been a widely researched phenomenon since the 1930s (Ocampo et al., 2018), long before it had a definition of its own. Recent research finds a positive relationship between OCB and servant leadership (Mo & Shi, 2017). Servant leadership, among other principles, is supported by superior listening skills. Finally, research on leaders' listening skills suggests a link between positive listening and group-level acts of OCB (Abu Bakar & McCann, 2016). Each of the three elements, OCB, Servant leadership, and listening are important alone. Together, their strength is reinforced to achieve the best organizational outcomes.

Focusing on servant leadership out of the wide range of leadership traits was supported by the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health which promotes expanding servant leadership in Finnish working culture (Hakanen, 2016). Listening is one of the leading principles of servant leadership (Spears, 2004). During the empirical data collection for this thesis, listening was an element strongly raised by the interview participants. Subsequently, the theoretical framework was built on OCB and servant leadership, with a focus on listening as a principle of servant leadership, as shown in Figure 3.

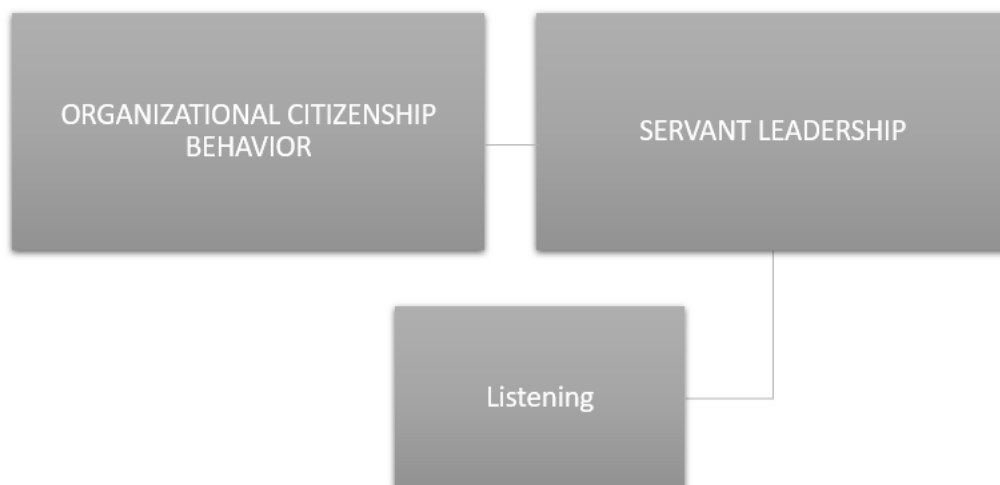


Figure 3. Theoretical frame of the thesis.

4 Methodology

In this chapter, the methodology used in this thesis is presented and justified. The processes of data collection and analysis are described. This thesis aims to understand how managers in Finland experience OCB in organizations. The empirical data is collected by interviewing managers working in Finland, representing different organizations and industries to allow for a rich data set to be collected.

4.1 Research Approach

A qualitative method was selected as the most suitable approach for answering the research questions in this thesis. As Hyvärinen et al (n.d.) suggest, when the aim is to collect information about human experiences, actions, and opinions there is no better way to get data than by asking. Typically, qualitative research supports answering research questions that are formed around a *what, why, or how* question. Qualitative research often focuses on analyzing meanings and their relations in spoken or written, even illustrated form (Ronkainen et al., 2020).

The empirical data in this thesis was collected using semi-structured interviews. This was the most appropriate way to collect information on a specific topic, across companies. Options such as in-depth interviews were evaluated, but not selected for their different nature. In-depth interviews are designed to provide deep information on a specific topic, often with few participants, and on sensitive topics (Milena et al., 2008). Semi-structured interviews consist of pre-formulated questions that can be flexibly utilized. As the interview proceeds, more questions may arise (Myers, 2013). The interviewee can take questions in a different order, skip some, and make observations not only of what is said but how things are said (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018). Semi-structured interviews support researchers in understanding the worldview of participants and enable the interviewer to pick up leads dropped by interviewees (Bryman & Bell, 2015, 497). Consequently, it requires the full attention of the interviewer. Or as Mason (2002, 67) puts it, to *'think on your feet'*, requiring the interviewer to react quickly, coherently, and consistently with the research questions in mind.

According to Cozby (2009, 133), one benefit of personal interviews as opposed to survey questionnaires is the interaction between people. Another benefit is that upon agreeing to join an interview the participants grant permission to utilize the information they share. Interviewees are more likely to answer all questions. In case of misunderstandings, the interviewer can make clarifications (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, 85-86). During interviews, the interviewer might encourage the interviewee to elaborate on specific topics further.

Conducting interviews as a method in qualitative research raises criticism for potential interview bias, which is a possible outcome of human interaction. The interviewer could e.g., influence the answers, or signal approval or disapproval of some answers (Cozby, 2009, 134). Bryman and Bell (2015, 508) encourage proper preparation and warn novice researchers of inefficient questions that might lead to simple yes or no answers.

4.2 Interviewee Selection and Interview Process

The interviewees were selected from the author's network using purposive sampling. Cozby (2009, 141) defines purposive sampling as selecting interviewees based on certain criteria. Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2018) recommend purposive sampling in qualitative research to ensure the interviewees know about the specific topic.

Two prerequisites were set for the participant selection: interviewees should have managerial experience and over ten years of working life completed in Finland. The author decided to only involve individuals with whom she had not worked closely. This decision supported the ethical approach of the thesis with objectivity on the author and anonymity on the participants' side. A snowball sampling technique was tested, whereby one interviewee was asked to recommend another from their network to be interviewed (Mason, 2002). This led to only one successful interview and two failed attempts which were canceled at the last minute by the invitees. Knowing the interviewees seemed to result in better participation, and possibly supported in creating an atmosphere of trust and openness which was present in each interview. As desired, the variety of industries and companies represented by the interviewees provided a richness of examples across

different fields. Despite differences, similarities in the findings of the interviewed managers could be identified.

On an ethical note, Cozby (2009, 42) recommends that before conducting an interview all participants are informed about the purpose of the study, confidentiality, and the right of the interviewee to withdraw from the process. Before the interview, each participant received a Microsoft Teams invitation with a justification and a short briefing on the topic. Providing information in advance proved beneficial, allowing the interviewees to orientate to the topic, saving time during the interview, and enabling the same pre-information to be delivered to all interviewees. The invitation served as a written document between both parties. It contained an agreement of anonymity, consent to the anonymous use of the interview material, and advance notice of recording and duly deleting the material after two years by the data processing rules related to research data (Jamk, n.d.).

In total, ten interviews were conducted. The average working years of all interviewees was 27.6 years, with their average in manager roles being 17.6 years. More details related to the participants and interviews are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2. Demographics of the interviewees.

	INTERVIEW LENGTH (min)	GENDER	AGE	WORKING YEARS	MANAGER ROLE YEARS
Interviewee 1	35	Female	49	26	15
Interviewee 2	50	Female	48	26	15
Interviewee 3	105	Male	46	30	15
Interviewee 4	50	Male	60	42	34
Interviewee 5	60	Female	46	20	15
Interviewee 6	90	Male	38	18	12
Interviewee 7	45	Female	55	35	23
Interviewee 8	35	Female	51	31	20
Interviewee 9	35	Female	46	23	7
Interviewee 10	45	Female	45	25	20

This thesis aims to understand OCB among managers working in Finland, not drawing attention to a particular organization or company, and as a phenomenon, OCB is not industry-specific. Collecting the empirical data from individuals with a wide range of backgrounds was considered an enrichment of the data. All interviewees had experience from working in large organizations, including the ones who had been, or were entrepreneurs during the time of the interview. Although not an exhaustive list, Figure 4 summarizes a sample of industries the interviewees represented.

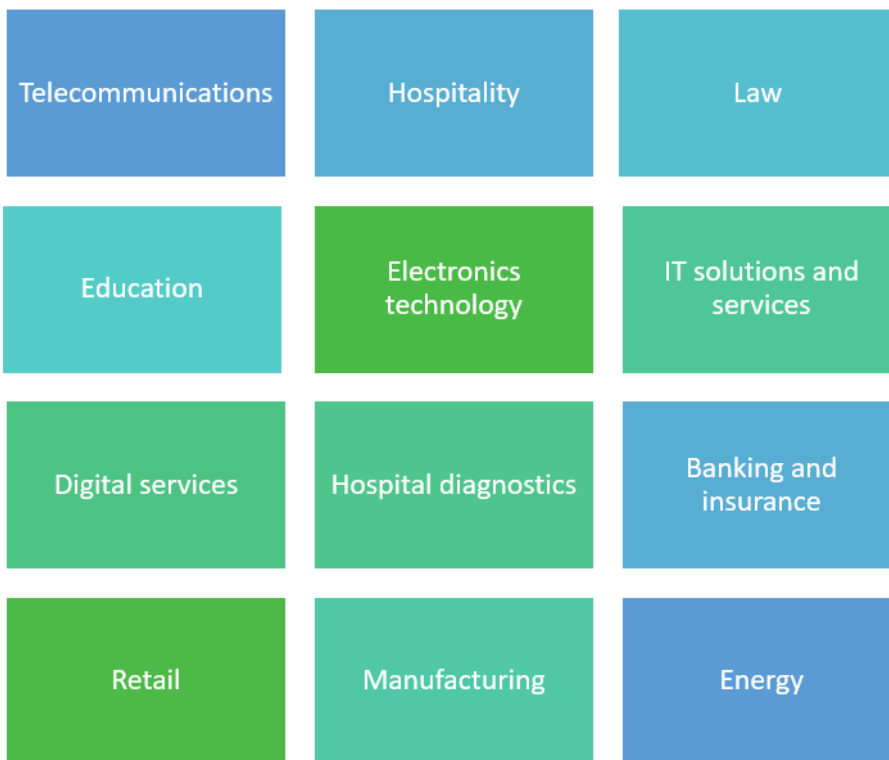


Figure 4. Examples of industries represented by interviewees.

Interview process

One pilot interview was conducted before starting the interview round. As recommended by Bryman and Bell (2015, 508), piloting allowed required changes to be made to the interview frame. Questions were modified and added, and the flow of the interview was improved by grouping questions according to themes to create a logical flow. Another benefit of the pilot interview was providing an estimated time for the interviews to follow. The flexibility enabled by semi-structured interviews was utilized, however, each interview followed the same main sequence. A brief introduction to the interview and collecting basic information about the interviewees i.e., demographics, working years, etc. was done first. The recording was started only after this point to support the interviewee anonymity. Establishing an understanding of OCB was formed with each participant, without using the term. Then, the questions were taken in a flexible but similar order.

Answering was voluntary, yet all interviewees answered all placed questions. Apart from two interviews where the network connection did not support it, video cameras were on during the

whole time. In addition to making the interviews more personable, it supported conveying emotions when interviewees spoke from an exceptionally positive or negative experience. The detailed interview questions can be seen in Appendix 2.

Myers (2013, 193) refers to setting up an interview as a drama script. The interviewer is encouraged to show empathy and understanding but to leave the majority of the space for the interviewee (Myers, 2013, 196). Occasionally, there was a dialogue between the interviewee and the interviewer. Through nodding and smiling, the atmosphere was kept interactive. Qualitative interviews can be considered social situations (Mason, 2002, 64), and communication between the parties in an interview is considered a richness instead of an issue (Hyvärinen et al., n.d.). To support objectivity, none of the comments made by the interviewees was contradicted or disregarded, nor did the interviewer guide towards desired answers.

The terminology used in the questions was simplified to common terms e.g., instead of using the term OCB the questions referred to extra-role tasks. In addition to questions that were designed to elicit deep and elaborative answers (Bryman & Bell, 2015, 508), the target was to get the interviewees to provide example situations from working life to utilize the most of their contextual knowledge. This technique can help understand the steps and reasons behind events instead of only collecting opinion-based data (Mason, 2002, 74). During the interviews, the answers of respondents were typed in a Microsoft Word document capturing roughly 80-90% of the answers with typos. Typing word for word was considered important to avoid accidental data manipulation. Later, each interview was transcribed by playing and pausing the recordings. Only thinking pauses and connecting phrases without meaning were not transcribed. Eventually, there were 47 pages of transcribed documents written in font size 11, using line spacing 1. The recordings of the interviews were stored in the Microsoft Teams platform.

All interviews were conducted in Finnish. There were no identifiable sociocultural gaps between the interviewer and interviewee (Bryman & Bell, 2015). From a reliability standpoint, nuances of the interview answers may have been lost in the process of translation. To minimize the risk, the data analysis was completed in Finnish as a continuation of the process, and translations were made carefully when presenting direct quotes in the Results chapter.

4.3 Data Analysis

The data analysis was done using qualitative content analysis (QCA). This choice was supported by the nature of the collected data. As Schreier (2012) summarizes, QCA is well justified when your data is non-standardized, needs interpretation, and when meaning needs to be constructed by the researcher. Typically, the meaning is analyzed from rich, verbal text. When conducting QCA, all collected material is reviewed, the decision of a coding frame is made, and the same sequence of steps is followed. Whereas in everyday encounters people intuitively seek meaning in different situations, with QCA the process of interpreting data is systematic. This, in turn, supports consistency in the process and supports the reliability of the results (Schreier, 2012). When conducting qualitative research, it is essential to keep in mind that empirical research data is only data. It should not be considered to be equal to the researched topic, nor does it represent the correct answers or a single, pure truth (Ronkainen et al., 2020). On an ethical note, even when familiar-sounding experiences were shared by interviewees, the author kept the data at a distance, keeping in mind that the data was not a reflection of her own experiences.

Initially, the data analysis was started using a data-driven basis. There were no pre-selected units of analysis (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, 109). A data-driven approach or *'letting your categories emerge from your data'* is common in qualitative research, whereby key codes and concepts are created while going through the material (Schreier, 2012, 25). The first reading rounds were completed with no other intention than to become familiar with the data. During the next reading rounds, similarities in the interviewee comments were systematically raised and preliminary categories were formed. The main focus was on what, at times also on how things were said. The classification codes were not preselected. Instead, they were formed after reducing the data and having properly familiarized with it, and in reflection to the research questions. Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2018, 108) propose this to be a common approach in qualitative research and content analysis, particularly when the analysis is approached from the empirical data.

The literature on the thesis topic assisted the author in identifying certain OCB factors, such as helping behaviors in the interviewees' comments. Similarly, it helped to look for what was not said by interviewees e.g., engaging in OCB for the sake of rewards, or being forced to do extra. During

the data analysis, the importance of listening was raised from the empirical data in this study and the author went back to theories of servant leadership and listening as one of its principles (Spears, 2004). Therefore, the data analysis process developed from a data-driven analysis to a theory-assisted analysis. As Tuomi and Sarajärvi suggest, theory-assisted analysis enables the utilization of prior research without attempting to test prior theories. Instead, in theory-assisted analysis previous studies support authors to find new meanings (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, 109).

The practical process of data analysis was performed in Microsoft Excel. First, all relevant comments from the interviews were copied to an Excel sheet for the first analysis round. Secondly, each original comment was split into as many separate cells as needed to contain only one meaning on one line. Without this step, detailed coding would not have been possible. The wealth of comments was overwhelming, exceeding 300 lines in total. The first coding step was reducing the comments. Then, each comment was classified into a first class, then a subclass, followed by a main class. It should be noted that this process was not ready in one go, instead, it was repeated multiple times until the comments were funneled into place.

The higher the classification code, the more unification and patterns started to appear. After defining the main class for each comment, the analysis process was validated following the guidance from Elo et al. (2022). A typical mistake to avoid was to ensure that the analysis did not form a circle where the author would find the research question in the main class. Instead, verifying that the formed main classes support answering the research question reassures the researcher that the analysis is on the right track (Elo et al., 2022). Finally, the experiences of managers were collected, and themes were formed related to encouraging and discouraging OCB experiences, which will be presented in the next chapter.

The work-life maturity of the interviewees and the versatility of the organizations they represented provided a richness of data. Using qualitative content analysis, the interviews were analyzed looking for similarities in the data. First, the experiences of OCB were captured from the data, to understand how the interviewed managers lived the phenomenon in everyday life in their workplaces. Next, encouraging and discouraging elements related to OCB were collected and analyzed. After multiple analysis rounds, the data was rigorously categorized. From the categories,

for both encouraging and discouraging experiences three unifying themes were formed. The results will next be presented accordingly.

5 Results

In this chapter, the results of the empirical data are presented in light of the research questions:

How do managers in Finland experience OCB in working life?

- a. What encourages managers to engage in OCB?
- b. What discourages managers from engaging in OCB?
- c. How can encouraging and discouraging elements be supported by leadership?

To answer these research questions, ten semi-structured interviews were conducted. The participating managers represented different companies from different industries in Finland. The decision to select cross-industry representatives was supported by the aim to understand OCB as a phenomenon in Finnish working life. The manager voice was chosen to add their experience to the body of research which has mainly focused on the employee view. The ability to speak from a manager and employee perspective, while simultaneously being able to see the phenomenon from their team members' viewpoint was valuable to the study. It enabled observations to be made related to the reasons why OCB becomes necessary in organizations in the first place, and what its consequences are. To clarify terminology, when presenting the results, the word *manager* is used strictly in connection to the group of interviewees, while the word *leader* is used to refer to their superiors.

5.1 OCB Experienced by Managers

All interviewed managers recognized OCB as a practical phenomenon in their workplaces. Experiences of OCB extended to all levels of the organization: employees, colleagues, and their leaders. There were examples of voluntary and involuntary OCB. Instead of focusing on in-role and extra-role tasks in their roles, the interviewees felt that in a manager role, you do what needs to

be done. The managers mainly found it challenging to distinguish between assignments that belonged to their manager roles and assignments that would be considered extra.

It is not easy to draw a line as a manager. You easily feel that you are responsible for everything. When I started my career as an employee it was easier, I had a role and job description, and I knew more clearly what belonged to my tasks (Interviewee 7).

It depends on how your manager role is built. The other thing is, is it a start-up, scale-up, or similar company where roles are a little bit hazy? Even if not hazy and defined on a job title level, it is sometimes challenging to know exactly what each specific manager role contains (Interviewee 8).

For me, it's very hard to think that some work would not belong to me. My career development has been strongly based on solving problems outside my working role. I have never said that something would not belong to me (Interviewee 3).

There was controversy in answers regarding OCB willingness. Some managers found that not everyone in organizations was willing to take on extra. The lack of OCB willingness was seen as a lack of flexibility that did not help the organization to function. The interviewed managers understood that despite OCB being a preferred feature in employees, it could not be expected of anyone. They did, however, recognize among their colleagues and in their teams who did or did not actively engage in OCB. Also, some comments were made with acceptance towards individuals not taking on extra.

Not everyone engages in extra-role activities. Usually, it is a red flag for me. You cannot ask in an interview how willing a person is to do extra. You can only try to get an idea by asking them about their initiative and personality in general (Interviewee 3).

No, not everyone does extra-role work. Some people are very specific about their limits and communicate them very clearly. The pen drops the minute the day ends. Sometimes, when you ask someone for help, they simply say this does not belong to me (Interviewee 9).

Some people completely ignore extra tasks. They can be passive, in a way, they actively avoid taking on anything extra. Sometimes in a meeting, an issue is raised. There are people in the room to whom it would logically belong. If they do not grab it, I find myself volunteering, knowing that the work has to be done anyway (Interviewee 1).

It is not necessarily a bad thing if you do not take on extra-role work. I find that a risk of overloading looms in the whole concept of doing extra, you might be exploited (Interviewee 10).

Some of the interviewees believed that everyone does engage in OCB. However, it may be out of practical rather than motivational causes. Sometimes OCB was also experienced to be periodical rather than daily in organizations.

Yes, I think all people do extra-role work, regardless of their position, age, or other criteria. I think it is based on their will to help others. On the other hand, I have also seen situations where people have not done anything more than what is required of them. But usually, there will be situations when you must do at least a little extra, for example when a colleague resigns, and work needs to be rearranged temporarily (Interviewee 6).

I find that engaging in extra-role assignments is sometimes periodical. In an annual clock, there may be times when certain things must be pushed through even if they do not belong to me. And that's fine if it does not become permanent (Interviewee 8).

The organization size where the interviewees worked had some influence on the experienced OCB. The smaller the company the wider the range of tasks that needed attending to. In large

organizations, OCB was more typically found as unassigned tasks that were easily allocated to the same individuals.

Working in a start-up company there are fewer of us, and we all do a little bit of everything. It requires and enables you to do much extra-role work, and at the same time causes the role boundaries to be less clear than in my previous job (Interviewee 2).

I am looking at this now as an entrepreneur. There are, in a way, no boundaries. Are there any assignments that I could say do not belong to me? No. I do try to ensure that my employees have clear roles set for them. Partially this pushes all the extra work to come my way (Interviewee 9).

In large organizations, roles are clearly defined, as in what you are allowed to do. If you ask people to do extra but their job description does not change, they cannot be paid extra... And if you take care of extra tasks in large organizations, they will be yours forever. I do a significant amount of extra work on top of my role (Interviewee 4).

Most of the interviewees found that monitoring their team members' extra-role work was easier than monitoring their own. Managers felt that they were able to both govern and protect their team members from engaging in too much extra-role work. In practice, the interviewed managers indicated that occasionally they take over assignments from their team members to support them.

It is much easier for me to monitor that my employees do not engage in too much extra-role work than to monitor my behavior and boundaries. Working is so transparent these days. Spending enough time with the team helps. It is easier to start organizing the excess extra-role work of team members because I can temporarily take some of it to myself (Interviewee 1).

I tell my team members to close their laptops, spend time with their families, and have hobbies – to save energy for all that. I tell them to imagine that this [work] is a game.

Before the game you need to rest properly, otherwise you will not have the strength to play (Interviewee 6).

Usually, the people who work too much on extra-role activities are white-collar office workers. If I had such a team, it might be difficult to know if they work all night from home. Leading a team in a production unit it is easy for me to monitor who does what, and that the workload in general is under control (Interviewee 4).

I can identify work that my team members have done outside their roles. These are working late in the evenings and during weekends. I try to intervene and remind people of assignments that do not belong to them. That we have different people responsible for those tasks (Interviewee 5).

Some of the interviewees found it challenging to monitor the load of extra-role assignments of their team members. Covid-19 and the subsequent increase in remote work have complicated this aspect of manager roles.

Leading people remotely has increased the complexity of monitoring what team members are engaged in. Many devoted and humble employees do not make noise. Remote leadership leads to focus being drawn to the individuals who do make noise, in good and bad. I am afraid of the potential blind spots when I do not meet people even weekly (Interviewee 10).

Yes and no. There are workload tracking and ticketing systems in place, but they do not tell everything. I want to maintain a working culture where people come and talk to me when they are overloaded, so we can plan how to support them (Interviewee 8).

5.2 Encouraging OCB Elements

The encouraging and discouraging OCB elements from all interviews were analyzed and for both, a comprehensive list of codes was created. Table 3 illustrates a sample of the data analysis coding scheme from the original phase to the main themes created.

Table 3. Sample of data analysis coding scheme.

Main theme	Main class	Subclass	Reduced phrase	Original phrase
Personality	Helping others	The will to help others when possible	The will to help others even when work does not belong to oneself	It motivates me that I can help others. Even when it is not a part of my role. If I can help someone, or support taking things forward at work, of course I will do it (Interviewee 2).
Exploitation	Good work rewarded by work	Unfairness of good work rewarded by more work	Feeling of unfairness when good work is rewarded by more work	When I feel I have given my best, but no matter how well I do my job or how much extra I do, I am given more work. It makes you cynical. The appreciation is not there and the work never ends. It does not motivate you to keep giving more of yourself (Interviewee 9).

OCB encouraging experiences were categorized under three main themes: personality, teamwork, and trust, whereas the discouraging experiences were grouped into structural, injustice, and leadership issues. Figure 5 illustrates how investing extra energy in their organizations is further motivated by the encouraging, while the discouraging elements of OCB start to decrease the will to do more.

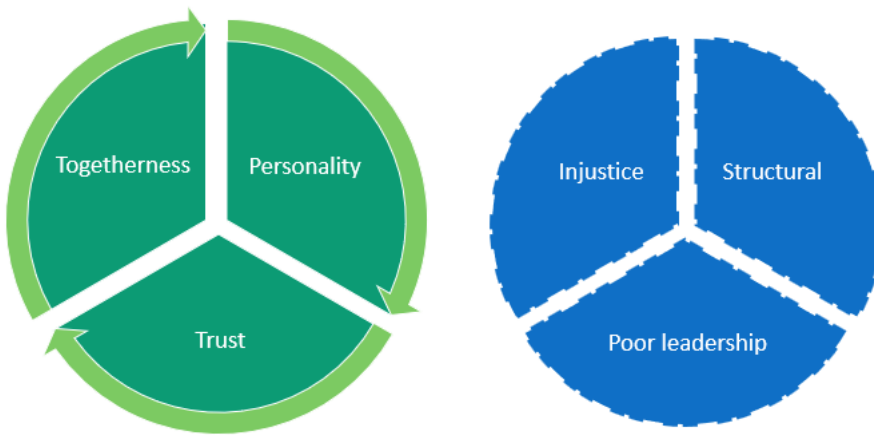


Figure 5. The flow of encouraging, and stagnation of discouraging OCB elements.

Altogether thirteen main classes for encouraging OCB elements were identified, as shown in Table 4. Next, the results will be presented according to the themes.

Table 4. The encouraging OCB elements.

ENCOURAGING ELEMENTS	THEMES	MAIN CLASSES
	Personality	Sense of responsibility
		Job engagement
		Helping others
		Pleasing others
	Togetherness	Supporting team members grow
		Reaching targets
		Succeeding together
		Safeguarding processes
	Trust	Leader displays trust in me
		Leader displays interest in me
		Positive feedback
		Psychological safety
		Listening leads to actions

Personality

A strong sense of responsibility was displayed in the interview comments. The interviewees found that all tasks in organizations need to be done. Including work that is without dedicated ownership. The ability to notice such work, combined with the willingness to solve issues were raised as driving OCB forces among the managers.

If there is an unassigned task, I easily take it up myself. I cannot leave it undone. I have always behaved this way, also in my free time (Interviewee 5).

I'm very solution-oriented by nature. I observe many things around me, I am also fast. These features enable me to notice things, and it is hard for me not to intervene. It happens on an impulse (Interviewee 10).

I can sense and see what needs to be done, not everyone in organizations does. If my job becomes easier after I have carried out tasks of 'missing links', I do it (Interviewee 8).

The willingness to help others was mentioned in various examples throughout the interviews. Also, the will to please others was often raised. Interviewees found these features to be strongly related to their personalities.

I am motivated by helping others and being able to get things done. If I can do something to help, naturally I will do it. I am the same way in my free time (Interviewee 2).

I am encouraged by taking on tasks to help other people, to take on a kind of supporting role, for one reason or another. I wonder if it's an in-built thing in my personality (Interviewee 1).

I think it is the will to help others so that other people would have it easier. It makes me feel good to be able to help somebody out (Interviewee 6).

It comes from my personality and spine. I easily think that everything belongs to me. And there is an element of the will to please others, I can admit that. (Interviewee 10).

In general, the interviewees understood their manager roles were nonspecific. They understood that establishing clear role boundaries would not be possible, hence engaging in extra assignments was considered normal. On the other hand, managers also recognized that they acted as role models in their organizations.

I cannot imagine that my current employer, or my previous one, could have written a job description that would state that for the next four years, I would only perform these tasks, and then I would go and work as if on an assembly line (Interviewee 6).

There are certain expectations on managers' shoulders. "A manager should" and "because of your role" are sentences you hear. On some level it [doing extra] is expected of us (Interviewee 10).

According to the interviewees, a strong work engagement and curiosity towards different assignments fostered acts of OCB.

99,9% of the time I like to go to work. When you like your job, you don't even feel like you're working. That's how I think it should be (Interviewee 5).

As a welcome addition to daily routines, I am easily tempted to participate in new assignments. They inspire and help me develop myself (Interviewee 7).

Togetherness

The interviewees emphasized the importance of working together as a motivator for their own OCB. Instead of seeking personal success, the managers raised their will to provide the required support to their team members to allow them to grow. They wished to act as enablers and

empower their team members e.g., by allowing them to solve issues themselves. Interestingly, the will to support team members extended upstream; the managers were also concerned with securing the success of their leaders.

As a manager, I am trying to develop myself to allow my team members to solve problems themselves. I am still too quick to provide them with a solution, it would raise their team spirit if they could solve problems themselves (Interviewee 4).

I'm continuously learning to be more patient. I tend to think we will proceed faster if we do as I say. Instead, I should allow my team members to solve issues, and allow them to enjoy the feeling of having found a solution on their own (Interviewee 9).

My job is to ensure that my team members succeed according to their set targets. But my job is also to ensure that my leader succeeds. At workplaces, we often talk about what managers need to do to support their teams to succeed, but I have hardly ever heard talk about what employees should do to support their managers to succeed (Interviewee 6).

The importance of building a winning team as a driver to contributing extra to work was raised. Some managers saw their roles as service professions. They felt responsible for the working community and instead of playing their role in the organization, they played for, and with, the whole team. Being a part of a winning team was considered a facilitator to doing extra.

If you build a good team, it encourages you to do much extra on top of your role. To me, it's important to help my team members solve problems. I want to contribute to creating superheroes. It is always about the people (Interviewee 3).

Regardless of who succeeds, I, a team member of mine, my leader... I get to join the celebration. These successes encourage me to do more and to try harder (Interviewee 6).

Goal orientation fueled positive OCB energy among the interviewed managers, specifically, reaching common goals together with their teams. Securing the smooth flow of processes was considered a natural part of manager roles. Regardless of whose responsibility tasks were, managers were committed to completing whatever was needed to prevent problems.

My main driver to invest extra energy in work is to reach the goals we have set for the company. Working according to my vision and values motivates me (Interviewee 9).

What motivates me to do extra is that we can deliver the goods to the customer and meet our targets, you do what it takes. It is as simple as that. Reaching the set targets and meeting the performance metrics that have been set motivates me to do whatever is needed to reach them (Interviewee 4).

In a hospital environment, I feel responsible for the whole process of working and for people to get their diagnosis as soon as possible. I cannot leave tasks undone even if they do not belong to me (Interviewee 5).

Trust

Trust displayed by leaders encouraged the interviewees to give their best at work. OCB motivation increased when leaders expressed their genuine interest in the managers' opinions. In particular, leaders' listening, as well as concrete proof of having been heard were considered important; actions speak louder than words.

It helps if you have a good, trusting relationship with your leader. It feels good to notice that some of the topics I have raised are quoted by my leader in presentations and decision-making. To me, it is proof that my leader has listened to me (Interviewee 10).

How my leader listens to me, has quite a big influence on my motivation to do extra. I think it may have something to do with the sense of appreciation. My opinion makes a difference (Interviewee 9).

In big strategic decisions, I sometimes find that my leaders have listened to me. I hear them quoting my phrases. When my leader has the same target as I do, listening leads to actions (Interviewee 4).

An ex-leader of mine was an excellent listener. He always shocked me by having listened to me, also in less significant situations. He had a lot of responsibilities and was not present much, but he was a genius at prioritizing when to listen, and he came to me (Interviewee 3)!

Genuine attention and appreciation displayed by leaders were valued and inspired the managers to engage in acts of OCB. Leaders who had invested time in getting to know the managers were highly regarded, which paid off in the form of an increased will to give more. Managers also commented on the topic from their standpoint. Just as they appreciated being heard, they provided examples of how important they consider listening to their team members.

If I feel that I am getting genuine attention and support from my leader, I get an even stronger motivation to do my work as well as possible. So that my leader would be proud of my work, and our unit would succeed (Interviewee 10).

In a development discussion with my leader, we talked about my hobbies e.g., performing arts and acting. Soon after this discussion, my leader suggested I would take on a speaker's role at a big trade fair event. It felt wonderful that I had been heard and my leader knew what motivated me (Interviewee 7).

I have had many leaders who have signaled that they have truly understood what motivates me. At some point, they have invested time in getting to know me and know my

personality. They have understood that I am at my best when I have a certain freedom to do things my way. Having leaders who believe in my judgment gives me positive energy. As a manager, listening is the only tool I have for getting to know my employees and what motivates them (Interviewee 6).

Positive feedback from leaders was considered a source of energy. It boosted the motivation of managers to continue giving their best.

One of the most motivating and encouraging types of feedback that comes to mind is when my leader gave me a positive nickname as an outcome of a job well done. This encouraged me to do more (Interviewee 2).

When I receive positive feedback from my leader it encourages me to do extra. It feels rewarding (Interviewee 7).

During difficult times the importance of leadership seemed to grow. The role of leaders in creating an environment of psychological safety and trust was further emphasized during organizational turmoil.

I have ranked leaders based on how they operate under crises. Not how they solve the crisis, but how they deal with their teams. How they talk and listen to them in hard times. Whether or not they manage to deliver the implied message that we've got this, it'll be all right, we're going to make it (Interviewee 3).

5.3 Discouraging OCB Elements

The discouraging OCB elements from the interview data were also grouped under three themes: structural, injustice, and leadership issues as displayed in Table 5.

Table 5. The discouraging OCB elements.

DISCOURAGING ELEMENTS	THEMES	MAIN CLASSES
	Structural	Fixing the underperformance of others
		Unclear responsibilities
		Unrealistic schedules and targets
		Own work suffers due to OCB
		Uneven distribution of work
	Injustice	Exploitation
		Credit for work stolen by others
		Unfair treatment
		Conflict of values
	Leadership issues	Lack of leader appreciation
		Inflexibility
		Lack of empathy
		Lack of support in manager role
		Overperformance

Structural

On a discouraging note, the interviewed managers questioned the need for acts of OCB. Unclear responsibilities were a typical requirement for OCB. Specifically, the need to carry extra tasks in organizations derives from the grey areas that have not been assigned to anyone yet must be carried out. Although periodically not an issue, the managers had little understanding towards systematic expectations to fix grey areas.

The role boundaries are unclear. You must fix the grey areas, or the process will not flow. You have to do all kinds of extra tasks to meet your metrics. There are many internal discussions about to whom this work belongs but, in the end, your contract states, 'all other assignments given by your employer' and you just have to do it. Interfaces between roles in big organizations cause issues. (Interviewee 4).

Unclear tasks and tasks without ownership. This leads to the question: "Who will do this?". I easily raise my hand because I am responsible and I know if nobody else will, it will not get done. Sometimes doing extra is required, so that I can do my job well (Interviewee 8).

On the other hand, when people engage in extra-role assignments they may be stepping on the toes of others, entering the responsibility areas of other individuals. Sometimes OCB is a result of going outside your role boundaries.

If everyone handled their roles as well as they could, most likely nobody would need to do extra. Helping somebody out is different, but what if individuals cannot complete their tasks in the time they should? Working on extra tasks may be a sign of interfering where you do not belong (Interviewee 6).

Unrealistic targets and working in a constant hurry were mentioned as demotivational influencers to the interviewed managers' will to do extra for their organizations. Although periodically accepted, if lack of resources and unrealistic timeframes were seen as the dictators to doing extra, it raised negative feelings.

Organizations easily set too ambitious targets and push employees even though they should admit all targets are not reachable in the given timeframes. Goals should be high but not so high that people are burnt (Interviewee 8).

When resources are too scarce, and we are too few at work to do our jobs. If some people are sick, it pushes other people to limits. When there are simultaneous problems like machines breaking down it is impossible to even prioritize tasks (Interviewee 5).

The interviewees felt that OCB may, particularly among managers, sometimes be associated with fixing the underperformance of others. The strong sense of responsibility would not let them walk away from a job that had to be done.

Often managers who do a lot of extra-role work are fixing the underperformance of others. They should not, instead, they should stop the process, but sometimes it is just easier to push things through yourself (Interviewee 8).

I could not go home for the weekend in peace if we did not handle the diagnosis of a suffocating patient even if the work arrives just before five p.m. on a Friday. If the other people needed in the laboratory choose to leave, I need to do all their tasks also (Interviewee 5).

According to the interviewees, the workload generated by extra assignments does not get shared evenly between individuals in organizations. Many comments referred to potential work overload in connection with OCB.

According to my experience, in all the places where I have worked, there have been certain individuals who have been the trusted ones, the few ones who carry responsibilities and take on extra actions on behalf of others (Interviewee 7).

As a manager, I notice work creeping up on me slowly. Trying to support my team from overloading I might take on some of their work. If you have a big team, your time can slip away easily (Interviewee 1).

As an example, when we have had a board meeting, I have always made all reservations. My colleagues have been happy with this arrangement, and they assume that it is always me who handles them. Such extra tasks then suddenly become part of my job (Interviewee 10).

One structural issue was related to the allocation of managers' time to extra-role activities. They were identified to be time away from primary role requirements and causing delays in reaching their strategic targets.

When you are working on extra-role activities your work suffers. You are constantly behind on your schedules because you are tied up with something you should not be doing in the first place (Interviewee 8).

Up to what point is it [doing extra] a good thing? Motivation and keeping you inspired is good, but at what point is it too much? When does it start to influence your work performance and reaching your targets negatively (Interviewee 7)?

Injustice

Different forms of unfair treatment were shared by the managers. Experiences of exploitation were shared e.g., the feeling of nothing being enough, manipulating with individuals' consciences, or good work being rewarded by more work.

Very often people are used to the maximum. By saying we need this person in this project, suddenly ten other people need the same individuals for other projects. Who ensures prioritization is done when realistically we can only do certain things with the same resources without breaking them (Interviewee 8)?

At the hospital, it is common to play with people's consciences. You may be told that if you do not work overtime a patient may not get their diagnosis in time. People are pushed to do extra but not rewarded for it (Interviewee 5).

When I feel that I have given my best, but no matter how well I do my job and how much extra I do, I am given more work. It makes you cynical. The appreciation is not there, and it does not motivate you to keep giving more of yourself (Interviewee 9).

There were critical views towards the whole principle of engaging in extra-role activities, its pitfalls, and resorting to OCB for the wrong reasons identified.

Often, I feel like an easy target for people who think something needs to get done. I am told that I could take this job because I know how to do it. This should never be the way work is dealt (Interviewee 8).

The feeling of injustice was connected to situations where credit for the work done was stolen by others. Even if not intentionally done, it was raised as a demotivator to contributing extra. It was important for the managers to know who in their teams was to be credited for good performance. The same expectation was mentioned towards their leaders. The interviewees highlighted the importance of superiors staying on pulse of what was happening in their teams.

When your work is not recognized or someone else takes credit for it is a huge motivation killer. Either your work is dismissed, or someone else celebrates it. Employees should not have to make noise; leaders need to stay on board and know who has done what (Interviewee 3).

The most demotivating thing in the world is when someone else presents your work as their own. Either by taking credit for it or forgetting to mention there was a team behind the work (Interviewee 8).

Discouraging OCB motivation was linked to experiencing a conflict of values. Both personal values and socially unacceptable choices made in organizations were raised.

It is not okay for someone in the organization to be celebrating financial victories that conflict with the big picture of what is going on in the world. For instance, achieving business success conflicts with values related to the war in Ukraine (Interviewee 3).

A member of our board passed away unexpectedly. It launched a chain of events that was handled in an ugly way. The organization was not given time to recover from the tragedy. Many changes were implemented immediately and without empathy. It was a real conflict of values for me (Interviewee 10).

Leadership issues

A lack of leader appreciation was raised as a demotivator to doing extra. Specifically, when managers felt dismissed by their leaders for their efforts, proposals, or strategic advice.

In one company where I worked, a director managed to destroy much of the positive very quickly by closing down functions and firing great people... I tried, but failed, to make him listen and understand what he was doing was a catastrophically bad idea and partly illegal (Interviewee 3).

What demotivates me to do extra is a kind of putting down from my leader's side. Completely crushing my ideas without even discussing them. Sure, it is understandable that all ideas cannot be executed but they could still be heard (Interviewee 7).

When you have a long working history, and someone decides to hire a consultant. The outcome of this is a written document of all the same problems I and my team members have raised many times before. It feels like a joke to see the same topics written down by a consultant but not heard from us (Interviewee 4).

Conflicting opinions with their leaders, especially saying *no* was raised as a challenging topic. It was not easy for a manager to say *no*, nor was it always easily accepted by leaders.

I had to say NO to my leader. It was really difficult. My neck was red for a long time. It was not easy for my leader, either. Three times my leader asked me to, and three times I said no. I had to say no because it went against my values (Interviewee 10).

In our working culture, we need to start intentionally breaking boundaries. We need to start working in ways we are not used to. At first, it feels rude, like, how can I tell someone this work does not belong to me (Interviewee 9)?

Team playing was raised by interviewees as an encouragement to OCB. When leaders neglected to support their teams or attempted to achieve personal benefits instead of playing for the team, the OCB willingness of the managers decreased.

It demotivates you when leaders who should be in a role where they build a winning team do not appreciate your initiatives. Once, I invested much time and effort to create an onboarding plan for new employees. Everyone appreciated this work except my leaders, which left me feeling empty. If your leaders do not appreciate or acknowledge your efforts, or in the worst case they ask, "Why are you commenting on this topic"? If you play for the team but other individuals think they can win the game solo. This discourages my will to do extra (Interviewee 1).

The interviewed managers mentioned a lack of flexibility and freedom in their roles. Being responsible for their teams, but not being allowed to make all required decisions. Support from human resources was lacking. Managers felt they were left alone under growing expectations, in demanding roles but without the equivalent support. Particularly in times of crises.

We need more flexibility in our manager roles. Organizations and teams differ so much, for example by size. We must be able to create ways of working that make our employees know they are noticed better. For me to want to continue working as long as possible I wish I did not have any people reporting to me (Interviewee 4).

If two-way flexibility [between manager and leader] is missing. If I am flexible and put in longer hours when the workload is high, but my employer is not flexible when I ask for a day off. This does not encourage me to do extra (Interviewee 2).

I feel like our HR and leaders ignore us managers in difficult times. They forget that we are also human and need support. I wish I did not have to be in a manager role for the next 20 years. Managers should get breaks from being a manager, assigned to a project or

something so they can charge their batteries. The role is demanding. It wears you out (Interviewee 10).

The interviewees evaluated their behavior and identified personality-related challenges associated with OCB. They understood that some elements of OCB are in-built. They identified issues related to over-performance and high demands on themselves and recognized such behavior in their team members. Experiences of exhaustion were shared.

In my case, I think doing extra is tied to being over-committed to work. It is also a bit of a good girl syndrome. I need to do more and more, to get appreciation. It is super important for me to keep my promises and over-deliver (Interviewee 9).

Since my clinical training days, I have been working in my free time. Even after my burnout, I cannot understand that fifteen-minute flexibility is missing at work (Interviewee 5).

Some people have an intrinsic need to prove themselves to be worthy, even if you try to convince them they are doing enough. This can get ugly and become an obsession. Over-performing, burnout... Some people work as if they competed, afraid to be outrun by others (Interviewee 3).

The threat of me slipping back to the other side, doing too much extra again, is always there (Interviewee 10).

Summary of results

The generous number of quotes in the Results chapter were displayed on purpose. Considering the range of industries and organizations represented by the interviewees, it was somewhat surprising to find so many similarities between experiences. Acknowledging these similarities provides valuable insights on the direction that organizations may want OCB to develop, and the leadership needed to support that direction. The illustrative example in Figure 6 visualizes this

concept: ideally, OCB positive and negative motivators should remain in balance. The threat lies in the potential disproportion of discouraging experiences that may tilt the scale.

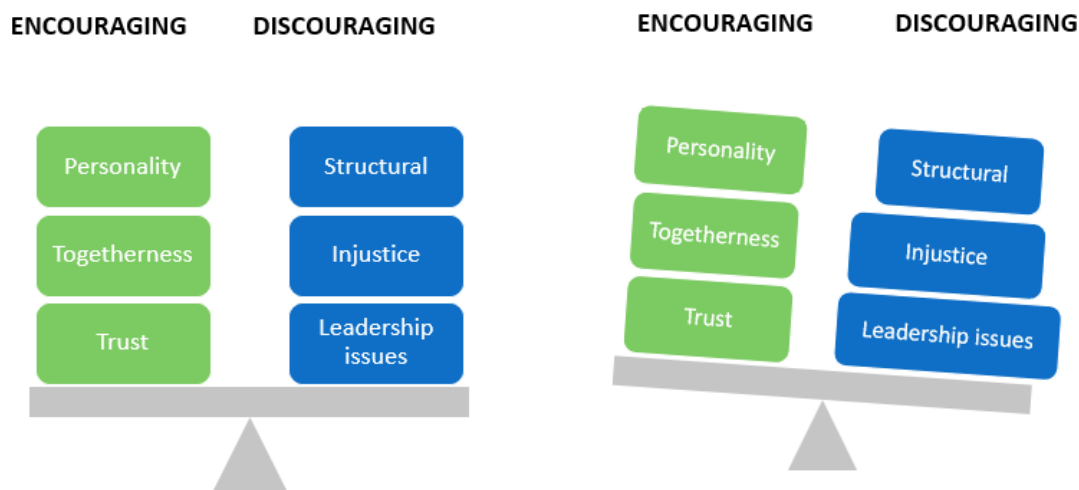


Figure 6. The importance of OCB balance.

6 Conclusion and Discussion

The purpose of this study was to understand how organizational citizenship behavior is experienced among managers in Finland. Following a qualitative method, ten managers representing different companies and industries were interviewed using semi-structured interviews. Results were created through qualitative data analysis. In this chapter, the answers to the following research questions are provided.

How do managers in Finland experience OCB in working life?

- a. What encourages managers to engage in OCB?
- b. What discourages managers from engaging in OCB?
- c. How can encouraging and discouraging elements be supported by leadership?

The same notation as in the Results is followed in the Discussion chapter: the term *manager* refers to the interviewed managers and the word *leader* is used when referring to the superiors of the interviewed managers.

6.1 OCB Experiences of Managers in Finland

Finnish managers are accepting and understanding of OCB at workplaces. They consider OCB to belong to organizations and are familiar with its benefits and drawbacks. Instead of seeking a clear line between in-role and extra-role tasks, managers have a strong sense of responsibility and do what needs to be done. Possibly due to their roles, managers easily feel responsible for everything. They acknowledge their role model statuses in organizations. They also, at times, step up to support their team members under a heavy workload. Voluntary OCB that occurs with acceptable frequency and for the right reasons is well received among managers.

However, challenges related to the phenomenon are identified, and contradictory views are raised. Workplaces are equipped with more and less active individuals, and managers understand that OCB cannot be expected of anyone. OCB derives from several different needs, and those needs make a difference in *how* managers experience OCB. When helping behaviors initiate from an individual's will to support others, OCB can be a rewarding, empowering experience. Periodical OCB requirements such as workload peaks or covering temporary gaps in resourcing, are neutrally accepted. But when the root cause for OCB is a profound problem, such as chronic under-resourcing, it conflicts with the managers' worldviews and OCB can become an unwanted, unaccepted, exhausting experience, as presented in Figure 7.

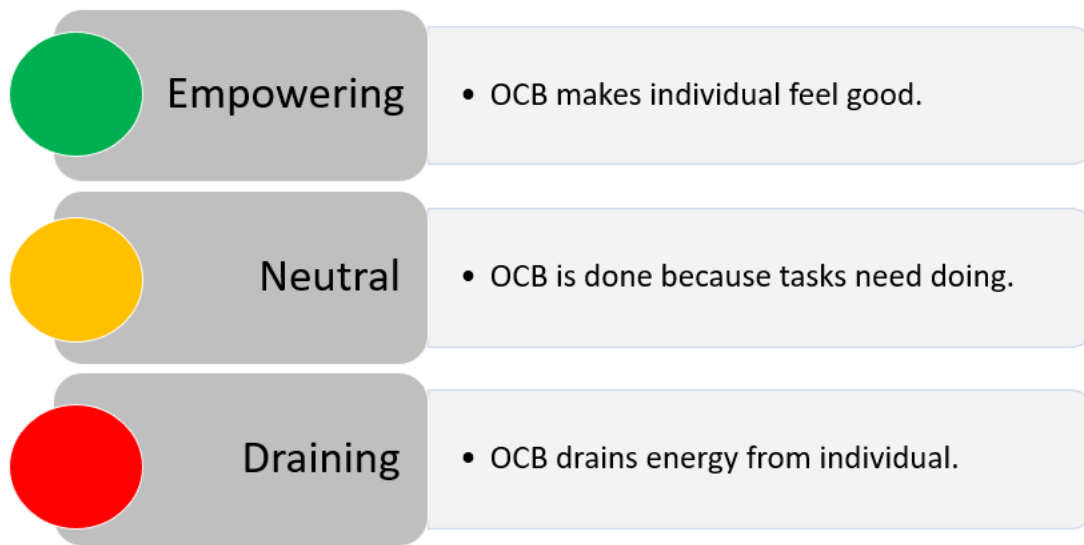


Figure 7. Experiencing OCB from empowering to draining.

Encouraging elements

The sense of responsibility is high among managers in Finland. Regardless of roles, boundaries, or expectations, managers focus on getting things done. Some may consider it an expectation; managers do recognize they are in role model positions in organizations. On the other hand, the will to help others is strongly transmitted and could primarily be personality-driven behavior. When managers engage in helping behaviors it provides them with a positive feeling. They do not consider it energy consumed they may feel empowered by it instead. Strong job engagement encourages managers towards OCB. Engaging in extra tasks is a natural outcome of job satisfaction. The managers foster a sense of togetherness in their teams and are motivated to give more of themselves when working as a team. Succeeding together and enabling team members to grow are important fuels for OCB. Leaders' trust fuels OCB willingness among managers. Being heard, receiving genuine attention from leaders, receiving feedback, and working in an atmosphere of psychological safety are elements that encourage managers to contribute to OCB.

Discouraging elements

Discouraging OCB elements consist of structural issues, experiencing injustice, and leadership challenges. Examples of structural issues in organizations are e.g., when roles and responsibilities are not defined for repeating tasks, instead process gaps need to be constantly fixed by *someone*. Targets and schedules should be in line with adequate, competent resourcing. The need to step up periodically is accepted, but working should not be a non-stop race with no help in sight. Engaging in extra tasks should not be caused by the need to fix the underperformance of others. Various forms of injustice in connection to OCB drain energy from managers. Unfair treatment, such as someone stealing credit for your work, or being asked to act in a way that conflicts with one's values is not tolerated.

As mentioned earlier, OCB is not evenly distributed in organizations. While some are intrinsically motivated, others simply do not take on anything extra. This may lead to a situation where it becomes a working norm. Good job performance of the most active individuals may be rewarded by more work. Subsequently, a feeling of exploitation may set in, which in turn leads to a drop in motivation and may eventually drain all energy out of an individual. Various leadership challenges result in discouraging acts of OCB. Primarily, managers suffer from poor listening on their leaders' part. Not being listened to leads managers to feel dismissed, and ultimately to feel unappreciated by their leaders. Inflexibility discourages managers, and does not limit to their leaders' behavior, but extends to their limited decision-making freedom as managers. Experiences of being left alone, without receiving the necessary support from their leaders, human resources, or other relevant functions in organizations demotivates managers. Particularly alarming is when managers are left alone during stressful times in organizations.

Finally, some managers identify in themselves a tendency for over-performance. Rather than being pushed to do more, they have personally set their bar too high. They keep telling themselves to keep doing more, better, faster. This could be behavior learned at a young age or a form of competitiveness in the individuals. It may be connected to acceptance-seeking, trying to fulfill the expectations of a role model, or a combination of many factors. In some cases, it is explained by strong job engagement. Some individuals enjoy their work so much that they cannot

stop. Regardless of the cause, managers can identify the potential risks involved in over-performance.

Leadership support

Leadership influences all activities in functioning organizations. Considering the influence of leadership in reference to OCB willingness, its role is slightly more significant in the prevention of unwanted outcomes. While managers appreciate feedback and fairness on their leaders' part, their OCB drivers are mainly intrinsic. Managers are mainly self-motivated with a strong sense of responsibility, proactively leading them to voluntary tasks outside their designated roles. As interviewee 3 stated: There are more ways to destroy the motivation of an individual than there are to build it. On the other hand, leadership can play a significant role in preventing negative OCB outcomes. As described earlier, listening is a key principle of servant leadership. By listening, leaders can acquire essential information about the OCB situation in their organizations. Understanding the need, nature, frequency, distribution, and experiences of OCB will help leaders plan preventive actions in time. All changes do not need to be implemented immediately, but acknowledging the challenges and providing managers with proof of listening is a good starting point.

6.2 Discussion

Certain OCB antecedents raised in prior research are supported by the findings of this thesis. Employee characteristics, such as helping behaviors, and conscientiousness which are positively associated with OCB (Bolino & Turnley, 2003) are also exhibited in the empirical part of this study. Furthermore, studies have indicated that helping behaviors and acts of kindness can have a positive influence on both parties. Helping other people comes back as happiness to the person offering help (Zhao & Epley, 2022). This is demonstrated in the managers' comments where they recognize the empowering energy of engaging in OCB. According to Abu Bakar and McCann (2016), the degree of OCB can act as a measure of organizational effectiveness, therefore OCB is treated as an outcome. Securing the process flow and handling all tasks that need to be handled are indications of group effectiveness among managers in Finland.

Signs of servant leadership and its benefits are raised by Finnish managers. The connection between leaders' listening to various positive experiences is particularly strong. When managers feel heard they also feel appreciated and trusted. This, in turn, encourages managers to invest extra energy in their organizations. Powerful emotions are connected to listening, in both good and bad. Managers who are proactively approached by their leaders are genuinely surprised and happy about it. This enhances their feeling of being appreciated and trusted. Managers who feel dismissed by their leaders feel not appreciated and hurt. In both situations, listening is the key. Listening has been connected to an enhanced feeling of trust (Kluger & Itzchakov). When employees perceive supervisors as good listeners, employee dedication increases and enhances their will to perform better (Jonsdottir & Kristinsson, 2020). In a positive working environment, the sense of procedural justice is enhanced. Polite communication and listening to each other have been indicated to support procedural justice and positivism in workplaces (Suutala et al., 2023), supporting OCB willingness.

Other traits connected to servant leadership are appreciated by managers e.g., empathy and stewardship. Specifically, serving, and caring behaviors, and the will to support team members to succeed and grow (Spears, 2004) were conveyed. On the contrary, managers did not appreciate individualistic behavior among their leaders. Selfishness and putting personal benefits ahead of the team are considered poor leadership, which managers find demotivating. Deery et al. (2017) find that although employees are measured against in-role targets, they are also expected to engage in extra activities. This may lead to challenges in prioritization and scheduling of work. This theory is supported by Finnish managers. Rather than presenting it as a problem, it is more of a practical finding: managers are sometimes busy doing tasks that do not belong to them, causing in-role responsibilities to be completed at the last minute. Typically, managers are high in accountability and deliver what is expected of them. This may, however, partly be done at the limits of their resources.

Literature suggests that excess OCB may result in OCB fatigue (Fu et al., 2022), which may result in multiple unwelcome outcomes. In this thesis, the focus was on the motivational elements. The empirical data is not enough to validate OCB fatigue findings. However, the signs of overload,

both threatening and unfortunately already materialized fatigue were strongly present during the interviews.

Prior familiarization with research enabled the author to make observations of what was *not said* by interviewees. Servant leadership is suggested to consume the resources of individuals, taking energy away from their families. Additionally, scholars suggest that OCB fatigue results in higher levels of stress and work-family conflicts (Zhou et al., 2020). Despite stress symptoms and burnout experiences raised in the empirical data, all provided examples remained in the working context. Intuitively, the interviewees did not connect OCB to the implications of work-family conflicts. Recent research points towards OCB being forced on employees (Rauf, 2016), and employees being tempted to engage in OCB to achieve personal benefits, such as career advancement (Fu et al., 2022). None of the interviewees connected any form of external force to OCB. No personal ambitions were mentioned, on the contrary. Succeeding together and empowering team members were emphasized.

Prior research (Bolino & Turnley, 2003) suggests that employees may be willing to go beyond the extra mile in the hope of receiving rewards and appraisal. Fu et al. (2022) propose that organizations should build OCB rewards into the formal compensation systems. These findings were not supported by the interviews conducted. Not only were the OCB motivators elsewhere, but the negative ones, such as exploitation or unfairness connected to OCB were perceived as unfairness. They would have been equally unfair if monetary rewards had been offered in contribution. A more solid way to solve this dilemma would be to clarify working roles, enable a reasonable normal workload, and allow for discretionary, voluntary, positive extra-mile actions to punctuate the normal workdays. Overall, the values and morals of the interviewed managers were surprisingly aligned in this aspect of the topic.

6.3 Managerial Implications

This thesis contributes to organizations in different ways. The results indicate that managers in Finland are self-motivated to engage in OCB and do not expect personal benefits in return. There is very little needed from leaders to boost managers to *do extra*, yet the ripple effect of OCB

willingness can benefit the whole organization. Finnish managers displayed acts of servant leadership and appreciated it in their leaders. Since managers are in a role model position, they set a positive example and are likely to encourage similar behavior in other levels of the organization (Yaffe & Kark, 2011). Following this logic, leaders are role models on a higher level and the same expectation of setting a positive example concerns them.

As established, OCB is voluntary actions that enhance task performance (Organ, 1997). Bass (1990) proposes that the performance of an individual in one role is similar to his or her performance on the next level. The most active, high-performing individuals are likely to be promoted to manager roles. With growing responsibilities *and* a role model position, it may be hard for them to control the amount of extra (OCB) that they contribute. In addition, managers may have primary jobs such as expert roles in their organizations, consuming normal working hours. In servant leadership, the will to serve others comes first (Northouse, 2016). Yet, organizations wishing to reap the benefits of servant leadership need to enable people in manager roles to exercise it.

Awareness of how well the scale of positive and negative OCB motivators is in balance is a joint effort between the manager and his/her leader. While leaders can be expected to support the fixing of structural OCB issues, they may not even be aware of challenges that are strongly tied to the personalities of managers, such as overachiever syndromes. Although the main responsibility lies with the individual, the importance of listening in leadership grows so that the managers and their leaders both know where they stand. Prior research suggests that job satisfaction encourages individuals to OCB (Jonsdottir & Kristinsson, 2020). This was supported by the empirical data in this thesis. All support related to improving the job satisfaction of individuals can be expected to bring positive OCB results in return.

Particularly during organizational crises, managers need support from their leaders and human resources. According to the comments made by managers, they often feel left alone. Along with responsibility, managers call for the equivalent decision-making power concerning their teams. Moreover, manager role exhaustion was expressed by the interviewees, which may lead to voluntary turnover. According to Holma et al. (2023), the calculational cost of losing an employee is always at least a 6-month-wage, not to mention the harm it can cause to an organization. The

calculational cost of losing people in top management roles rises as high as a 14-month wage. Ultimately, if manager roles become less attractive, it may even decrease the willingness of the best candidates to apply for managerial positions. In a country facing multiple economic challenges and skilled labor shortages (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, 2022), this would be an alarming direction.

In consideration of previous literature, supported by findings in this thesis, listening brings an abundance of positive outcomes to organizations and individuals. Leaders would be surprised by how little attention goes a long way. The most powerful emotion transmitted during the interviews was from managers who were positively surprised that *their leader had come to them*. Positive emotions like joy and warmth were shared in stories where leaders had remembered what had been discussed before: they had *proof of leaders' listening*. The perceived listening turned into feelings of togetherness, trust, and appreciation, making the managers feel valued. Leaders who take the time to know what motivates managers in their organizations are onto something good: when the work itself feeds the motivational needs of an individual, more results will be received with less input (Räty, 2017).

Listening as the key

Organizations wishing to benefit from OCB and avoid its pitfalls should critically analyze the *reasons behind* OCB needs. If they lie primarily in structural issues e.g., grey areas in repeated processes or chronic under-resourcing, corrective actions are needed. When organizations neglect to fix structural issues, utilizing the kindness of individuals instead, it may be experienced as exploitation and lead to undesired outcomes. Leaders could collect valuable information about the OCB situation in their organizations by listening. They could learn about the overall workload, responsibilities, experiences of fairness and justice, and the energy levels of managers during the discussion. A discussion where they would, in fact, mainly listen.

As proposed in Figure 6, it is important that the leader proactively approaches managers. This enhances the managers' sense of being appreciated and valued. The second point is to give feedback. Managers appreciate knowing their leaders have noticed the work they have done.

Finally, it may be that opening with one question from the proposed list will provide an answer to all questions. The main focus of the leader should be on just listening.

Table 6. Listening as the key.

What?	Why?	Desired outcome
1. Make the first move	Managers feel valued and important when their leader approaches them proactively.	✓ Increase the sense of appreciation and trust
2. Give feedback	Managers appreciate their leaders knowing what they have done.	✓ Possibility to fix structural issues and prevent undesired negative outcomes
3. Listen	Managers who feel heard by their leaders also feel valued, appreciated and trusted.	
Proposed guiding questions:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Have we defined roles and responsibilities clearly enough? b) Are extra tasks distributed fairly in our organization? c) Have your in-role targets been compromised by extra-role tasks? d) Are targets and schedules in line with our resources and capabilities as an organization? e) Are <i>you</i> happy with your performance? 		

The questions have been formed based on the identified OCB discouraging elements raised in the empirical data of this thesis. The challenges may potentially influence unwanted outcomes such as manager OCB fatigue. The last question is designed to make the over-achievers critically evaluate their expectations of themselves. Ultimately, after listening there should be some concrete next steps to prove that listening has turned into hearing on the leaders' part.

All situations between people in organizations are unique. Listening enables individual support to be offered. Treating managers as individuals and devoting time to listening to them may lead to positive results. The importance of satisfied, motivated, and healthy managers, and employees alike, to organizations is unarguable. As Finnish managers contribute their best to their organizations, employees may follow the behavior inspired by their managers. When OCB benefits

can be enjoyed, and its pitfalls avoided, a multitude of positive organizational outcomes can be expected. Those positive outcomes will ultimately contribute to the needed societal inputs in Finland.

6.4 Research Reliability, Ethics, and Limitations

Qualitative research is typically evaluated through the actions and decisions taken by the researcher throughout the study. Validity is seen as an outcome of a profound thinking process and the establishment of an understanding of prior theories (Ronkainen et al., 2020, 139). In this case, the author's strengths reside in the practical rather than the academic world. Living OCB in everyday working life inevitably influenced the author's worldview on the topic. On the other hand, it also helped to maintain a genuine interest in the topic. During the interviews, when familiar-sounding experiences were shared, particular concentration was required to maintain the spectator role. The approximately one year spent working on the thesis allowed time for reflection – the processing continued long after the laptop closed. Critical thinking and questioning were present throughout the journey, intensifying towards the end. At the beginning of the process, admiring the work of academics threatened to represent one truth to the reader.

Validity in qualitative research can refer to how well the results describe the phenomenon being studied. Validity can also be seen as a link established between the studied phenomenon, the author, and the world in which the study is conducted (Ronkainen et al., 2020, 131). The connection between the author and the studied phenomenon is supported by over two decades of working in Finland, in manager and expert roles, and living and observing everyday OCB in workplaces. The relevance of the choice of topic is justified by the current challenges in the Finnish economy related to the scarcity of skilled workforce, as well as concern over the identified well-being issues among Finnish managers (Mäkiniemi et al., 2022). There is a potential threat that when resources are tight, expectations on existing employees grow excessively and may have unwanted outcomes.

Establishing and verifying reliability is considered more complicated in qualitative than quantitative research. Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2018, 163) propose that certain criteria be met, not

only as individual topics but also in connection to each other. These criteria consist of the target and purpose of the study, the author's commitment to the topic, data collection methods, time spent for conducting the study, ethics, analysis, and reporting of the findings. Reliability is reinforced by the ability to tie the required elements together and succeed in delivering a credible entity of the used methods and found results (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, 163-164). In this thesis, the results should be considered in light of the representative group. The share of females (7) exceeded the number of male interviewees (3). Coincidentally, two agreed interview candidates who canceled at last minute were male. Possible implications of the gender imbalance in this thesis may characterize the results.

Inherent bias caused by previous experiences related to OCB may have influenced the choice of questions made by the author. The comments made by interviewees felt familiar at times, demanding the author to focus on staying objective. Despite these, research ethics were honored in all phases of the process. The dignity and autonomy of interview participants were respected in practical decisions. As recommended by the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity (TENK, 2019), participants received information in written form beforehand, were made aware of the voluntary nature of the interviews, had the right to not answer selected questions or to withdraw at any time without any consequences. The anonymity of participants was secured by only storing data in numbers (e.g., Interviewee 3 instead of names), the recording was only started after taking down the basic data, and the information about the saving of the recordings being done following the current University of Applied Sciences instructions (Jamk, n.d.) was shared in the interview invitation in writing.

An understanding of organizational citizenship behavior as a researched phenomenon was first built when starting this thesis. This was done by reading multiple international articles. The vast number of available articles alleviated the data search. There were access limitations to selected articles, and in general, finding qualitative results on OCB was more demanding than quantitative studies. The Jamk access rights, EBSCO Host, and SAGE Publications were trusted sources when Google Scholar did not provide access to desired articles. The plethora of literature available, combined with the growing interest in the topic resulted in an overflow of absorbed articles and threatened to derail the author. Similarly, servant leadership research articles were ventured.

Focusing on listening as a part of servant leadership provided another rich labyrinth of data. Topped by the abundant empirical data, narrowing down the topic proved to be the main challenge of the thesis. Considering every false move as a learning opportunity, the process provided plenty for the author. Despite multiple pain points caused by trial and error, integrity, and passion towards the choice of topic remained from the beginning to the end.

Limitations

This thesis should be considered in light of several limitations. The interviews conducted represent the experiences of ten individual managers from a spectrum of industries in Finland. Despite being neutrally selected, voluntary participation in a thesis interview may indicate that the interviewees, by personality, had an exceptionally positive attitude towards OCB. The participants were selected using purposive sampling because of the desired criteria; finding individuals with maturity in working life, in manager roles, from a variety of companies, and outside the author's working network. As mentioned, the gender imbalance of interviewees should be noted when reviewing the results. Based on the findings of this study no generalizations should be made. However, this study could be transferred and deepened in other ways e.g., conducted within a specific industry or company in Finland to see if similar findings arise.

Despite the interviewees expressing familiarity with OCB as a concept, it does not mean that all the interview comments were explicitly related to OCB experiences. As described in the Results chapter, the managers found it challenging to even distinguish between in-role and extra-role tasks. When discussing topics such as workloads, feedback, or values the examples provided by the interviewees may have been given from a broader perspective than OCB alone. Similarly, the topic of well-being challenges potentially being linked to acts of OCB should be taken as subjective views. The complex entity of work well-being was excluded from the scope of this thesis.

The work-life situation of interviewees at the time of the interview may have accentuated their comments, in positive and negative. The long careers of the interviewees can be considered a richness, yet some of the examples they shared may have been from a time before their manager roles. As the interviews were conducted in Finnish, also the data analysis was done in Finnish

before translating the results. Despite efforts and best intentions, the possibility of misunderstandings or nuances lost in translation remains.

6.5 Recommendations for Future Research

Risks related to manager role demands should be studied further. Experiences of burnout and its early warning signs were widely shared during the interviews. Understanding the root causes will help organizations to take preventive actions. A deeper analysis of the main reasons that lead to the voluntary turnover of managers in Finland would be beneficial. Also, experiences of conflicting personal and company values in connection to OCB experiences could provide fruitful data. The comments related to manager role fatigue would deserve more investigation. The growing need for good leadership combined with manager role fatigue poses a threat to Finnish working life. Further studies could be conducted on the possible gender-biased outcomes of OCB. All things being equal in organizations, is there a possibility that OCB-related threats are more strongly connected to women?

In this thesis, the voice was given to managers. Were a similar study to be conducted among employees, interesting comparable data could be received. Particularly about how equally OCB is distributed among employees and if there are signs of filling resource gaps with growing OCB expectations. Finally, the cultural setting in this thesis was limited to Finland. Comparing results to a similar study made in another country could bring additional, valuable information about the influence of national cultures on managers' working norms and behaviors related to OCB.

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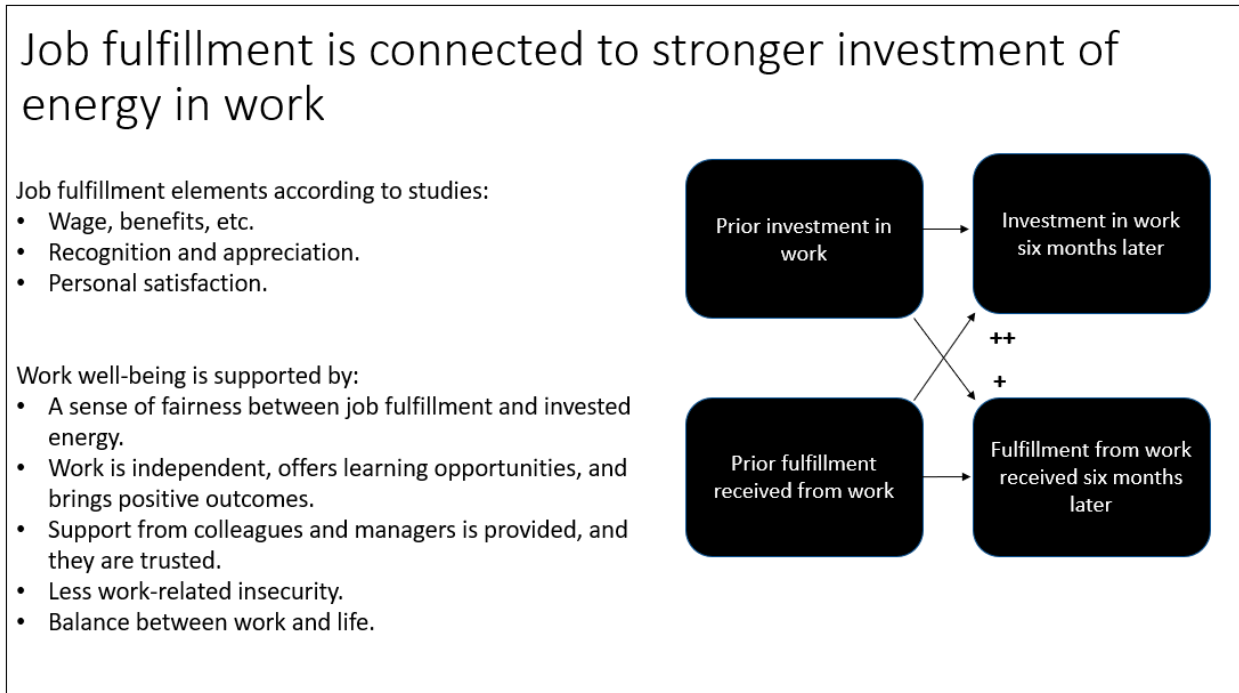
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Appendices

Appendix 1. Job fulfillment and energy invested in work



Job fulfillment connected to energy invested in work, and its supported elements (adapted from Kaltiainen, J., & Hakanen, J., 2023).

Appendix 2. Interview questionnaire

DEMOGRAPHICS AND BASIC DATA	Date:
	Time: (interview start and end time)
	Interview number:
	Gender: (options: male/female/prefer not to say)
	Age:
	Total working years:
	Working years in a manager role:
	Education:
	Experience mainly from working in: (field of industry, rough size of company)
<i>Recording starts</i>	
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	1. Can you identify the behavior of doing extra-role tasks at work?
	2. Is it easy to identify tasks that do/ do not belong to you?
	3. Do you find that everyone engages in extra work?
	4. What motivates you to take on extra?
	5. What demotivates you to take on extra?
	6. Have you ever engaged in too much extra-role work? If yes, what happened?
	7. Are you able to follow that your team members do not take on too many extra-role tasks?
	8. How does your leader listen to you?
	9. Does your leader's listening influence your will to do extra?
	10. As a manager, how do you listen to your team members?
	11. What would encourage you to stay in working life for as long as possible?