

UNDERSTANDING THE COMPLEX RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGICAL OWNERSHIP AND ORGANISATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOURS DURING COVID19 CRISIS

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Abstract

The Covid-19 crisis has forced many employees to telework (TLW). TLW can eventually generate a feeling of professional isolation (PI) for some workers and the higher the TLW, the higher the feeling of PI (Golden, 2008). PI is known to have negative impacts on organisational and teleworker outcomes such as job satisfaction (e.g., Bentley et al., 2016) or the adoption of organisational citizenship behaviours (OCBs) (Mulki and Jaramillo, 2011). OCBs are largely influenced by the organisational psychological ownership (OPO) (Zhang et al., 2021) which also influences organisational identification (ORI) (Van Dyne & Pierce, 2004). Yet, the relationship between ORI and OPO seems to be quite complex, considering for instance that OPO predicts the intention to leave the organisation while ORI does not (Knapp et al., 2014). Thus, this relationship deserves special attention for its implication in the OPO/OCBs relationship. Furthermore, the binding dimension of TLW is likely to have had complex consequences and may imply a feeling of PI, the moderating role of which in the OPO/OCBs relationship could be interesting to study.

The study population consisted of 185 participants, divided into 77.3% women and 22.7% men. The questionnaire included a measure of OPO (4 items), ORI (5), OCBs (6) and PI (7).

Results showed that ORI is a mediator of the OPO and OCBs relationship ($\beta=.1136$; $p=.0199$; LLCI* $=.0182$ and ULCI** $=.2089$) and ORI explains 11.3% of the variance. The analysis reveals a full mediation since OPO does not predict OCBs anymore when ORI is integrated ($p < .084$). They also showed that PI moderates the relationship between OPO and OCBs ($\beta=.0911$; $p=.0314$; LLCI* $=.0082$ and ULCI** $=.1739$) and that explains 2.1% of the variance.

First of all, this study reveals the relationship between OPO and OCBs is quite complex since it is both mediated by ORI and also moderated by PI. The results may seem contradictory as they show that a high level of OPO combined with a high level of PI leads to a high level of OCBs; while we could have imagined the opposite with high levels of PI. The discussion will focus on two eventual explanations: seeking more relational closeness through OCBs and compensating the fear of being perceived as not working enough (Taskin & Edwards, 2007).

Keywords: *Organisational psychological ownership, organisational citizenship behaviours, organisational identification, professional isolation, telework.*

1. Introduction

The Covid-19 crisis has forced many employees to telework (TLW). TLW may eventually generate a feeling of professional isolation (PI) for some workers and the higher the TLW, the higher the feeling of PI (Golden, 2008). The constraining dimension of TLW, during lockdown for example, may have increased the feeling of PI for workers who have never experienced TLW before. This PI is known to have negative impacts on organisational and teleworker outcomes such as job satisfaction (e.g., Bentley et al., 2016) or the adoption of organisational citizenship behaviours (OCBs) (Mulki and Jaramillo, 2011). OCBs can be defined as behaviours at work, which are not part of the prescribed role or tasks of the job held, i.e., the specific terms of the contract between an employee and his or her organization. They rather are the result of personal choices to get involve further than the job attempts, so that their omission does not imply a sanction. In other words, these behaviours concern to selfless voluntary behaviours and they typically include acts of mutual aid in situations of learning and change. They then constitute a source of "contextual performance", i.e., "individual efforts that are not related to the tasks of the job held" (Borman and Motowidlo 1993).

If OCBs are negatively influenced by PI, they are, on the contrary, positively influenced by the organisational psychological ownership (OPO) (Zhang et al., 2021). Psychological ownership is a feeling of possessiveness towards a target object (Pierce et al., 2001; Vandewalle, Van Dyne & Kostova, 1995). In our case OPO focuses on the feeling of possessiveness of the very organisation in which the employee works, leading him or her to speak of it in terms such as 'my organisation' (Vandewalle et al., 1995). In general, this feeling generates positive effects both for the organisation, e.g., reduced turnover intentions (Armstrong-Stassen & Schlosser, 2011), and OCBs (O'Driscoll, Pierce & Coghlan, 2006; Van Dyne & Pierce, 2004) and employees, e.g., in terms of attitudes, commitment, job satisfaction and organisational identification (ORI) (Van Dyne & Pierce, 2004).

By identifying strongly with their organisation, employees perceive a similarity between their own identity and the organisational identity. In this sense, it is quite clear that the OPO plays a role in the way employees construct a psychosocial image and a specific identity associated with the organisation because it reinforces self-esteem (Abrams & Hogg, 1988) and promotes a certain understanding of who they are (Hogg, 2001; Tajfel & Turner, 1985). Like OPO, a strong feeling of ORI leads to positive outcomes for both employees and the organisation, e.g., including job satisfaction, job involvement, in-role performance, extra-role performance such as OCBs and less intent to turnover (Riketta, 2005).

Yet, Knapp et al. (2014) distinguished the consequences of OPO and ORI since they highlighted that OPO predicts the intention to leave the organisation while ORI does not. Thus, the relationship between OPO and ORI seems to be quite complex and lead to contradiction in the literature. Both OPO and ORI contribute to a feeling of belonging to the organisation (Masterson & Stamper, 2003) insofar as individuals have invested in the organisation and consider it a personalised space. However, the manifestation of this belonging takes two different forms: in the case of OPO, belonging concerns the organisation and the employee considers, in a certain way, that he/she owns the organisation in which he/she works; in the case of ORI, belonging concerns the individual who defines himself/herself by the organisation in which he/she works. Then, it appears that OCBs are the consequence of a high feeling of OPO on the one hand, and the consequence of a high feeling of ORI on the other hand. If there is a strong connexion between OPO and ORI since the first one predicts the second (Chen, 2011; Zhang and Xu, 2019), and since both of them do not imply the same consequences (like for the intention to leave the organisation), we cannot confound them and this relationship deserves special attention.

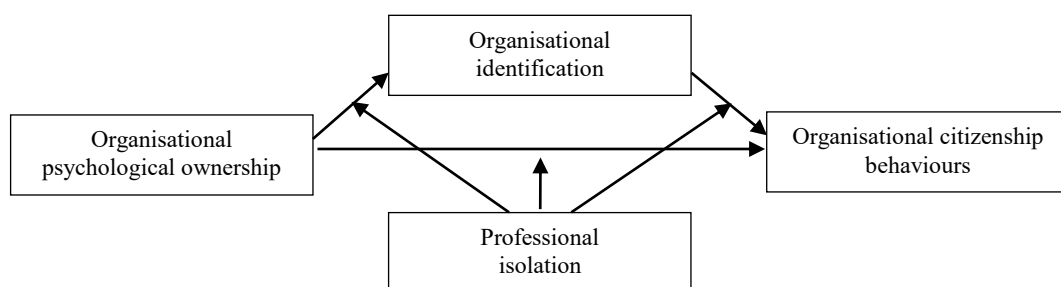
In the context of strong transformations related to the Covid-19 crisis, lockdown periods and constraint TLW, the study of these variables seems even more relevant. Indeed, the OPO, the ORI and the PI, have been put to the test by measures which, although imposed by the government, may have been the subject of more or less support for employees in their implementation by the organisations. PI has been studied and seems to have increased (Guillaud et al., 2021; Saba & Cachat-Rosset, 2020) during the crisis. Generally, PI has a negative effect on OCBs when OPO and ORI improve them. The question we are asking is what effect this contextual PI has on the relationship between both OPO and ORI with OCBs and to what extent the PI can thus negatively moderate this relationship.

2. Hypotheses

The literature argues for two different conceptions of the relationship between ORI and OPO; either ORI predicts OPO (Pierce, 2001; Knapp, 2014) or OPO predicts ORI (Chen, 2011; Zhang and Xu, 2019). In this study, we aimed at testing it and thus, we assume:

1. ORI should mediate the relationship between OPO and OCBs
2. Because of its contextual characteristic related to the crisis, IP should moderate the relationship between both OPO and ORI with OCBs.

Figure 1. Tested model



3. Method

3.1. Sample and measures

The sample consisted of 185 participants, divided into 77.3% women (n=143) and 22.7% men (n=42). The mean age was 39.28 (SD=8.527), ranging from 23 to 61 years. The questionnaire consisted of 22 items with the aim of testing the model (Figure 1). It included four standardised scales, measuring respectively PI (7items), OPO (4), ORI (5) and OCBs (6). Several questions dealt with socio-demographic characteristics such as gender, age, socio-professional category, and level of education.

3.2. Procedure

The questionnaire was posted online on Facebook and LinkedIn from 2021 January to 2021 June, during respectively lockdown period (from March 17th and May 11th in France) and curfew period (from 20 March 2021, the start time of the curfew is extended to 7 pm throughout France, the start time of the curfew is postponed to 9 p.m. on 19 May 2021 and then to 11 p.m. on 9 June 2021). The only two criteria for inclusion were to have a job in France, and being at least 18 years old. Three publicity campaigns were conducted. Prior to completing the questionnaire, participants were informed of the objectives of the study, the confidential and anonymous nature of their participation, and were explicitly asked to give their consent to continue the study.

3.3. Statistical analysis

The analyses were performed using SPSS version 26. Means and Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated. We tested our hypothesis using SPSS PROCESS Macro (Hayes, 2013), which allows to test concomitantly mediation and moderation relationships through complex models (model 8).

4. Results

Considering the potential mediation effect, the results of the model showed that ORI mediated the relationship between OPO and OCBs ($\beta=.1136$; $p=.0199$; $LLCI*=-.0182$ and $ULCI**=.2089$). Globally, the integrated model explains 15.18% of the variance ($p<.000$). We controlled the mediation effects through stepwise regression under SPSS. The analysis reveals a full mediation when ORI is integrated ($p < .084$) and then OPO does not predict OCBs anymore. These results tend to indicate that OPO has no direct effect on OCBs, but it influences them through its positive relationship with ORI.

With regard to moderation effect of PI (Table 1), results indicate that PI acts as a significant moderator of OPO and OCBs relationship. However, only the conditional indirect effect is significant for the three tested values of the moderator (PI), as neither of the confidence intervals contain zero, while the direct effect was not significant (two confidence intervals included zero). However, the magnitude of this indirect effect is growing stronger as PI is increasing (PI=1,2857; $\beta=.0950$; $CI95= .0096$; .1883; PI=2.1429; $\beta=.0950$; $CI95=.0103$; .1982; PI=3.4286; $\beta=.0950$; $CI95=.0109$; .2222). In other words, the more isolated an individual feels, the more the PI will moderate the relationship between OPO and OCBs through ORI.

Table 1. Moderated Mediation Analysis.

Model Summary	R2	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
	.1518	.5952	8.4546	4	189	.000
Variable	β	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
OPO	-.0917	.1138	-.8058	.4214	-.3161	.1328
ORI	.1136	.0483	2.3487	.0199	.0182	.2089
PI	-.3935	.1685	-.23354	.0206	-.7259	-.0611
OPO x PI	.0911	.0420	2.1684	.0314	.0082	.1739
R2 change	0.211					
Direct effect OPO => OCBs						
PI 1.2857	.0254	.0758	.3351	.7379	-.1241	.1749
PI 2.1429	.1034	.0647	1.5998	.1113	-.0241	.2310
PI 3.4286	.2205	.0818	2.6948	.0077	.0591	.3820
Indirect effect OPO => ORI => OCBs						
			Effect	BootSE	LLCI	ULCI
PI 1.2857			.0950	.0448	.0096	.1883
PI 2.1429			.1015	.0473	.0103	.1982
PI 3.4286			.1114	.0531	.0109	.2222
Index of moderated mediation						
			Index	BootSE	LLCI	ULCI
			.0077	.0092	-.0067	.0300

Based on 5000 bootstrap samples

5. Discussion

The study aimed to examine the effects of organisational psychological ownership (OPO) and organisational identification (ORI) in the specific context of the Covid-19 crisis. We wanted to study the mediation role of ORI between OPO and organisational citizenship behaviours (OCBs). The results confirmed such a hypothesis. In other words, we can say that the ORI totally explains the relationship between OPO and OCBs. We can thus confirm previous results in the literature, notably those of Chen (2011) and Zhang and Xu (2019) who applied this modelling to other sectors such as tourism. We also can confirm the moderating role of the professional isolation. Indeed, PI acted as a moderator of the OPO and OCBs relationship. That is to say that the more employees felt isolated during this period of strong measures for working, the more the relationship between OPO and OCBs was positively affected.

This research revealed the complexity of the relationship between OPO and OCBs since it is both mediated by ORI and also moderated by PI. The results may seem contradictory as they show that a high level of OPO combined with a high level of PI leads to a high level of OCBs; while we could have imagined the opposite with high levels of PI. We can think that the search for greater relational closeness, linked in particular to a strong feeling of OPO and ORI, could lead individuals to wish to help their colleagues in a context made difficult by the crisis and the introduction of TLW which is otherwise constrained and which some of them may never have experienced before. In order to investigate this theory further, it would be interesting to see whether those who had never teleworked before particularly benefited from these OCBs, and felt particularly supported and helped by their colleagues. It would also be interesting to see whether those who had already experienced TLW before the crisis were more likely to develop OCBs than others. We can also ask to what extent TLW may lead some employees to fear being perceived as not working hard enough (Taskin & Edwards, 2007), which may then lead to more presenteeism, or increased work activity, including OCBs.

However, the results of this research cannot be generalised in the sense that they are based on a sample which, although correct, is still relatively small. The context of the study, which covers a period of confinement and a period of non-confinement but restriction, may also have played a role. Furthermore, this study did not measure the effects of occupational seclusion before and after these measures. This data is essential and a longitudinal study would have measured the direct effects of the restraint TLW on the OCBs and their evolution according to the context and the past experience of the TLW.

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