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Friends Don't Make Friends Good Citizens, But Advisors Do

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The authors explore whether employees' willingness to perform organization citizenship behavior (OCB), or go "above and beyond" what is required by their jobs, is affected by social influence. The authors draw on social information processing and social learning theories to argue that OCB is contagious, or affected by the OCB of employees with whom a focal employee maintains social network ties. A study of admissions department employees reveals that strong advice ties between employees are positively and significantly related to similarity in OCB, whereas strong friendship ties and weak ties are not. Implications for research and practice, including suggestions for influencing ethical behavior in organizations, are discussed.

Keywords: *organizational citizenship behavior; social networks; social influence; social exchange*

Is the willingness of employees to go "above and beyond" what is required by their jobs, or perform organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), socially influenced? Most current research on OCB draws on social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), which posits that employees repay the organization for favorable treatment by performing discretionary acts to help it succeed (e.g., Organ, 1988). Exchange-based OCB research reveals that job-related factors (e.g., job satisfaction) and organization-related perceptions and attitudes (e.g., organizational commitment) predict OCB. Yet evidence suggests that social exchange theory may not offer a complete

explanation for OCB. Indeed, scholars have long speculated that the social context may influence social exchange relationships in general and citizenship behavior in particular. For instance, Emerson (1976) argued that social exchange theory itself is “undersocialized” and that researchers should explore the influence of third-party relationships besides the traditional employer–employee dyad. Brass, Butterfield, and Skaggs (1998) offered a similar argument in their discussion of ethical and unethical behavior in organizations. They argued that ethical workplace behavior, such as OCB, is “inherently a social phenomenon—it involves a relationship between actors that is also embedded in a structure of other social relationships” (p. 14). Furthermore, Bommer, Miles, and Grover (2003) found that when a work group had a member who demonstrated a high level of helping behavior, other employees in the work group generally helped others to a greater extent as well. In sum, this theoretical and empirical work suggests the performance of OCB may be “contagious,” or socially influenced.

Accordingly, we use a social network methodology to explore the effects of social influence on OCB. Social network analysis focuses on patterns of social relations between a set of actors to explain social phenomena (Wasserman & Faust, 1994) and thus provides the conceptual and methodological basis for measuring social influence (Erickson, 1988; Ibarra & Andrews, 1993). Specifically, social networks research suggests that certain types of ties (e.g., friendship or advice) and the strength of those ties affect the extent to which they are influential (e.g., Umphress, Labianca, Brass, Kass, & Scholten, 2003). Using social networks analysis as a lens, we explore whether OCB is influenced by friends or advice contacts and if strong or weak friendship and advice relationships influence OCB. We expect our results to provide evidence as to whether OCB is “contagious” at work and to demonstrate which types of relationships are influential.

Understanding the effects of social context on OCB has important theoretical and practical implications. First, we examine the effect that different social relationships exert on employees’ performance of OCB. Our study extends Organ’s (1988) social-exchange-based conception of OCB, which draws exclusively on the employer–employee dyad, by examining the effects of advice and friendship ties among coworkers. Second, we consider the role of tie strength in social influence research. Our expectation is that the behavior of coworkers with whom an individual maintains strong relationships will have a greater impact on that employee’s own behaviors. It is surprising that few social influence studies have examined the effects of tie strength on perceptual or behavioral similarity (for an exception, see Umphress et al., 2003). From a practical perspective, changes in organizations such as decentralization and the use of team-based structures have

increased the number of tasks that fall outside employees' formal job requirements (Ilgen & Pulakos, 1999). As a result, employees' willingness to perform OCB is critical not only to organizational and work group performance (e.g., Podsakoff, Ahearne, & MacKenzie, 1997) but also to employee performance evaluations (see Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000, for a review) and turnover intentions (Paré & Tremblay, 2007). Thus, managers may be able to enhance organizational performance by structuring work relationships in such a manner that OCB is more prevalent. With these points in mind, our ideas about the impact of social relationships on citizenship behavior are examined using data from a social network study of admissions department employees in a university setting.

Conceptual Background and Hypotheses

OCB

Organ (1988) defined OCB as any behavior that exceeds role requirements, is not explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and facilitates organizational functioning. The concept of OCB was initially proposed by Barnard (1938), who discussed the importance of employees' "willingness to cooperate" (p. 83). Smith, Organ, and Near (1983) coined the term *OCB* and proposed an OCB model consisting of five dimensions: altruism, civic virtue, conscientiousness, courtesy, and sportsmanship. The fact that OCB is related to important organizational and individual outcomes has spurred research on factors that make it more prevalent (Podsakoff et al., 2000).

The majority of research on the antecedents of citizenship behavior is driven by Organ's (1988) view of OCB as the product of the social exchange relationship between employee and organization. When employees believe that they are treated well by the organization, the reciprocity norm (Gouldner, 1960) dictates that they "go above and beyond" to help it reach its goals (Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Davis-LaMastro, 1990; Scott & Colquitt, 2007). For instance, recent field research by Fassina, Jones, and Uggerslev (2008) and Camerman, Cropanzano, and Vandenberghe (2007), as well as an experiment by Scott and Colquitt (2007), shows that perceptions of organizational justice result in citizenship behaviors. Other recent studies reveal that the extent to which organizations fulfill employees' psychological contracts—the implicit promises employees believe that the organization has made to them—yields OCB (e.g., Restubog, Bordia, &

Bordia, in press; Restubog & Bordia, 2006). For instance, Restubog, Bordia, and Tang (2006) found that the organization's failure to fulfill psychological contract obligations led to lower levels of affective commitment and thus lower OCB. Restubog, Hornsey, Bordia, and Esposito (in press) found that employees who felt like a valued member of the organization performed OCB to a greater extent. Similarly, employees' beliefs that the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (perceived organizational support) results in affective organizational commitment, which yields OCB (Cardona, Lawrence, & Bentler, 2004; Eisenberger et al., 1990). Overall, this line of research suggests that treatment offered by the organization creates favorable organizational attitudes and perceptions that motivate employees to reciprocate by helping the organization.

Researchers also have found consistent relationships between job-related attitudes and perceptions (job satisfaction, autonomy, and task significance) and OCB (Podsakoff et al., 2000). Cardona et al. (2004) suggest that these relationships are observed because employees develop work exchange relationships with their organizations. That is, when employees perceive that their jobs aid their learning and motivate them intrinsically (Cardona et al., 2004) or increase psychological ownership (O'Driscoll, Pierce, & Coghlan, 2006), employees develop positive perceptions of work exchange with the organization (Cardona et al., 2004). These perceptions of favorable work exchange increase feelings of responsibility and involvement and thus increase OCB (Cardona et al., 2004).

Although social and work exchange relationships are certainly important predictors of OCB, the social context may be an important factor as well. Emerson (1976) argued that social exchange theory—the basis for exchange-related views of OCB—represents an undersocialized view of exchange. He contends that social exchange is limited because it encompasses only the application of economic and individual psychological principles to dyadic relationships. For instance, Blau's (1964) conception of exchange involves only two actors and ignores the role others play in how one evaluates outcomes of social exchanges. Yet social exchanges occur within a social context that affects the exchange behavior of individuals. Emerson contends that, by failing to consider the social factors beyond the primary dyadic relationship, there is little that is social about how social exchange theory is operationalized. The use of social networks will help researchers better understand the role of social factors in social exchange relationships (Emerson, 1976).

Brass et al. (1998) draw on ideas presented by Emerson (1976) in their discussion of ethical behavior in organizations and social networks. They

suggest that ethical behavior (such as OCB) is not merely a product of either dispositional or situational factors but rather an interaction of the two. According to the authors, individuals who have impeccable moral character will always behave ethically (and vice versa), which suggests a “bad apples,” or dispositional, explanation for unethical behavior. However, because most individuals have neither impeccable nor extremely poor moral character, the social context—represented by an individual’s position in the social network—will (more likely) influence the extent to which his or her behavior is ethical (a “bad barrels” approach). Thus, when individuals interact with others who behave in an ethical (or unethical) manner, they are likely to behave in a similar fashion. In other words, ethical and unethical behaviors are affected by social influence or social contagion, highlighting the role that the social context plays in behavior.

Recently, researchers have conducted several studies suggesting that social factors may influence the extent to which employees help their coworkers. For instance, Deckop, Cirka, and Andersson (2003) found that employees’ helping behavior toward coworkers was driven by whether coworkers demonstrated OCB toward them, whereas Bowler and Brass (2006) found that employees were more likely to help coworkers who were connected with other more influential individuals in the organization. Consistent with the arguments presented by Brass et al. (1998), Bommer et al. (2003) found that the helping behavior of employees in small work groups was influenced by the helping behavior of others in the work group. When helping behavior was high among work team members, the focal employee tended to help coworkers to a greater extent as well. When helping behavior of team members was low, helping behavior of the focal employee was low. The findings of Bommer et al. (2003) suggest that the social context plays an important role in interpersonal helping behavior among employees in small work groups. In this article, we build on the findings of Bommer et al. (2003) and explore the role of direct social relationships on employee performance of OCB (as opposed to interpersonal helping) in a decentralized organization that does not use work groups. To explore the relationship between social relationships and OCB, we use social networks analysis and draw on social learning and social information processing theories.

Social Networks

Social network researchers have shown that employee values, attitudes, and perceptions are, in part, the product of their interaction with other

employees (e.g., Gibbons, 2004; Umphress et al., 2003). Morrison (1993) and Bryant (2005) found that employees turn to peers for information on organizational norms and values, sources that often provide information more quickly than supervisors (Cross & Prusak, 2002). Informal information exchange with coworkers shapes a focal employee's organization-related attitudes and opinions because it results in exposure to the coworkers' beliefs about organizational events, policies, and procedures (Bordia, Jones, Gallois, Callan, & DiFonzo, 2006). In this study, we address two issues related to the relationship between social influence and employee values: type of relationship (advice and friendship ties) and the strength of employees' ties with coworkers.

In organizations, advice ties and friendship ties are the most frequently occurring types of ties (Gibbons, 2004). Employees share information and knowledge related to the completion of their work through advice ties (Ibarra, 1993), which are characterized by cognitive trust, or the belief that another has the ability and competence to provide help (Ho, 2005; McAllister, 1995). Asking an individual for advice is an indication of respect for the opinion of that individual and an expectation that help from that individual is available and useful. Employees who frequently provide advice to others often are perceived as more powerful than individuals who are not a frequent source of advice (e.g., Burkhardt & Brass, 1990) because others are dependent on them for information needed to complete their jobs (Brass & Burkhardt, 1993). Furthermore, the number of advice ties maintained by employees is positively related to organizational knowledge and task mastery (Morrison, 2002) as well as job involvement (Zagenczyk & Murrell, in press).

The fact that employees who provide advice to others are perceived to be more powerful has important implications for their role in social influence. Specifically, we argue that individuals will attend to advice ties to learn about organizational norms (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992) through two different processes: social information processing and social learning. Salancik and Pfeffer's (1978) social information processing theory contends that individuals use information that they obtain from coworkers when forming perceptions and evaluations concerning the organization and their jobs because organizations and jobs are complex and ambiguous. Specifically, individuals use social information to (a) learn to react to social cues, (b) form perceptions by focusing attention on some aspects of the work environment and away from others, (c) construct their interpretations of organizational events, (d) understand the requirements of their jobs, and (e) understand expected behaviors on the job. Research on social information processing indicates that employees' advice ties can influence their

perceptions regarding the fairness of organizational policies and procedures as well as their beliefs about how fairly they are treated by supervisors (Umphress et al., 2003). In a longitudinal study of value changes among teachers, Gibbons (2004) found that advice ties enhanced organizational stability because they facilitated work-related information transfer, which served to coordinate activities in the organization and reinforce organizational values.

In addition to social information processing, social influence can occur through social learning. Bandura's (1986) social learning theory emphasizes the importance of observing and modeling the behaviors, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others in learning the behaviors and attitudes of those individuals. For example, Ibarra (1999) showed that investment banking and management consulting firm employees making the transition from entry-level to management positions observed and interacted with employees whom they admired to learn what behaviors, attitudes, and perceptions made the admired employees successful. They then adopted these behaviors, attitudes, and perceptions to see if what they learned would help to make them successful. Accordingly, we expect that a focal employee will adopt OCB similar to that of coworkers from whom he or she receives advice.

Like advice ties, friendship ties also play an important role in social influence. Friendship ties involve expressions of personal affect, social support, and a sense of identity and personal belongingness (Gibbons, 2004). Individuals depend on friends for counseling, companionship, and social support (Krackhardt & Stern, 1988); tend to share resources with friends during crisis (Krackhardt & Stern, 1988); and make career decisions that are similar to those of their friends (Kilduff, 1990). Furthermore, friendship ties enable open and honest communication, which has the capacity to spur change in organizations (Gibbons, 2004). As a result, friends occasionally develop similar job- and organization-related perceptions and attitudes.

Although friendship and advice ties are distinct with respect to content, both types of ties can vary in their strength. *Tie strength* is defined as "the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding) and reciprocal services that characterize the tie" (Granovetter, 1973, p. 1361). Strong ties are more intimate, involve more self-disclosure, and provide more than just instrumental exchange (Granovetter, 1982; Marsden & Campbell, 1984). Individuals who maintain strong ties are likely to have similar attitudes, background, experiences, and access to resources (Granovetter, 1982). In contrast, exchanges that occur through weak ties are less frequent and less intimate and usually form between individuals who reside outside of the focal employee's network. Weak ties are significant because they provide employees

access to different sources of information or resources than they receive through strong ties (Burt, 1992; Granovetter, 1973).

Studies examining the simultaneous effects of both strong and weak ties show that they are related to different outcomes. For example, Morrison (2002) found that strong advice ties were related to task mastery and role clarity among newly hired accountants but weak ties were not. Hansen (1999) found that weak ties were best for transferring noncomplex knowledge, whereas strong ties were better for transferring complex knowledge between departments in an organization. Although these studies do not directly assess the role of tie strength on social influence, the general pattern of results suggest that weak ties are less influential and less useful in transferring complex information than are strong ties.¹ Consistent with research that demonstrates that employees have greater exposure to, and are more likely to discuss, the views of other employees with whom they maintain strong ties, we expect the following:

Hypothesis 1: Strong advice ties between employees will be positively related to similarity in OCB.

Hypothesis 2: Strong friendship ties between employees will be positively related to similarity in OCB.

Method

Research Site

A field study was conducted using student employees from a section of the admissions department at a large university in the eastern United States. The unit is regarded by the university as an autonomous organization within the university. This organization is responsible for coordinating more than 80 campus tours for prospective students each week and more than 4,000 walking tours of the campus and 300 bus tours yearly. In addition, organization members perform telemarketing duties, help with other admissions programs, attend weekly organizational meetings, and represent the university on recruiting trips. All hiring decisions are handled by the organization itself.

Sample

Data were collected during a regular meeting of the organization. Of the 138 members of the organization, 101 were present at the meeting and complete; usable data were obtained from 93 employees, yielding a response

rate of 92% of the available employees, or 67% of the entire organization. Many network studies are published with response rates ranging between 65% and 90% because of the difficulty associated with getting employees to complete such a long and cumbersome survey (Stork & Richards, 1992). Respondents were told that the purpose of the survey was to investigate the experience and knowledge they gained while performing their jobs and were assured that their responses would remain confidential. Mean tenure was 1.94 years, and average age was 20.1 years. The sample was 60.2% female and 80.6% Caucasian, 11.8% African American, 5.4% Asian, and 2.2% Other.

Measures

Network measures. To measure employees' friendship and advice networks, respondents were given a roster of all employees in the organization (Marsden, 1990), which included questions assessing the relationships that employees maintained with their coworkers. Advice ties were measured by asking each respondent to identify those employees who "provide job-related advice, meaning that this person has been a source of information related to your job as a member of this organization (yes/no)." Consistent with previously published studies (Ibarra, 1992; Morrison, 2002), friendship networks were measured by asking respondents to identify coworkers they considered friends, or "who you see as an organization member as well as socially—outside of activities related to the organization (yes/no)." To increase the accuracy of our measure of friendship ties and to reduce common method variance, only reciprocated friendship ties (ties that were acknowledged by both members of the dyad) were included in the analysis (Hammer, 1985). We did not require that advice ties be reciprocal because such advice ties may be unidirectional. Matrixes were constructed for both advice and friendship networks using the same procedure. For instance, if an advice tie existed between employees *i* and *j*, a 1 was entered in cell *X_{ij}*. If no advice tie existed, a 0 was entered into the advice matrix.

To measure tie strength, all employees were asked whether they interacted with every other employee "at least once a week (yes/no)." If person *i* indicated that he or she had frequent contact with person *j*, or person *j* indicated that he or she had frequent contact with person *i*, cell entry *X_{ij}* in the frequent contact matrix was 1. The strong friendship matrix was computed by adding the frequent contact matrix and the friendship matrix; likewise, the strong advice matrix was computed by adding the advice matrix to the frequent contact matrix. The weak advice and friendship matrixes

included all advice/friendship ties that were not characterized by frequent contact.

Our tie strength measure was adopted from Nelson (1989), who argued that frequent contact approximates all components of Granovetter's (1973) tie strength definition (time, emotional intensity, intimacy, and reciprocal services). We determined that weekly interaction constituted a strong tie, based on interviews with supervisors, similar to the method used by Morrison (2002), who adjusted items drawn from existing scales after consulting with organization members to "establish . . . the thoroughness and relevance of items" (p. 1152) for her network study.

OCB. In this study, we used Allison, Voss, and Dryer's (2001) OCB scale. Consistent with the five-component model of OCB developed by Smith et al. (1983), Allison et al. (2001) assess altruism, civic virtue, conscientiousness, courtesy, and sportsmanship, although their scale is modified for use in a classroom setting. We modified their scale for use in an academic organization. (see Appendix for list of items). This scale was employed not only because incoming students are the focus of organization members' jobs but also because the employees are student employees, so their student status was considered in the research design of this project. In our study, reliability for this scale was .71. An OCB matrix was constructed for use as a dependent variable. Each cell in this matrix represented the absolute difference between two respondents' mean OCB scores. Therefore, smaller numbers represented greater interpersonal similarity in OCB performance.

Control Variables

Demographics. In this study, information on sex (0 = male and 1 = female), race (0 = White and 1 = Other), and tenure (years with organization) was collected because these variables could potentially influence OCB performance (see Podsakoff et al., 2000). Similarity matrixes were constructed for all control variables as well, based on absolute difference values with respect to each variable. For example, with respect to sex, a male and a female would be dissimilar because (dummy variable = 0) – (dummy variable = 1) = 1, indicating dissimilarity.

Job satisfaction. Job satisfaction measures an individual's overall satisfaction with his or her job based on five standard dimensions, including pay, coworkers, supervision, the work itself, and promotions (Comer, Machleit, & Lagace, 1989). Thus, job satisfaction is a representation of the

underlying employee “morale” factor that is significantly and positively related to OCB (Organ & Ryan, 1995). We controlled for job satisfaction to account for the possibility that the relationship between social network variables and OCB could be attributed to respondents having similar levels of job satisfaction. We used five items (one each for pay, coworkers, supervision, the work itself, and promotion) from the Industrial Salesperson’s Instrument (INDSALES) Job Satisfaction Scale (Comer et al., 1989) to measure job satisfaction. The INDSALES was originally designed to measure the job satisfaction of sales representatives, and in our study, a key function of the employees was to sell the university to prospective students. Responses were measured on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Reliability for our scale was .69. A job satisfaction matrix, in which each cell in this matrix represented the absolute difference between two respondents’ mean job satisfaction, was constructed.

Analysis and Results

Analysis of the matrix data was conducted using UCINET 6 for Windows (Borgatti, Everett, & Freeman, 2002). Quadratic assignment procedure (QAP) correlation analysis was used to generate a bivariate correlation matrix, and QAP regression was used to test the hypotheses. QAP regression is similar to Ordinary Least Squares regression, but it accounts for and corrects autocorrelation problems typical to social network matrixes (Raider & Krackhardt, 2001). Autocorrelation is a problem in network analysis because the unit of analysis is not the individual but rather the dyad (Raider & Krackhardt, 2001).

QAP regression analysis comprises two steps. First, standard multiple regression is performed across corresponding cells of the dependent and independent variable matrixes. Next, the rows and columns of the dependent variable matrix are randomly permuted, and the regression is computed. This latter step is repeated 1,000 times, after which QAP counts the proportion of random permutations needed to yield the regression coefficient generated in Step 1 (Borgatti et al., 2002). We regressed the OCB similarity matrix onto the independent variables and control variables.

Table 1 provides the means, reliabilities, and intercorrelations for all variables. The results for all hypotheses testing are displayed in Table 2. Hypothesis 1 stated that strong advice ties between employees would be positively related to similarity in OCB. This hypothesis was supported, as strong advice ties between employees were significantly and positively

Table 1
Means, Standard Deviations, and QAP Correlations

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Tenure	1.94	1.26	—							
2. Sex	—	—	-.13	—						
3. Race	—	—	-.01	.12	—					
4. Job satisfaction	4.11	0.56	-.36**	-.13	-.18	—				
5. Weak friendship	8.45	9.27	-.01	.00	.00	-.02	—			
6. Weak advice	5.30	6.87	-.02	-.01	.00	.05	.36**	—		
7. Strong friendship	6.87	9.77	-.04	.01	.00	.04	-.15**	-.04*	—	
8. Strong advice	12.33	14.77	-.11*	.05	.06	.07*	-.12*	-.03	.69**	—
9. OCB	3.81	.45	.02	.15	-.09	.27**	-.00	-.01	.02	.06*

Note: QAP = quadratic assignment procedure; OCB = organization citizenship behavior. $N = 93$.
 * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 2
Results of Quadratic Assignment Procedure Regression
Analysis for Hypotheses 1 and 2

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable
	Similarity in OCB
Control variables	
Tenure	0.15
Sex	0.17
Race	-0.06
Job satisfaction	0.30**
Independent variables	
Strong friendship ties	-0.04
Strong advice ties	0.08*
Weak friendship ties	0.00
Weak advice ties	0.01

Note: OCB = organization citizenship behavior. Coefficients reported are standardized beta coefficients.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

related to similarity in OCB ($\beta = .08$, $p < .05$). Hypothesis 2, which stated that strong friendship ties between employees would be positively related to similarity in OCB, was not supported. In fact, the relationship between strong friendship ties and OCB was negative ($\beta = -.04$), although not significant. We also explored the impact of weak ties to see if they had any

impact on similarity in OCB. Neither weak advice ties ($\beta = .01$) nor weak friendship ties ($\beta = .00$) were significantly related to similarity in OCB among employees. Thus, based on these data, the strength of advice ties was an important factor in predicting similarity in OCB. With respect to the control variables, our results showed that similarity in job satisfaction was positively and significantly related to similarity in OCB performance ($\beta = .30, p < .01$).

Discussion

Results of this study indicate that strong advice ties between employees were significantly related to similarity in OCB, whereas weak advice ties and strong and weak friendship ties between employees were not. It was not surprising to discover that employees had similar levels of OCB to those individuals with whom they frequently shared work-related information. Advisors are respected for their knowledge of their job and the organization. Advisors' knowledge and access to information make their opinions regarding the actions of the organization salient. It is also important to note that strong advice ties were positively and significantly associated with similarity in OCB performance even when similarity in job satisfaction was entered as a control variable—showing that the effects of strong advice ties on similarity in OCB was not simply a byproduct of employees having similar beliefs about their work but is related to social influence or social contagion processes within the work unit.

Although our results concerning strong advice ties were consistent with our hypothesis, our expectation that friendship ties would influence OCB was not supported. There are a number of explanations for why we did not find support for this hypothesis. For one, Gibbons (2004) found that advice ties reinforced existing professional values in four schools, whereas friendship ties led to changes in professional values. She speculated that employees were more apt to share information that differed from the accepted values of the organization with friends (with whom they had presumably more stable relationships) than with advice ties, which may have been threatened by discrepant values. Friendship ties, then, led to discrepancy in professional values in organizations, whereas advice ties led to similarity in beliefs (Gibbons, 2004). A second possible explanation is that there may be a difference between expressed values and exhibited values. Friends may be more likely to share with other friends. For instance, an individual may disclose to a close friend that he or she performs OCB only to make him or

herself more socially desirable (Bolino, 1999). As a result, employees who are privy to this information may choose not to perform OCB to a greater or lesser degree as a result of their friend's OCB performance. Finally, it is possible that employees form strong friendships with coworkers who are at a similar hierarchical level in the organization, whereas they form strong advice relationships with more senior employees. Individuals tend to select mentors and role models who are more accomplished than themselves and strive to achieve similar success through adoption of the knowledge gained from and behaviors exhibited by these individuals (Ibarra, 1999). Although individuals tend to identify with role models and mentors (Ibarra, 1999), it is possible that they are less likely to form friendships with them.

It is interesting that similar results for friendship and advice ties were not found in the data. Not only do employees differentiate between friendship and advice ties, but the different ties also had different effects on OCB. The sample used in this study may have provided a more stringent test of friendship and advice ties than a typical organizational setting in which employees are less likely to maintain both friendship and advice relationships. In addition, given the focus of our research on OCBs, it may provide a contextual frame that causes work-related relationships (advice ties) to be more relevant than personal relationships (friendship ties). Nonetheless, our results support the idea that tie content is important in predicting value-based behaviors.

Our study makes several important contributions to the literature. First, and most important, we move OCB research beyond the traditional organization–employee dyad by demonstrating that employees who are connected via advice ties tend to have similar levels of OCB. Existing research has viewed the employer–employee relationship as a dyadic relationship and largely ignored the effects that coworkers may have. Responding to calls for research on the social context by Emerson (1976) and Brass et al. (1998), we argue that the dyadic and solely exchange-based view of the employer–employee relationship should be reconsidered. Second, the results of this study extend research on social influence in organizations. Social influence research reveals that employees' social ties are related to perceptions of and attitudes toward organizations, including psychological contract promises and fulfillment (Dabos & Rousseau, 2004), perceptions of organizational justice (Umphress et al., 2003), personal and task-related attitudes (Burkhardt, 1994), decisions regarding job interviews (Kilduff, 1990), attitudes about new technology (Rice & Aydin, 1991), and the professional values within an organization (Gibbons, 2004). Our research suggests that social influence may affect individual ethics and values as well as the behaviors that stem from those ethics. In addition, our

research implies that it is important to consider not only whether advice ties are present but also the strength of these ties on behavioral similarity. Furthermore, our results indicate that social networks researchers should assess tie content (friendship vs. advice), rather than just assessing the presence or absence of ties and their strength.

In addition to conceptual and theoretical implications, this article has practical implications for managers. Although many organizations view the employer–employee relationship as dyadic, our findings indicate that this relationship is more complex. Therefore, companies must be concerned not only with how they treat individual workers but also with how they treat all workers in the organization, as contagion effects may influence OCB. In addition, organizations may facilitate changes in values among organizational members by manipulating informal advice networks in the organization. For instance, if managers can determine which employees provide advice to others and engage in high levels of OCB, OCB may spread more effectively throughout the organization.

Our findings also suggest that managers need to view organizational citizenship not simply as an individual act but as a social process. The cultivation of positive organizational behavior and ethical actions may occur through advice relationships that can be facilitated and supported by the organization. Both formal advice ties (e.g., supervisors, formal mentors) and informal advice ties (e.g., peers, informal mentors, role models) are powerful tools that managers can use to create environments where ethical behaviors are not merely a subject of focused discussions but instead are ubiquitously transmitted (or virally contagious) within the work environment. We see our findings as a prescriptive for managers who are seeking tools to enhance ethical behavior within the organization: They should cultivate strong advice ties among employees who are role models of good citizenship within the firm.

Limitations

This study has a number of important limitations that warrant mention. First, the cross-sectional nature of the study precludes us from making causal inferences regarding the relationship between social network ties and values. Future longitudinal or experimental research assessing the relationship between values, attitudes, and behaviors and social network ties could provide a more definitive answer to the research question we posed. Second, our study takes place in a single highly decentralized work unit. Consequently, the results may not be generalizable to traditional, hierarchical

organizations and should be interpreted with caution. However, the decentralization found within this work unit may make the findings more relevant to organizations with flatter structures, which are becoming increasingly prevalent today (Ilgen & Pulakos, 1999). Finally, our sample consisted of student employees who worked 25 hr per week. These student employees differ from more traditional employees because they do not view the organization for which they work as a long-term employment option. However, as employees adopt more careerist attitudes toward the organizations for whom they work and as contingent workers become more common in organizations, this may not be as great a concern (Ilgen & Pulakos, 1999).

Future Research

This research also presents opportunities for future research. In general, employees may seek advice from employees whom they admire, such as role models (Murrell & Zagenczyk, 2006), or employees who are believed to have useful knowledge. Employees may adopt the behaviors of these admirable or knowledgeable individuals for multiple reasons; for instance, employees may internalize these individuals' values because they appear to be morally correct (i.e., "I should behave in this way because this behavior/attitude is the right thing to do"). Because researchers sometimes conceptualize OCB as the behavioral manifestation of an individual's ethics (e.g., Turnipseed, 2002), the above scenario suggests that, on one hand, employees have ethical beliefs similar to those individuals with whom they frequently share advice. On the other hand, employees may mimic the behaviors of advice givers to obtain the same outcomes but may not adopt the same ethics and values that drive the behaviors of advice contacts (i.e., "I should behave in this way in order to assure a certain type of outcome because I value that outcome"). Unfortunately, our data cannot answer this question, although a study to determine the rationale for OCB would provide an excellent avenue for future research. Researchers should measure not only behaviors but also the underlying values and motives that drive these behaviors, as well as employees' motives for maintaining network ties (see Randel & Ranft, 2007). This research will make it possible to determine if employees are mimicking the behaviors of advice givers (consistent with social learning or social information processing theory) or if they have adopted values and motives that are consistent with the behaviors that they are performing. In particular, longitudinal research examining social network ties, OCB, and values at different points in time would make it possible to

draw stronger conclusions about the causal direction of relationships between these variables, as well as the mechanisms that underlie OCB performance.

Appendix

Survey Questions

Organizational Citizenship Behavior

1. ____ I willingly give my time to other (organization members) who have work-related problems.
2. ____ I am willing to take time out of my own busy schedule to help other (organization members) with their work.
3. ____ I “touch base” with other (organization members) before initiating actions that might affect them (team projects).
4. ____ I take steps to try to prevent problems with other (organization members) at work.
5. ____ I attend special classes or other meetings that (organization members) encouraged to but not required to attend.
6. ____ I attend and actively participate in (organization) meetings.
7. ____ I return phone calls from (organization members) and respond to other messages and requests for information promptly.
8. ____ I always find fault with what the (organization) is doing.
9. ____ I always focus on what is wrong with my situation rather than the positive side of it.
10. ____ I complete work assignments earlier than is required.

Job Satisfaction

1. ____ Overall, I am satisfied with my experience as an (organization member).
 2. ____ I am satisfied with the people I work with as an (organization member).
 3. ____ I am satisfied with the supervision and direction I receive as an (organization member).
 4. ____ I am satisfied with the amount of pay I receive as an (organization member).
 5. ____ I am satisfied with the chance to do things for other people as an (organization member).
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Note

1. In our study, we include weak ties to highlight the effects of strong ties and to account for the possibility that they will influence OCB, although we make no explicit hypotheses for weak ties.

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