Unraveling the Paradox: How Organizational Citizenship Behavior Can Lead to Unethical Pro-Organizational Behavior

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Abstract

In today's globalized and highly competitive markets, organizations strive to gain an edge by investing in skilled, informed, and content human capital that exhibits productive pro-organizational behaviors. However, individuals driven by their commitment to the organization, as demonstrated through organization-oriented organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), may cross ethical boundaries in pursuit of organizational benefits, leading to what is termed as unethical pro-organizational behavior (UPB). This study draws on established theoretical frameworks such as Social Identity Theory (SIT), Social Exchange Theory (SET), and Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). We propose a mediated-moderation model that explores UPB as a potential negative outcome of OCB, mediated by social exchange (SE), and moderated by moral attentiveness (MA) and collectivist orientation (CO). As the first study of its kind to propse the OCB-UPB relationship, this review aims to significantly contribute to the knowledge base surrounding UPB. Finally it is a theoretical discussions need to involve for further investigation research

Key Words: Unethical Pro-Organizational Behavior (UPB), Organization-oriented Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), Social Exchange (SE), Moral Attentiveness (MA), Collectivist Orientation (CO).

1.   Introduction

The issue of unethical behavior veiled by organizational interests has become a significant concern in the dynamic business landscape of the 21st century (Vem et al., 2022). The rapid pace of globalization and the hyper-economic environment have further intensified market growth (Khan, 2022). In this highly competitive context, organizations are recognizing the importance of investing in human capital that not only possesses essential skills, knowledge, and contentment but also demonstrates productive pro-organizational behaviors (Tefera & Hunsaker, 2020).Pro-organizational behavior encompasses both ethical extra-role behaviors, such as OCB, and unethical extra-role behaviors, like UPB. Existing research indicates that strong identification with the organization and positive social exchange (SE) promote OCB (Moorman et al., 1998; Van Dick et al., 2006) and UPB (Umphress et al., 2010; Wang et al., 2019). While both OCB and UPB are pro-organizational in nature, their impact on organizational performance differs significantly. OCB enhances organizational performance, whereas UPB may hinder it.

Given the contrasting consequences of these behaviors and their pro-organizational motives, a comprehensive review of both constructs is warranted (Mishra et al., 2022). Extensive research has been conducted on OCB (Das & Mohanty, 2021). However, scholars have also recognized the importance of developing a comprehensive conceptual framework to address the potential negative outcomes of OCB, such as unethical and counterproductive behavior (Bolino et al., 2018; Mishra et al., 2022). Concurrently, there is a burgeoning interest in understanding how individuals who exhibit good citizenship behavior may also engage in UPB. Researchers have called for studies to examine the antecedents of UPB (Inam et al., 2021; Veetikazhi et al., 2022) and explore organizational-level motives, as well as individual and contextual moderators, that contribute to UPB (Alniacik et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2022; Mo et al., 2022; Qureshi & Ahmed, 2021).

While previous literature has delved into the link between a positive SE and unethical behavior (Wang et al., 2019), there is a notable research gap concerning a conceptual model that specifically addresses how OCB and SE stimulate UPB. This review aims to fill this gap by investigating the relationship between OCB and employees' propensity to engage in UPB. It will examine the mediating role of high-quality SE among employees and explore how this relationship is moderated by moral awareness (MA) and collectivist orientation (CO). To the maximum understanding of authors of the study represents the first of its kind to comprehensively examine these interrelated dynamics.

This review aims to address several important aspects related to UPB. Firstly, UPB is becoming increasingly prevalent in organizational contexts, making it crucial to have an assessment of its causes and develop effective management strategies. Secondly, this review seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how OCB serves as both a potential antecedent and determinant of UPB through employees' psycho-social attachment to the organization. Thirdly, unlike other types of unethical behaviors such as collusion, cheating, fraud, and corruption, UPB often arises from employees' organizational concern (OC) motives and is influenced by SE mechanisms and reciprocity norms. Lastly, while OCB is generally seen as a positive phenomenon contributing to organizational efficacy, it is important to differentiate the conditions that can lead to negative outcomes and develop a more nuanced understanding of the potential undesired effects of OCB.

The following sections of this review are organized as follows: firstly, a theoretical exposition is provided to establish a conceptual foundation. This will be followed by a comprehensive

literature review of the relevant constructs. Subsequently, the proposed conceptual framework is presented, accompanied by the substantiation of propositions through existing literature and underlying theories. Finally, the review concludes by discussion and the significance of the study and highlights its contributions to the existing body of knowledge.

The prevailing theory used to understand employees' engagement in different organizational behaviors is the Social Identity Theory (SIT), which highlights the significance of identification with the organization as a potent motivator for pro-organizational workplace behaviors (Mo et al., 2022). According to SIT, individuals tend to categorize themselves and others into social groups, with their self-concept influenced by group membership (Tajifel & Turner, 1985). Consequently, employees who feel a sense of unity and belongingness within their organization demonstrate a range of workplace citizenship behaviors and positive attitudes (Naseer et al., 2020). This psycho-social bond drives employees to exert unwavering efforts toward organizational success (Alniacik et al., 2021), particularly in collectivist cultures (Dou et al., 2019; Naseer et al., 2020). However, factors such as organizational affiliation, emotional attachment, internalization of organizational success, external competition, interdependence, and positive SE can also engender a strong desire to protect and benefit the organization at the expense of ethical values, leading to UPB (Alniacik et al., 2021; Umphress et al., 2010).

Social Exchange Theory (SET) stands as a prominent theoretical lens for comprehending the impact of OCBs (Cropanzano et al., 2017; Tayal et al., 2022), as well as the conceptualization of UPB (Inam et al., 2021). Previous research highlights that OCBs contribute to the development of enduring socioemotional attachments and foster positive SE relationships within the organization, yielding favorable outcomes (Liaquat & Mehmood, 2017). However, these sentiments may also trigger unhealthy activities pursued in the pursuit of competitive advantage (Jachimowicz et al., 2018). In the pursuit of collective organizational goals, UPB is viewed as a reciprocal behavior aimed at enhancing organizational performance, often accomplished by downplaying ethical considerations through cognitive minimization (Mishra et al., 2022).

Researchers digging deep into the social cognitive perspective, as expounded by Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), shed light on the individual variability in responding to ethico-moral cues (Khan et al., 2022). To mitigate self-contempt, employees often resort to cognitive minimization to rationalize unethical behavior (Al Halbusi, 2022; Qureshi & Raza, 2022). Notably, employees possessing stronger ethico-moral boundary conditions, such as higher levels

of moral attentiveness (MA), are less likely to engage in unethical behavior compared to those with lower levels (Newman et al., 2020). Furthermore, researchers have emphasized the necessity of investigating the comparative explanatory power of multiple theoretical frameworks, including Social Identity Theory (SIT), Social Exchange Theory (SET), and Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), to comprehensively understand the occurrence of UPB (Mo et al., 2022).

2. Literature Review

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)

OCB refers to "behaviors contributing towards maintenance and enhancement of the social and psychological context that support task performance" (Organ, 1997, p. 91). This definition highlights the significance of individuals' identification with the organization and their cognitive understanding of its goals. Moreover, OCB is fostered through the process of organizational socialization, which promotes interdependence and the adoption of norms of reciprocity for optimal output (Ras & Duyar, 2012).

OCB can be classified into two orientations: OCB-I, which directly benefits specific individuals and indirectly contributes to the organization, and OCB-O, which benefits the organization as a whole (Williams & Anderson, 1991, p. 601–602). Multiple mechanisms can trigger OCB. Social exchange often leads to OCB-I, while identification with the organization is associated with OCB-O. Organization-oriented OCBs are characterized by socioemotional attachment, a sense of belongingness, and a strong sense of organizational membership. Despite helping other organizational members, the primary consideration remains the overall benefit of the organization (Jiang & Law, 2013). In this review, our focus will be on organization-oriented OCB (OCB-O), and for the sake of simplicity, we will use the term OCB to refer specifically to OCB-O. OCB is motivated by organizational concern (OC) motives, such as defending the organization in critical situations and feeling pride in representing the organization publicly.

The investigation of OCB reveals that employees' engagement in these behaviors not only impacts organizational outcomes but also enhances their reputation as "good soldiers". This positive image contributes to improved impressions, self-representation, and performance appraisals, leading to rewards, career advancement, interesting assignments, and organizational support (Organ, 2018; Tayal et al., 2022). However, recent empirical analysis highlights the unintended consequences of OCB. When employees perceive OCB as a job requirement and an

integral part of organizational norms, there is a risk of prioritizing behaviors beneficial to the organization without due consideration for ethical and moral values (Liu et al., 2019). Existing research demonstrates that OCB can lead to unethical behavior (Qian et al., 2022), counterproductive work behaviors (Yam et al., 2017), organizational deviance (Nguyen et al., 2021), and prosocial rule-breaking (Liu et al., 2019).

Researchers have emphasized the significance of examining the outcomes of OCB, particularly its potentially negative consequences, by developing a more integrated and comprehensive conceptual framework (Bolino et al., 2018; Wang, 2016). While it may present a challenge to explore the negative aspects of a behavior that has long been regarded as positive (Wang, 2016), doing so would provide a more nuanced understanding and a balanced perspective (Bolino & Grant, 2016). It is important to note that empirical investigations challenging commonly-held beliefs may encounter resistance from reviewers; however, such investigations aimed at explaining inconsistencies in prevailing beliefs are thought-provoking and intriguing (Bolino et al., 2018).

Unethical Pro-Organizational Behavior (UPB)

Nexus to the ever-increasing competition for market dominance, reports have emerged of employees in various organizations frequently engaging in unethical behavior and fraudulent activities to facilitate organizational success (Chen et al., 2022). These individuals often resort to discretionary actions that disregard social and ethical norms, driven by the aim of advancing the organization's competitive goals (Kong, 2016; Umphress et al., 2010).

UPB, an extra-role pro-organizational behavior aimed at promoting organizational success or improving the organization's image, is characterized by a prioritization of organizational benefits over ethical considerations (Mishra et al., 2022; Inam et al., 2021). Despite the potential ethical implications, many organizations may choose to overlook UPB, as it can yield contributions beyond what is achievable through ethical means (Schuh et al., 2021). Engaging in UPB can cultivate a perception of being a 'good employee' and lead to short-term gains, driven by a strong sense of belongingness, identification, and group/organizational membership (Cheng et al., 2022; Dou et al., 2019). Examples of UPB include deliberately concealing information, manipulating financial records, destroying incriminating documents, misrepresenting products or services, betraying customers, and hiding imperfections, all in pursuit of increased sales and organizational benefits (Sheedy et al., 2021).

Despite the growing interest in UPB, researchers have identified specific areas that require more focused attention. These areas include investigating the underlying constructs that lead to UPB (Inam et al., 2021; Tsiavia et al., 2016; Veetikazhi et al., 2022), understanding the motivational mechanisms involved, and investigating the role of individual and dispositional moderators, as well as cultural and contextual factors (Alniacik et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2022; Mishra et al., 2022; Mo et al., 2022; Qureshi & Ahmed, 2021; Vem et al., 2022). By diving deep into these aspects, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the factors that contribute to UPB and its manifestations within different organizational contexts.

Social Exchange (SE)

Within an organizational context, employees engage in interdependent interactions that foster trust, interpersonal attachment, loyalty, mutual commitment, socio-emotional employment relationships, and a sense of obligation (Shore et al., 2006). Research indicates a positive relationship between employees and employers, which leads to the demonstration of citizenship behavior (Touringy et al., 2019). However, in certain cases, employees may cross ethical boundaries and engage in UPB as a way to reciprocate organizational efforts (Wang et al., 2021). SE plays a crucial role in understanding employees' willingness to engage in pro-organizational behaviors, particularly when guided by strong reciprocity norms. Previous research emphasizes the importance of social identity and SE in explaining employees' enactment of OCB (Jiang & Law, 2013; Organ, 2018). The literature on OCB consistently highlights the influence of reciprocity norms and the support received by employees from the organization (Gervasi et al., 2021). However, it is important to recognize that positive SE can also have unintended consequences, such as fostering unhealthy competition (Jachimowicz et al., 2018). As a result, individuals who are committed to the effective functioning of the organization through OCB may, at times, cross ethical boundaries in pursuit of organizational benefits or anticipated rewards, engaging in UPB (Mishra et al., 2022).

Positive SE can lead individuals to prioritize organizational goals over societal norms, resulting in the occurrence of UPB. UPB is viewed as a reciprocal behavior aimed at maintaining a positive employment relationship with the employer, often at the expense of moral obligations towards society (Umphress & Bingham, 2011). Given these dynamics, researchers have emphasized the importance of investigating the motivational framework rooted in SE that drives UPB (Wang et al., 2021).

Moral Attentiveness (MA)

The occurrence of recent high-profile business scandals has generated significant interest among researchers in understanding and addressing moral failures (Al Halbusi, 2022). MA refers to an individual's consistent awareness and consideration of morality and moral elements in their experiences (Reynolds, 2008; p. 1029). MA can be categorized into two dimensions: perceptual moral attentiveness (PMA), which involves the automatic recognition of morality in daily life, and reflective moral attentiveness (RMA), which requires deliberate and time-consuming contemplation of morality-based issues in decision-making (Ouyang et al., 2022). MA is a distinct personal characteristic that varies from person to person, with individuals more attuned to moral cues demonstrating a heightened ability to assess their own decisions and those of others (Reynolds, 2008). In the workplace, MA can serve as a valuable tool for restoring moral balance by detecting and signaling any unethical activity (Van-Gils et al., 2015).

To mitigate the prevalence of unethical behavior in the marketplace, it is imperative to promote MA among individuals (Khan et al., 2022). MA not only enhances employees' self-assessment of their behavior but also facilitates the evaluation of others' conduct in light of the moral standards they hold (Ouyang et al., 2022). Researchers have advocated for investigating how this social cognitive process of MA may moderate the behavioral transition from OCB to UPB (Mishra et al., 2022; Chen et al., 2022).

Collectivist Orientation (CO)

In the era of globalization, it is essential to develop a harmonious conceptualization of employee-organization relationships that considers cultural values. Culture plays a significant role in shaping employees' loyalty, attachment, and commitment to their organizations (Hagemann et al., 2020). The prevailing norms, culture, and obligations within the organizational context strongly influence behavior. Individualism primarily focuses on self-oriented gains, while collectivism emphasizes collective benefits (Yang et al., 2020). Collectivist cultures evoke collective values, social norms, and shared mores to navigate the social world (Xu et al., 2019). The cultural orientation of collectivism is characterized by interdependence among individuals, a focus on relationship building, and the prioritization of collective goals (Arshad et al., 2019; Hofstede, 2018). In such societies, strong cohesion, collective well-being, cooperation, and

organizational concern are the defining features, fostering unwavering loyalty, dedication, and mutual support (Hofstede, 2018; Zulfiqar et al., 2019).

Collectivism (CO) strongly stimulates OCB, as it aligns with organizational concern (OC) motives aimed at gaining a competitive advantage (Cheng et al., 2022; Takeuchi et al., 2015). Employees with higher levels of collectivism perceive organization-oriented OCB as a duty-bound responsibility for achieving organizational gains and fostering intra-group harmony (Xu et al., 2019). Similarly, UPB may be seen as promoting organizational efficacy, with employees who strongly identify with the organization considering it an act of reciprocity (Yang et al., 2020; Umphress & Bingham, 2011). Such employees go beyond their formal job descriptions, driven not only by organizational benefits but also by heightened expectations from the organization, even at the expense of ethical considerations (Naseer et al., 2020; Yam et al., 2017). To gain a comprehensive understanding of these behavioral transitions, researchers have emphasized the examination of contextual and cultural moderators across different cultural settings (Vem et al., 2022).

4.   Conceptual Framework
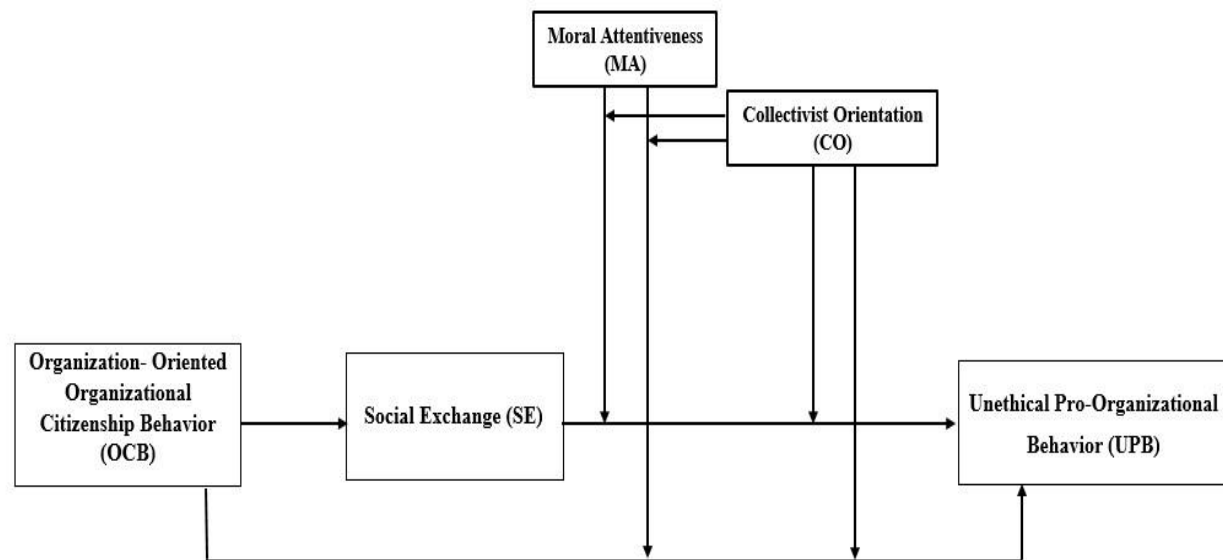
5.   Proffered Proposition
Relationship between OCB and UPB

OCB and UPB are two parallel streams within the same continuum of pro-organizational workplace behaviors. Both behaviors are primarily driven by intention rather than their outcomes

(Cropanzano et al., 2017). Theorization of these constructs overlaps at two key points. First, they are intentional behaviors that are not prescribed in job descriptions or the reward system, and they stem from the individual's choice, influenced by various factors (Cheng et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2021). Second, both behaviors aim to benefit the organization, potentially with a simultaneous self-interest motive (Castille et al., 2018). The fundamental distinction between OCB and UPB lies in the presence of unethicality, which is evident in UPB but absent in OCB (Mishra et al., 2022).

OCB is a well-known form of extra-role pro-organizational behavior that contributes to the effective functioning of organizations (Poksakoff et al., 2018). Research indicates that organizations actively encourage such behaviors to facilitate their operations and efficiency (Shah et al., 2020; Ocampo et al., 2018). However, when these extra-role behaviors are implicitly encouraged and informally rewarded through organizational norms or job requirements, employees may inadvertently extend the boundaries of citizenship behaviors to include UPB, disregarding moral and ethical norms (Bolino & Koltz, 2015; Liu et al., 2019).

Drawing on Social Identity Theory (SIT), the self-concept of employees becomes aligned with organizational attributes, resulting in the internalization of organizational successes and failures as their own (Umphress et al., 2010; Umphress & Bingham, 2011). According to SIT, employees who strongly identify with their organization prioritize organizational interests over individual achievements. This strong identification fosters motivation to pursue collective goals, leading to the display of extra-role behaviors and promoting commitment, cooperation, and attachment, ultimately enhancing organizational competitiveness (Alniacik et al., 2021). Research has consistently demonstrated that organizational identification is associated with engagement in organizational-oriented citizenship behaviors (Jiang & Law, 2013; Irshad & Bashir, 2020). Individuals with a high level of identification take pride in their organization and, driven by their sense of belongingness, are more inclined to engage in pro-organizational behaviors that benefit the organization, even if it means compromising moral considerations (Naseer et al., 2020).

Previous studies have indicated that engaging in OCB may inadvertently lead to unethical behavior, organizational deviance, prosocial rule-breaking, and counterproductive behavior. The convergence of internalized organizational values and external competitive pressures can compel individuals to engage in UPB. Given the pro-organizational nature of both organization-oriented OCB and UPB, a practical work environment can blur the distinction between these behaviors,

leading employees to perceive UPB as an extension of OCB (Mishra et al., 2022; Veetikazhi et al., 2022). Building upon this line of inquiry, we speculate on the potentially perilous outcome of employees' strong identification, sense of belongingness, and attachment to the organization, which may inadvertently legitimize the display of UPB as a means of aiding the organization and sustaining long-term associations (Chen et al., 2022; Mo et al., 2022). In light of the above, we propose the following: -

Proposition 1: Greater identification with the organization positively influences the propensity of employees demonstrating OCB to engage in UPB.

Mediating Role of Social Exchange (SE) between OCB and UPB

Social exchange (SE) serves as a crucial boundary condition for understanding employees' motivation to engage in pro-organizational behaviors. The establishment of strong identification, trustworthiness, and non-negotiable arrangements forms the foundation for attachment and SE between employees and the organization (Shore et al., 2009). SE occurs through interdependent relationships, generating a sense of reciprocal obligation, although the specific nature of reciprocation may not be predetermined (Blau, 1964). Employees, driven by self-interest, strive to achieve goals that align with organizational objectives to maximize their remuneration or anticipated rewards. In this context, UPB is often perceived as a reasonable, rationalized, justified, and dutiful action to fulfill employment obligations (Dong et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021).

Scholars have recognized the significant role of positive SE relationships in fostering employees' engagement in extra-role behaviors for the organization (Ma et al., 2022; Ocampo et al., 2018; Tourigny et al., 2019; Umphress et al., 2010). Employees develop socio-emotional attachments to their organization as a means of maintaining their organizational association. The achievement of collective organizational goals becomes a central milestone, and UPB is perceived as a reciprocal behavior aimed at enhancing organizational effectiveness, sometimes involving cognitive minimization and temporarily disregarding ethical considerations (Mishra et al., 2022). Consequently, individuals who are committed to ensuring the organization's effective functioning through the practice of OCB within the framework of SE may, at times, cross ethical boundaries to benefit the organization and engage in UPB (Mishra et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2021).

Based on the preceding arguments, we posit a positive association between SE and organization-oriented OCB. Positive SE creates a conducive environment that fosters employees' willingness to engage in UPB, potentially overriding ethical considerations. Moreover, by integrating the positive relationship between OCB and SE, we propose that OCB indirectly influences employee engagement in UPB through SE. These arguments culminate in the following proposition: -

Proposition 2: OCB positively influences the establishment of favorable conditions for a prosperous SE, subsequently fostering employees' willingness to engage in UPB.

Moderating Role of Moral Attentiveness (MA) between OCB, SE, and UPB

MA is a trait that varies among individuals in their perception and consideration of morality-based elements within their experiences, supported by theoretical and empirical evidence (Zhu et al., 2016). It encompasses the cognitive framework through which individuals interpret, organize, and process incoming information, with a focused lens on morality (Ames et al., 2020). MA allows individuals to distinguish between moral and amoral aspects and to discern normal and non-normal situations (Mo et al., 2022). Drawing on the social cognitive theory (SCT), individuals' responses to moral situations differ based on their level of engagement with SE (Khan et al., 2022). Strongly aligned with SE, employees tend to prioritize the achievement of organizational goals, often overshadowing social norms (Umphress & Bingham, 2011). To reconcile morally questionable deeds, employees may employ neutralization or cognitive minimization techniques to mitigate self-disgust (Al Halbusi, 2022; Qureshi & Raza, 2022).

Employees who possess higher levels of MA demonstrate a greater sensitivity to ethical considerations and are less likely to engage in unethical behavior, as they perceive unethicality as detrimental with multiple drawbacks (Jiang et al., 2022). Their heightened attention to morality leads them to prioritize ethical conduct and refrain from employing unethical means to serve organizational interests. Conversely, employees with lower levels of MA may not pay as much attention to the moral dimensions of unethical behavior, thereby emphasizing the positive aspects of their reasoning and focusing on pro-organizational outcomes (Khan et al., 2022). Previous empirical studies have consistently supported the notion that individuals with higher MA are less inclined to engage in unethical behavior (Miao et al., 2020; Khan et al., 2021;

Ouyang et al., 2022; Reynolds, 2008; Van-Giles et al., 2015). These findings lead us to propose the following propositions: -

Proposition 3a: The association between OCB and employees' willingness to engage in UPB is contingent upon individual levels of MA, with the relationship being weaker for employees higher in MA and stronger for employees lower in MA.

Proposition 3b: The association between SE and employees' willingness to engage in UPB is contingent upon individual levels of MA, with the relationship being weaker for employees higher in MA and stronger for employees lower in MA.

Moderating Role of Collectivist Orientation (CO) between OCB, SE, and UPB

The concept of CO, originally introduced by Hofstede (1980), emerges as a crucial cultural construct that is generally associated with individual behavior, emotions, and motivations toward engaging in extra-role behavior (Xu et al., 2019). Within the context of research on employees' organizational behavior and social identity, CO serves as a highly relevant and suitable boundary condition. Strong identification with an organization fosters interdependence, group favoritism, positive contributions, emotional attachment, and well-developed social networks (Arshad et al., 2019; Zulfiqar et al., 2019). Collectivist societies place significant emphasis on achieving collective goals, obtaining extrinsic rewards, and prioritizing collective interests over personal interests (Hussain et al., 2022).

The process of organizational socialization plays a crucial role in strengthening employees' identification with the organization and their sense of organizational membership, resulting in in-group favoritism, the willingness to care for other members, and a willingness to make compromises to meet in-group demands (Yang et al., 2020). CO significantly influences the cognitive and behavioral attributes of employees, fostering reciprocal concern for other group members and a strong commitment to collective well-being and welfare. This, in turn, promotes relationship-building and SE within the organizational context (Hussain et al., 2022). Employees with a high level of CO closely intertwine their self-definition with organizational identification and perceive OCB as an act of duty (Xu et al., 2019). Simultaneously, CO contributes to the manifestation of UPB, as employees internalize organizational norms and perceive UPB as a

form of reciprocity to meet the demands of the in-group due to the strong psychological bond with the organization (Yang et al., 2020). Considering these antecedents, CO is likely to moderate the direct relationship between OCB and UPB, as well as the indirect relationship via SE, leading to the following propositions: -

Proposition 4a: The association between OCB and employees' willingness to engage in UPB is contingent upon individual levels of CO, with the relationship being stronger for employees higher in MA and weaker for employees lower in CO.

Proposition 4b: The association between SE and employees' willingness to engage in UPB is contingent upon individual levels of CO, with the relationship being stronger for employees higher in MA and weaker for employees lower in CO.

Joint Moderation Effect of Moral Attentiveness (MA) and Collectivist Orientation (CO)

The moderation effect of MA on the linkage between OCB-UPB and SE-UPB is grounded in the fundamental understanding that MA plays a crucial role in shaping these relationships. Specifically, the positive association between OCB and the willingness to engage in UPB is expected to be weaker for employees higher in MA, while stronger for employees lower in MA. Similarly, the positive association between SE and the willingness to engage in UPB is anticipated to be weaker for employees higher in MA, and stronger for employees lower in MA. Drawing from social cognitive theory (SCT), employees with higher levels of MA demonstrate greater attention to morality and increased sensitivity to unethical issues (Jiang et al., 2022). Consequently, they are less likely to engage in UPB, as they prioritize ethical considerations over serving the interests of leaders or organizations through unethical means. Conversely, employees with lower levels of MA may not give as much attention to the moral aspects of unethical behavior, focusing more on the positive outcomes that align with pro-organizational goals (Khan et al., 2022).

CO is expected to moderate the moderation effect of MA on the linkage between OCB-UPB and SE-UPB, primarily for employees with low MA. This suggests that employees characterized by CO and low MA are more susceptible to displaying a willingness to engage in UPB, driven by their strong identification with the organization. These employees place significant emphasis on OCB as a sense of duty (Xu et al., 2019) and may perceive UPB as a norm of reciprocity, resulting from their profound psychological attachment and internalization of organizational

norms (Yang et al., 2020). Building on these arguments, we propose that CO is likely to moderate the moderating effect of MA on both the relationship between OCB and UPB, as well as the relationship between SE and UPB: -

Proposition 5a: The association between OCB and employees' willingness to engage in UPB, jointly moderate the MA and CO such that the negative effect of MA is weaker for the employees higher in CO and the negative effect of MA is stronger for the employees weaker in CO.

Proposition 5b: The association between SE and employees' willingness to engage in UPB jointly moderate the relation of MA and CO such that the negative effect of MA is weaker for the employees higher in CO and the negative effect of MA is stronger for the employees weaker in CO.

6.   Discussion

Rising instances of unethical behavior in the workplace have raised concerns among both scholars and the general public. The prevalence of high-profile episodes, such as corruption and the dissemination of deceptive information has prompted substantial attention and scrutiny from researchers (Bryant, 2020; Graham et al., 2020; Inam et al., 2021; Zeng et al., 2021). Within this growing interest in UPB, scholars are particularly keen on investigating the transition from good citizenship behavior to UPB, taking into account various ethical and moral constructs that serve as potential bridges or catalysts (Chen et al., 2022; Mishra et al., 2022; Mo et al., 2022). By examining these factors, researchers aim to shed light on the underlying mechanisms that lead individuals to deviate from being good citizens and engage in UPB.

The proposed conceptual framework offers significant contributions to the existing literature in several ways like it is typically subjected to empirical testing and guides the development of hypotheses. Further, it addresses the inherent inconsistency between OCB and UPB, shedding light on how employees aspiring to be good citizens and engage in organization-oriented OCB may unintentionally cross ethical boundaries and perform UPB (Mishra et al., 2022). It also integrates fragmented research on the consequences of OCB, providing a comprehensive mediated-moderation framework to explore the non-traditional negative outcomes of OCB (Bolino et al., 2018; Edros et al., 2020; Harvey et al., 2018; Wang, 2016). The proposed study also enriches the understanding of potential antecedents and determinants of UPB by identifying organization-

oriented OCB as a potential precursor through psycho-social mechanisms (Inam et al., 2021; Tsiavia, 2016; Veetikazhi et al., 2022). Similarly, it proposes the relationship between SE and UPB by considering reciprocity norms within a motivational framework (Cheng & Lin, 2019; Mo et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2021). Finally, it suggests to implore the moderating effects of MA as an individual moderator and CO as a dispositional (Alniacik et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2022; Mo et al., 2022; Qureshi & Ahmed, 2021; Qureshi & Raza, 2022; Vem et al., 2022). Finally, it responds to the call for a comparative explanatory power of multiple theoretical frameworks, including SIT, SET, and SCT, to enhance our understanding of UPB (Mo et al., 2022).

7. Conclusion

The article proposes a comprehensive and integrated conceptual framework that positions OCB as a potential antecedent leading to subsequent unethical behavior. It reviews organizational-level motives, considering both individual and contextual moderators in detail. The framework examines the comparative explanatory power of theoretical frameworks like SIT, SET, and SCT to understand the occurrence of UPB. By empirically analyzing the relationship between OCB and UPB under ethico-moral boundary conditions, the study aims to generate valuable insights for managers, practitioners, academics, and research scholars. The future findings through hypothesis analysis can help to guide policy-makers in fine-tuning their policies and knowledge plans to handle complex situations within organizations effectively. Through empirical analysis, the proposed propositions aspire to make significant theoretical, practical, and managerial contributions to the body of knowledge in the field of UPB. However, propositions are not subjected to empirical testing on their own but may guide the development of hypotheses.

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