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## PROSOCIAL ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR AND ITS DIFFERENT ASPECTS

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### ABSTRACT

In human relations helping behaviors of people have been trying to be understood. People also take the stage in organizations with their relations with others. Prosocial attitude is a multifaceted concept for organizations as in human life. Today, prosocial behavior is the topic of researches for psychologists, sociologists, managerial and organizational behavior scientists and professionals of human resources as well. It is generally believed that prosocial organizational behavior means "voluntary" acts that an employee does in the organization. However less is known about this kind of behavior, and therefore scientists have been trying to understand prosocial organizational behavior and even now, they have interest in knowing the still-unknown faces of this important subject. Even though many researches made significant contributions to the literature of prosocial organizational behavior in this respect, different aspects of prosocial organizational behavior needed to be analyzed.

In this vein, the aim of this study is to explore prosocial organizational behavior and its aspects by understanding the concept with a literature review. In this context, types of prosocial organizational behaviors exhibited in organizations, different factors and reasons which trigger prosocial organizational behaviors, outcomes and benefits of prosocial organizational behaviors are explained in this study. Ultimately, it can be emphasized that prosocial organizational behaviors need to be encouraged due to their remarkable value for organizations.

**Keywords:** Prosocial Organizational Behavior, Types of Prosocial Organizational Behavior, Predictors and Outcomes of Prosocial Organizational Behavior.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, in order for organizations to be successful, their employees need to exhibit prosocial behavior as well as their formal role requirements. Change in practices related to human resources forces organizations to make researches in this field (İpek & Özbilgin, 2015: 129). Prosocial organizational behaviors are thought to be one of the basic assets that the organization must have for its survival and progress (Hazzi & Maldaon, 2012: 106). Humans in a society integrated with courtesy behaviors they exhibit to others. This kind of behaviors are commonly appreciated by the society they found. Moreover, a society which consist of people who are not behaving prosocially will be doomed to self-destruct. Therefore, it is important to understand prosocial behaviors in organizations (Cadenhead & Richman, 1996: 170).

Prosocial organizational behaviour generally explained as the desire of employees to fulfill the formal requirements of their job and to go beyond these requirements. The literature on organizations demonstrate that prosocial organizational behaviour mainly conceptualized as voluntarily acts of employees (Lee, 2001: 1041). Employees in organizations exhibit different behaviors depending on their personal characteristics as well as internal and external factors. Some of them are role behaviors that are appropriate to the requirements of the job, and some

are in the form of in-role and extra-role prosocial behaviors. The individual is aware that his/her behaviors that do not consider social expectations in society will not be accepted. Therefore, he/she prefers to behave according to social norms and values. In this sense, role behaviors can be defined as behaving in accordance with the expectations of others by being influenced by norms and values of the society that they live in. On the other hand, being different from formal role behaviors, prosocial behavior is defined as non-formal additional role behaviors that provide benefits for the organization but are not based on any orders or directives (İpek & Özbilgin, 2015: 130). In other words, the behaviors that are not based on any order and beneficial for the organization differ from the formal role behaviors of the employees, and these behaviors described in the form of non-formal behaviors are referred in the literature as prosocial behaviors (Karadağ & Mutağçılar, 2009: 52). Investigation of prosocial organizational behaviors based on conceptualization of spontaneous behaviors (behaviors that are exceeding job requirements) by Katz and Kahn. Katz and Kahn explained that spontaneous behaviors have an important role in the survival and effectiveness of the organization. When it comes from the time to the present, it can be seen that behaviors that are exceeding formal job requirements are conceptualized as prosocial organizational behavior (Katz & Kahn, 1966; Bülbül, 2014: 48).

Prosocial organizational behavior is an extremely value-loaded concept (Hazzi & Maldaon, 2012: 112). Prosocial organizational behaviors observed in organizations are highly commendable and helpful. Prosocial organizational behaviour appears in different types. There may be seen many different forms of prosocial organizational behaviors that support both the effectiveness of individual and organizational performance (Lee, 2001: 1031). It is important to understand the types of prosocial organizational behavior. Being as voluntary or selfless behaviors, it is not possible to force employees to exhibit prosocial attitude as it depends on many factors. Thus, factors behind prosocial attitude should be described. Besides its predictors, large numbers of researches have been conducted so far for explaining benefits and outcomes of practicing prosocial organizational behaviors.

Eventually, this study was composed to explore prosocial organizational behavior. In order to gain an understanding about this concept a literature review is designed. In this context, first of all, prosocial organizational behavior is defined. Then, types of prosocial organizational behaviors exhibited in organizations, different factors and reasons which trigger prosocial organizational behaviors, outcomes and benefits of prosocial organizational behaviors are explained respectively in this study.

## **2. DEFINING PROSOCIAL ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR**

Initial publications on prosocial behavior were based on classical management theorists and practitioners. Although studies on prosocial behavior have substantially increased in years between 1983 to 1993, most of them are mere empirical investigations which aims to explore conceptual issues (Tonetto da Rosa, Lara Machado & Ziebell de Oliveira, 2016: 9).

Prosocial organizational behavior can be broadly described as a behavior that is (a) performed by a member of an organization, (b) directed toward an individual, group, or organization with whom he or she interacts while carrying out his or her organizational role, and (c) performed with the intention of promoting the welfare of the individual, group, or organization to whom it is directed (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986: 711). Prosocial organizational behavior is carried out by an organization's member with the intention of providing benefits for the co-workers, customers, teams, or the organization itself with which the member interacts while performing his/her role (Uymaz, 2014: 124). Employees exhibit prosocial organizational behaviors with the sense of improving the wellbeing of other individuals or organizations. Prosocial organizational behaviors explains the desire of an employee to both

fulfill and exceed necessities of a job (Kanten, 2014: 257). Organizational citizenship behaviors are usually accepted as a prototype of prosocial behaviors. In addition to this, most of the researchers working in the field of organizational citizenship behavior have occasionally taken into consideration other prosocial behaviors (such as mentoring, knowledge sharing, brokering introductions, and compassion) which are studied by organizational scholars. (Bolino & Grant, 2016: 24).

On the other hand, prosocial behaviours are accepted as an important foci of proactive behaviors. Proactive behaviours, which are distinguished as proorganizational (directed at the organization), prosocial (directed at the workgroup/colleagues), and proself (directed at facilitating the achievement of one's personal or career goals) proactive behaviours, describes the anticipatory actions which an employee shows for affecting or changing himself or his work environment. Different forms of proactive behaviour have different predictors and outcomes (Belschak & Den Hartog, 2010). Thus, prosocial types of proactive behaviours have different aspects need to be examined.

When prosociality in organizations have been spoken, three related concepts should be differentiated from each other. Therefore, reviewing the meanings of prosocial motives, behaviors, and impact help to understand prosociality in organization. Differences between prosocial motives, prosocial behaviors and prosocial impact are explained as in Table 1 (Bolino & Grant, 2016: 5).

Table 1. Comparison of prosocial motives, behaviors, and impact

	<b>Prosocial motives</b>	<b>Prosocial behaviors</b>	<b>Prosocial impact</b>
<b>Definition</b>	The desire to benefit others or expend effort out of concern for others	Actions that promote or protect the welfare of individuals, groups, or organizations	The experience of making a positive difference in the lives of others through one's work
<b>Features</b>	Distinct from purely altruistic (self-less) motives or instrumental (self-serving) motives and may involve both concern for others and concern for oneself	May be may be either role-prescribed (i.e. inrole behavior) or discretionary (i.e. extra-role behavior). May be rewarded or unrewarded May be organizationally functional or dysfunctional	Similar to task significance, but focuses on the perception that one's actions are making a difference in others' lives
<b>Nature</b>	A state or trait	A behavior	A perception or feeling

In the organizations, in which, people exhibit prosocial attitudes, normally do not give rewards to them in return because individuals normally do not expect any rewards; however, some organizations recognize this type of contributions as useful and encourage their employees to exhibit them as a part of their regular practice. Management of almost every organization wants to inculcate the spirit, under which, people show prosocial behaviors (Uymaz, 2014). Depending on the existence of cultural beliefs that people should exhibit prosocial behaviors because they are accepted as socially desirable or correct behaviors, prosocial organizational behaviors are related to the opinion of socially desirable behavior (Baruch et al., 2004: 401). Prosocial organizational behaviors are keep in mind as socially desirable behaviors performed by employees who are aspiring to be of service to other people in the organization and make contribution to effectiveness of the organization. This type of

behavior may comprise of voluntarily behaviors that contain cooperating with others such as helping colleagues to accomplish certain tasks, sharing with others, and other behaviors (Onyishi, 2012: 97). Prosocial motives give rise to prosocial behaviors, which ultimately reinforces perceptions of prosocial impact (Bolino & Grant, 2016: 49).

### 3. TYPES OF PROSOCIAL ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR

In the literature on prosocial organizational behavior, it is observed that classifying prosocial organizational behaviors is very difficult.

According to a view prosocial organizational behaviors can be explained by two fundamental component. One of them is extra-role behaviors and the other is in-role behaviors. Extra-role behaviors are the behaviors that the organization cannot assign to the individual and may not be accepted within the reward system of the organization. In-role behaviors are the behaviors that the organization assign to the individual as a part of performance requirements and they may be seen as a part of one's role prescriptions (Lee, 1995: 197).

In the context of another view, Brief and Motowidlo (1986) specified thirteen different types of prosocial organizational behavior. Explaining that different behaviors may be organizationally functional, individually functional, or dysfunctional, they emphasize that it is very difficult to classify and define prosocial organizational behaviors (Baruch et al., 2004: 401). Although these difficulties in identifying prosocial organizational behaviors, they made their classification as in Table 2 (Brief and Motowidlo, 1986).

Table 2. Types of Prosocial Organizational Behaviors

#### Specific Types of Prosocial Organizational Behaviors

- Assisting co-workers with job-related matters
- Assisting co-workers with personal matters
- Showing leniency in personnel decisions
- Providing services or products to consumers in organizationally consistent ways
- Providing services or products to consumers in organizationally inconsistent ways
- Helping consumers with personal matters unrelated to organizational services or products
- Complying with organizational values, policies and regulations
- Suggesting procedural, administrative, or organizational improvements
- Objecting to improper directives, procedures, or policies
- Putting forth extra effort on the job
- Volunteering for additional assignments
- Staying with the organization despite temporary hardships
- Representing the organization favorably to outsiders

In the extensive classification of Brief and Motowidlo (1986) three axes is determined in the course of which prosocial organizational behaviors may differentiate. Firstly, prosocial organizational behaviors vary in being organizationally functional or dysfunctional. Secondly, a differentiation occurs in prosocial organizational behaviors due to being understood as role prescribed or extra-role prosocial behaviors. Ultimately, receiver at the end of the prosocial organizational behaviors is discussed in terms of being an individual receiver (coworker,

customer, etc.) or an organizational receiver in the process of prosocial organizational behavior. Taking into account these differentiations, thirteen different types of prosocial organizational behavior is determined by the researchers (Bülbül, 2014: 48). According to first axes, functional prosocial behaviors are the behaviors that lead to the development of organizational capabilities to achieve the goals of the organization and to sustain its life while dysfunctional prosocial behaviors do not directly contribute achieving the objectives of the organization. Due to second axes, prosocial behaviors consist of a wide range of behaviors, including both in-role behaviors involved in job descriptions and extra-role behaviors not involved in job descriptions. Third axes is related to the target of the act. The act can target colleagues and/or customers. Thus, prosocial behaviors may be directed to all sides involved in the interaction (Bayrakçı & Kayalar, 2016: 124).

According to another view, prosocial organizational behaviors are classified in three types in terms of the advantages of the behavior which they reflect. First type is called as prosocial organizational behavior and this type of behavior directed to the organization as a whole. Second type is called as prosocial individual behavior and this type of behavior directed to specific individuals in the organization. The last type is called as role-prescribed prosocial behavior and this type of behavior directed towards meeting one's job requirements (McNeely & Meglino, 1994; Onyishi, 2012: 97).

#### **4. PREDICTORS OF PROSOCIAL ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR**

There are two approaches, which need to be understood, for explaining the background of prosocial organizational behavior in organizations. One of them is related with "positive mood" while the other is based on social exchange theory (Uymaz, 2014: 124; McNeely & Meglino, 1994: 836). According to George (1991), a good deal of prosocial organizational behaviors are the acts which appears spontaneously and originated from the existing mood of an individual. In the context of worklife, positive mood will lead to more positive behaviors. Employees who are in a positive mood tend to look positively to everyone who will be getting help from them, such as colleagues and customers. Positive mood can be seen as a state or as a trait. Being thought as a state, positive mood represents how a person feels at a given point in time. On the contrary, being as a trait, positive mood refers stable individual differences in the level of positive mood generally experienced. Moreover, the positive mood which has a relationship between prosocial behavior is accepted as a state rather than a trait (George, 1991). Prosocial organizational behavior should also be thought on the basis of social exchange theory. Social exchange theory is one of the most effective conceptual paradigms that can be addressed in understanding behavior in the workplace (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005: 874). In terms of the social exchange theory, a prosocial person believes that his/her prosocial behavior will somehow return to him/her in the future (Prochazka & Vaculik, 2011: 364). Social exchange theory has principally concentrated on norms of reciprocity (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005: 880). The assumption contemplated herein is that rewarding prosocial behaviors toward another person would result in prosocial behaviors of others against the person who can act prosocially. This case is clarified by the norm of reciprocity, which is a social norm defined in the fields of psychology, political science, sociology and economics. The norm of reciprocity assumes that a person who received help in the past should turn back this help in the future. Being exist with together, social exchange theory and norm of reciprocity confirm that individuals expect prosocial behaviors from others in response to their own prosocial behaviors (Prochazka & Vaculik, 2011: 364). Moreover, social learning theory correlate prosocial behavior to the individual's history related to learning, and norms and roles need to be taken into account for prosocial behaviors (Bülbül, 2014: 48).

Identifying the reasons which trigger prosocial organizational behaviors and why employees engage in this type of behaviors have taken attention of a considerable amount of researches in both in the fields of organizational behavior and social psychology (McNeely & Meglino, 1994: 836). Thus, many researches conducted for seeing the relations between prosocial organizational behaviors and different variables. Baruch et al. (2004: 408) emphasized that a relationship was found between prosocial behavior and the motivational ground of behavior, especially for the achievement need and employees' need for control. They have also explained that organizational commitment can be seen as a direct predictor of prosocial behavior. Li et al. (2017: 1811), examined prosocial behavior in different envy situations and specified that separate forms of envy effects prosocial behavior separately. Due to their research, malicious envy predicts negative prosocial behaviors within the envied, and well-tempered envy predicts positive prosocial behaviors within the envied. These results proved once again that people act depending on two reasons, one of them is to escape bad things and the other is to pursue good things. Leadership and most particularly servant leadership is considered as an antecedent of prosocial behavior. In the model of servant leadership, due to servant leaders' effort for serving their followers and satisfaction of the followers from this situation, prosocial behavior is developed (Ehrhart, 2004: 69-70). Leaders' and coworkers' ethicality has also an effect on prosocial workplace behavior and leadership provides situations for prosocial behavior (O'Keefe, Messervey & Squires, 2018). In a different research, although it isn't proved empirically, equality is thought as positively associated with prosocial behavior (Liu, 2009). Perceived fairness and pay satisfaction are also accepted as a predictor of prosocial behavior (Lee, 1995). Quality of work life affects extra-role prosocial behaviors (Kanten, 2014: 251). Moreover, being socialized and being engaged to role tasks and perceiving acceptance from others in the workplace bring out prosocial behaviors at work (Livi, 2018: 9). Therefore, it can be said that different factors somehow affect prosocial organizational behavior.

## 5. OUTCOMES OF PROSOCIAL ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR

Prosocial acts in organizations can be beneficial both for the individual and organization. This type of behavior is a valuable contributor for the side (individuals or the organization) where it is directed (Boundenhan et al., 2012: 14). In organizational context, prosocial behaviors may have benefits for a specific individual or the organization as a whole, or both of them. Besides, in most instances, it may be difficult to determine benefits of prosocial behaviors. Prosocial acts were accepted as advantageous not only for the receiving end, but also having multiple advantages for the agent performing them (Bülbul, 2014: 47). Brief and Motowidlo (1986) claimed that prosocial behavior has definite effects on organizations. They agreed with the description of Katz's (1964), in which, he claimed that behavioral patterns are required for effective organizational functioning.

Prosocial behaviors in the workplace can be thought as a key component of organizational effectiveness in terms of leading the development of the business environment by a series of behaviors carried out by employees (Boundenhan et al., 2012: 14). From a motivational point of view, employees may feel that they experience a strong sense of meaning and purpose when they engage in providing benefits to others, and this feeling may lead them to work harder, smarter and longer. As long as it is voluntary and effective, benevolence allows employees to be in a good mood. From the learning point of view, employees can develop their ability to solve their own problems when they spend time to help others for solving their problems. Although traditional assumptions suggest that information sharing allows the recipient to learn, new researches emphasize that it can also help the provider. Employees can gain new insights and skills by helping other employees to solve their problems. On the

further side of individual performance, prosocial acts have a key role in the effectiveness of organizations (Bolino & Grant, 2016: 27).

Results of prosocial motivation involves persistency in performance, productivity and organizational citizenship behaviors (Bülbül, 2014: 48). Efforts for explaining the importance of prosocial organizational behavior come into the scene with Organ and his colleagues. Indeed, researchers have claimed that this type of informal (i.e., extra-role) helping and cooperation behaviors are required in order to take an efficient functioning of an organization (McNeely & Meglino, 1994: 836). depending on the difficulty in determining the whole of the behaviors essential to organizations for achieving their goals, extrarole prosocial behaviors are crucial for the effectiveness of organizations (George, 1991: 299).

It has long been recognised that prosocial behaviors generally have positive outcomes for organizations. Prosocial behaviors' positive effect on performance is usually emphasized in the literature (Bolino & Grant, 2016: 26). Prosocial behaviors regulate the mood and this effect may be broaden to the general well-being of the person and his/her closest environment (Bülbül, 2014: 48). Prosocial behaviors strengthened relationship and reputation of the employee, make easy to constitute social capital, improve status and create capability that poses less threat to other employees. Employees earn respect by giving priority to the interests of others, and groups are prone to reward loyalty (Bolino & Grant, 2016: 26). At this juncture, it can also be approved that job satisfaction, organizational efficiency, communication and customer satisfaction will be improved by prosocial behavior (Baruch et al., 2004: 401).

Although prosocial behaviors often relate to positive outcomes, there may be negative outcomes. While prosocial behaviors aim to contribute individuals, groups or organizations, these behaviors may have a negative impact on some parties (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986; Bolino & Grant, 2016: 28). Research evaluates the negative effects of prosocial behaviors on employees and others in five categories which comprise of exhaustion, ineffice, injustice, ethical violations, and exploitation (Bolino & Grant, 2016: 28).

## 6. CONCLUSION

Prosocial behaviors are voluntary behaviors based on helping others. The concept of prosocial behavior is the subject of researches in many areas such as education, psychology and sociology. In terms of organization, the concept of prosocial organizational behavior occurs when prosocial behavior is realized in organizations. Similar to prosocial behavior, prosocial organizational behavior is carried out voluntarily to provide benefits for others. The individual who exhibits prosocial behavior here is an organization's member. Individuals in organizations can exhibit a great deal of prosocial organizational behaviors while living in the business world as a main actor. Prosocial organizational behaviors are considered as very important in achieving effectiveness in the performance of both organizations and individuals. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate, examine and understand prosocial behaviors in organizations.

In this study, it is aimed to shed light on understanding prosocial organizational behavior, focusing on its definition, its different types, its predictors and its outcomes. The effort to understand the behavior of the individual in business life as in many areas of life also leads to the need to understand prosocial behavior in organizations. With the help of a literature review, what is expressed by the concept of prosocial organizational behavior, what are the differentiated types of prosocial organizational behavior, the factors that provide a basis for prosocial organizational behavior, and the remarkable effects of prosocial organizational behavior on both the individual and the organization are discussed in the study. In the light of the examinations, it can be said that there is a need to examine the prosocial organizational

behavior with different research designs and prosocial organizational behavior is a research field that maintains its popularity.

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