Job Demands and Organizational Citizenship Behavior: The Roles of

Organizational Commitment and Social Interaction

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ABSTRACT

Drawing from the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model and research on social exchange relationships, this study investigates the impact of three job demands (work overload, interpersonal conflict, and dissatisfaction with the organization's current situation) on employees' organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), the hitherto unexplored mediating role of organizational commitment in the link between job demands and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), as well as how this mediating effect might be moderated by social interaction. Using a multi-source, two-wave research design, surveys were administered to 707 employees and their supervisors in a Mexican-based organization. The hypotheses were tested with hierarchical regression analysis. The results indicate a direct negative relationship between interpersonal conflict and OCB, and a mediating effect of organizational commitment for interpersonal conflict and dissatisfaction with the organization's current situation. Further, social interaction moderates the mediating effect of organizational commitment for each of the three job demands such that the mediating effect is weaker at higher levels of social interaction. The study suggests that organizations aiming to instill OCB among their employees should match the immediate work context surrounding their task execution with an internal environment that promotes informal relationship building.

Keywords: organizational citizenship behavior, job demands, organizational commitment, social interaction

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1. INTRODUCTION

Organizations see the ideal worker as one who not only demonstrates high levels of task performance but also engages in behavior that is not directly required from formal job descriptions (Bolino & Turnley, 2005). Hence, organizational citizenship behavior, or OCB, tends to highly valued by employers (cf. Organ, Podsakoff, & MacKenzie, 2006, p.217). In light of its contribution to organizational effectiveness, extant research has devoted significant attention to the manifestations of OCB (e.g., Ehrhart, Bliese, & Thomas, 2006; Williams, & Anderson, 1991), its antecedents (e.g., Arthaud-Day, Rode, & Turnley, 2012; Li, Liang, & Crant, 2010; Organ, 1988) and its outcomes (e.g., Halbeslben, Bowler, Bolino, & Turnley, 2010). However, because of its beneficial effects, the literature has mostly focused on "positive" factors that simulate OCB, with less attention being devoted to how it may be hampered by adverse workplace conditions (Noblet, McWilliams, Teo, & Rodwell, 2006). Some of the popular precursors of OCB are perceived organization support (Lynch, Eisenberger, & Armeli, 1999; Baran, Shanock, & Miller, 2012), decision autonomy (Noblet et al., 2006), fairness perceptions (cf. Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001), and leader attitudes and behaviors (Anand, Vidyarthi, Liden, & Rousseau, 2010), but there is paucity of research on the link between sources of job stress and OCB. Further, since the stress-OCB relationship itself is a relatively less investigated topic, limited research suggests solutions to mitigating the negative impact of sources of stress on OCB. My thesis addresses this gap.

The earliest definition of OCB describes it as "individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization" (Organ, 1988, p. 4), as well as activities that are comprised of "only those behaviors that, in the aggregate,

across time and across persons, contribute to organizational effectiveness" (Organ, 1997, p. 87). While OCB may fuel effective organizational functioning, such behavior does not occur automatically and requires significant personal investments of time, energy, and effort. When employees display OCB (e.g., they come in early or stay late for work), they spend additional time, energy and effort that is beyond the company's formal requirements (Bolino & Turnley, 2005). Job demands, on the other hand, are seen as sources of stress (Meijman & Mulder, 1998) that drain energy out of employees, eventually leaving them exhausted and constrained in where to allocate their work efforts. Hence, when extra-role time investments become more challenging because of highly demanding work conditions, the occurrence of OCB may diminish.

Accordingly, I will investigate the relationship between various job demands and OCB, as well as the mechanisms that may underlie or influence this relationship. I draw hereto from the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, which categorizes the organizational context into job demands and job resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). While job demands trigger stress, job resources tend to have an attenuating effect and reduce stress. I investigate how employees' OCB is informed by three distinct job demands (work overload, interpersonal conflict, and dissatisfaction with the organization's current situation), their attitudes toward their organization (organizational commitment), and a critical resource that is embedded in employees' relationships with other organizational members (social interaction). The research setting that I will use is an organization based in Mexico, which provides an interesting context for studying the roles that job demands and social interaction play in the prediction of OCB. Compared to more frequently investigated settings, such as the US and Canada, Mexico scores high on

the dimensions of uncertainty avoidance and collectivism (Hofstede, 2001). In Mexican culture, people tend to be more risk averse, and thus they may be particularly sensitive to the stress that emerges from demanding working conditions. Furthermore, social relationships are highly valued in Mexico, and the proposed beneficial role of social interaction in countering the stress that comes with high job demands may therefore be particularly potent in this country. Empirically, this study applies a two-wave, multi-source research design, based on data collected from employees and their supervisors over a one-month time period.

I seek to make the following contributions. First, I investigate how various job demands that employees may encounter in their daily work inform their OCB. As stated earlier, previous research has paid relatively limited attention to the potential effects of job stressors on OCB (Paillé, 2010). While it has considered the influence of role stressors, such as perceived role ambiguity or conflict (Eatough, Chang, & Miloslavic, 2011; Rodell & Judge, 2009), these stressors represent only a narrow facet of the strain that employees may encounter in their job (Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2003). I consider the role of three distinct job demands: one that relates to employees' job itself (work overload), another that focuses on their exchanges with organizational peers (interpersonal conflict), and a third one that speaks to their perception about the entire organization (dissatisfaction with the organization's current situation). By doing so, I devote attention to an under-studied set of job demands that may reduce OCB.

Second, I posit that employees' organizational commitment presents an important mechanism that connects their job demands with reduced OCB. Thus, I argue that high levels of job demands lead to lower OCB through the emergence of negative attitudes

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toward the organization, as manifested in employees' reduced organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Under work conditions that bring high job stress, employees may develop negative feelings toward their organization, such that they become less attached to it, which in turn should decrease their propensity to engage in discretionary behaviors that are not directly expected of them in terms of their formal job description.

Third, I examine how employees' access to relational resources functions as an important buffer (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) against the negative attitudes that arise with high job demands – or conversely, how in the absence of relational resources, job demands may be particularly potent in reducing employee commitment, and hence OCB. Thus, I argue that the level of social interaction with peers, which reflects employees' personal, informal relationships with them (Tsai & Ghoshal, 1998), should temper the negative attitudes that arise with high job demands (Bakker, Demerouti, & Euwema, 2005) and mitigate the harmful effects of these demands. Although extant research has shown that access to resources can help reduce the harmful effect of job demands on how employees feel about their organization (cf. Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), previous applications of the JD-R model have not examined how social interaction might reduce employees' organizational commitment as a result of demanding job conditions and subsequently turn employees away from OCB.

In short, with this thesis I seek to make three contributions: (1) to examine how various sources of job stress relate to OCB, focusing on the role of various hitherto under-explored job demands, (2) to examine how the emergence of negative attitudes toward the organization functions as a critical mechanism that connects such job demands

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with OCB, and (3) to explain how employees' access to relational resources suppresses the activation of negative attitudes that arise with high job demands and mitigates the conversion of such demands into lower organizational commitment and hence lower OCB.

The rest of this study is structured as follows. First, I provide the theoretical background that underpins the thesis research, clarifying the different constructs that constitute its conceptual framework. Second, I outline the arguments for each of the proposed hypotheses. Third, I explain issues relevant to the empirical portion of the research, in particular the data collection, measurement of constructs, and analytical techniques used for the hypothesis testing. Next, I report and discuss the results of the analyses. Lastly, I discuss the study's limitations and the avenues for future research work that it suggests, as well as its implications for practice.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)

For over three decades, organization citizenship behavior (OCB) has been a topic of great interest to scholars (e.g., Smith, Organ, & Near, 1983; Niehoff & Moorman, 1993; Lepine, Erez, & Johnson, 2002, Eatoughet al., 2011). The notion dates back to early research by Katz (1964) who argues that organizations cannot rely on employees' prescribed behavior only. Over the years, different definitions have been used to describe OCB. Bateman and Organ (1983) conceive of it as "supra-role" behavior that cannot be enforced on employees and that stems from feelings of reciprocation. Essentially, OCB is neither a part of employees' formal job description nor is it undertaken in the hope of

getting explicitly rewarded (Shore & Wayne, 1993), but it is nonetheless essential. The practical significance of OCB for organizations is illustrated by Lievens, Conway, and De Corte (2008) who indicate that raters of job performance often give greater weight to OCB than to in-role performance.

OCB literature is very rich, with studies focusing on OCB dimensions, antecedents, and consequences. Over the years, avid scholars have explored and identified several dimensions of OCB. A study by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, and Bachrach (2000) reviews a great deal of research that has been undertaken over the years, and presents about thirty dimensions of OCB. While Organ (1988) identifies the dimensions of altruism, conscientiousness, courtesy, sportsmanship, and civic virtue as underlying OCB, Borman and Motowidlo (1993) define OCB in terms of the extra effort and enthusiasm for one's task, the voluntary involvement in tasks that fall outside prescribed tasks, the extension of help to and cooperation with other organizational members, the following of organizational rules and regulations, and the endorsement, support, and defense of organizational objectives. Graham (1991) breaks the concept of OCB down into organizational loyalty, organizational obedience, and organizational participation, whereas Williams and Anderson (1991) distinguish between OCB-O (i.e., OCB that is directed at the organization) and OCB-I (i.e., OCB that is directed at individuals). Research has also considered the specific context in which OCB takes place, distinguishing between unit- and group-level OCB (Ehrhart, 2004; Ehrhart et al., 2006; Ehrhart & Naumann, 2004; Schnake & Dumler, 2003). Another stream of research has compared OCB with counterproductive work behavior (cf. Dalal, 2005, for a meta-analytic review).

Yet another stream of research has justified the heightened attention given to OCB by considering its outcomes. They have documented the importance of OCB for organizational functioning (Organ, 1988; cf. LePine et al., 2002 for a meta-analytic review), including its positive impact on departmental and organizational productivity (cf. Podsakoff, Whiting, Podsakoff, & Blume , 2009, for a meta-analytic review). The review by Podsakoff and colleagues (2000) lays out various consequences of OCB, which include positive evaluations and appraisals from managers, and positive outcomes such as reciprocity and fair treatment. Research has also examined the conditions under which OCB garners managerial appraisal (Halbesleben et al., 2010), as well as considered multilevel, contextual influences of OCB on performance (Bommer, Dierdorff, & Rubin, 2007).

Since OCB shows promising and desirable consequences, it is undeniably important to understand its antecedents. Hence, extensive research has considered various determinants of OCB, including fairness (meta-analyses show that all dimensions of perceived organizational justice relate to OCB [Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2001]), psychological contracts (Robinson & Morrison, 1995), and job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Williams & Anderson, 1991). Other antecedents include personal values (Arthaud-Day et al., 2012), proactive employee personality (Li et al, 2010), and role stressors (Eatough et al., 2011; Rodell & Judge, 2009). The focus of this study, too, is on antecedents of OCB, but with a particular focus on the role of demanding work conditions. As mentioned previously, despite the extensive literature on explaining OCB, surprisingly little research has paid attention to the effects of job stressors on OCB, with an exception of the examination of role stressors (cf. Eatough et

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al., 2011 for a recent meta-analysis). I extend previous research by examining the influence of various job demands on employees' OCB, as well as of their access to relational resources, for which I draw on the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model. Since my interest is in examining how job demands and relational resources inform employees' discretionary behaviors in general, and not in their effects on different targets of such behaviors, I conceptualize OCB as employees' tendency to engage in behaviors that are beneficial to either their supervisor, other organizational members, or their organization in general (De Cremer, Mayer, van Dijke, Schouten, & Bardes, 2009).

2.2. Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model

The JD-R model distinguishes between two critical dimensions of employee's work context: job demands and job resources (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). While job demands generate anxiety in employees and deplete their energy levels, job resources reduce such anxiety and spur motivation (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). The JD-R model originates from the Demand-Control (DC) model (cf. Ganster & Rosen, 2013 for a discussion), which argues that job stress is caused by high job demands in the presence of low job control (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Extending the DC model, the JD-R model uses the broader term "job resources," instead of job control. According to this model, high job demands put excessive pressure on employees, such that their work-related energy is drained. When combined with resource limitations, the likelihood of negative behaviors, such as increased absenteeism or other withdrawal actions, is increased (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner & Schaufeli, 2001; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Thus, in the face of the stress that is caused by demanding work conditions, employees may

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conserve their limited energy such that they disengage themselves from tasks that benefit their organization indirectly, and only carry out tasks that are formally required.

The JD-R model also suggests that in the presence of high job resources, this energy depletion effect of adverse working conditions is subdued, such that the resource support that employees receive can mitigate the harmful effects of job demands on work outcomes, which reflects the so-called buffering hypothesis (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Wilcox, 1981). I will apply this buffering hypothesis, as outlined in the Hypotheses section, when theorizing about the mitigating effect of social interaction on the influence of different job demands on organizational commitment. In the next sections, I discuss the constructs that constitute the study's conceptual framework.

2.2.1 Job Demands

Job demands are "physical, social, organizational, or psychological aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological (cognitive and emotional) effort or skills" that are associated with certain "physiological and/or psychological costs" (Bakker & Demouriti, 2007; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Although job demands may not always be detrimental (Van den Broeck, De Cuyper, De Witte, & Vansteenkiste, 2010), most studies predict that the presence of highly demanding work conditions overburdens employees' personal capacities (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) and has negative consequences. Employees tend to consider job demands as sources of stress as these demands necessitate the expense of high levels of effort on their part (Meijman & Mulder, 1998). Job demands have been found to challenge employees' physical and mental well-being, which lead to energy depletion and negative health issues (cf. Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2003).

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Job demands have been categorized into physical, social, organizational, and psychological demands (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). I elaborate on each category briefly. First, *physical* job demands encompass aspects of the job that affect employees' tasks directly, such as task duration and frequency, the instruments used in a task, or the intensity of the labor during task accomplishment. A typical example of a physical job demand is the work overload experienced during task execution, such as when employees find it hard to keep up with the pace of work, when their time is too limited, or when there is just too much work to do (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), which can lead to exhaustion (Ahuja, Chudoba, Kacmar, McKnight,& George, 2007; Moore, 2000).

Second, *social* job demands consider the stress that employees experience based on their working relationships with others in the organization. Work relationships may be sources of anxiety, for example, when they are strongly emotion-laden and marked by high levels of interpersonal conflicts (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Interpersonal conflict has been considered as a stressful job demand (i.e., stressor) in many studies (Ilies, Johnson, Judge, & Keeney, 2011). Although conflict is not necessarily bad at all times, interpersonal conflicts – conflicts based on interpersonal incompatibilities, disagreements, and animosity – are almost always dysfunctional (Jehn, 1995; Jehn & Bendersky, 2003). Thus, high levels of interpersonal conflict tend to increase stress.

The third category of job demands relates to the *organization* in general. When their managers make poor decisions, employees may not be happy about the organization's decision-making process; or when employees are skeptical about operating policies, they may experience stress because they wonder if the organization will be sustainable in the future. Thus, dissatisfaction with the current organizational situation

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may have several sources, but a significant aspect is unhappiness about the current performance of an employee's work unit or organization, which in turn may derive from comparisons with competitors, environmental changes, or the discovery of opportunities for improvement (De Clercq, Castañer, & Belausteguigoitia, 2011; Yuan & Woodman, 2010),

The fourth kind, *psychological* job demands, underlies all three of the aforementioned categories, capturing the cognitive and emotional efforts that employees expend in their daily functions. The difference between this category and the other three is somewhat blurry, in that cognitive efforts, for instance, may be required to address anxiety stemming from task, social, and the broader organization conditions. Hence, the focus in this study is on the first three categories, and particularly on the extent to which employees experience high levels of work overload, interpersonal conflict, and dissatisfaction with the organization's current situation.

2.2.2. Job resources

Job resources capture aspects of employees' job that help them to achieve their work goals and stimulate their personal growth and development (Bakker & Demouriti, 2007; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) propose four categories of job resources, which mirror the four aforementioned groups of job demands: physical, social, organizational, and psychological. *Physical* resources are material resources, such as computers and copy machines, that directly help employees with performing job-related tasks. *Social* or *relational* resources are embedded in employees' relationships with other organizational members, such as the level of social support received by supervisors or colleagues. *Organizational* resources are provided by the organization in

general, including financial rewards and recognition. *Psychological* resources originate from employees themselves, including personal characteristics such as their level of optimism or self-control.

In light of the significant role of intra-firm social capital in effective organizational functioning (Gedajlovic, Honig, Moore, Payne, & Wright, 2013; Payne, Moore, Griffis, & Autry, 2011), I focus specifically on the role that *relational* resources play in the emergence of OCB. A systematic evaluation of how relational resources may diminish the stress that emerges from demanding working conditions, and particularly their role in influencing employees' engagement in OCB, is missing in the literature. Thus I make an attempt to address this issue with my thesis.

Drawing from previous research on organizational social capital (De Clercq, Thongpapanl, & Dimov, 2011; Tsai & Ghoshal, 1998) and informed by research that acknowledges the relevance of informal relationships for employee attitudes (Bouckenooghe, De Clercq, & Deprez, 2013), I particularly focus on the level of employees' social interaction with organizational peers. Social interaction reflects the strength or closeness of their social relationships with peers (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998), and thus the frequency of interactions taking place in their day-to-day activities, as well as the extent to which they spend significant time together in social situations outside work (De Clercq, Thongpapanl, & Dimov, 2011). Most human beings are social creatures who need personal interaction and thus cultivate and develop relationships with others. Hence, creating a sense of organizational community through social interactions with others may play a critical role in how employees can counter the stress that comes with highly demanding work conditions (Webb, 2012).

2.3. Organizational Commitment

Employees' organizational commitment, or the "force" that binds employees with their organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990), may also play a critical role in regulating their OCB. A well-established conceptualization of organizational commitment explicates three underlying dimensions: affective commitment or the emotional attachment to the organization, normative commitment or the felt obligation to remain part of the organization, and continuance commitment or the calculative bond toward the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Similar to many previous studies on OCB (cf. Wright & Bonett, 2002), I focus on the affective component of commitment—"organizational commitment" hereafter—because this component acknowledges the critical role of positive affect and emotions, rather than obligations or calculations, in governing OCB (Lee & Allen, 2002).

While OCB reflects actual behavior of employees, organizational commitment captures their attitudinal response to their experiences with the work environment (Meyer, Bobocel, & Allen, 1991). A key premise of this study is that the likelihood of strong organizational commitment, and thus positive feelings toward the organization, is *lower* when employees experience strongly demanding work conditions. A meta-analysis by Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, and Toponlnytsky (2002) shows that an employee's affective attachment to the organization is influenced by how they experience their work conditions. Additionally, in their meta-analysis, Meyer and colleagues (2002) find that the feeling of emotional attachment to the organization has a strong positive correlation with OCB. Accordingly, I consider how the emergence of negative attitudes toward the

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organization that may result from high job demands functions as a critical mechanism *through* which employees refrain from OCB.

2.4. Conceptual Framework

The study's proposed conceptual framework and its constitutive hypotheses are presented in Figure 1. The framework suggests that when employees encounter high job demands, their efforts to cope with the resulting anxiety and stress will reduce the emotional bond they feel vis-à-vis their organization (i.e., lower organizational commitment), witch in turn should decrease the likelihood that they engage in behaviors that benefit their organization (i.e., lower OCB). Further, it proposes that employees' social interaction with organizational peers is beneficial for OCB indirectly by attenuating the negative impact of job demands on organizational commitment. Conversely, when employees engage in less social interaction, their development of negative attitudes toward the organization stemming from high job demands may escalate, such that the harmful effect of job demands on organizational commitment becomes stronger. The theoretical arguments underlying the relationships are discussed next.

Insert Figure 1 about here

3. HYPOTHESES

3.1. Job Demands and OCB

According to the JD-R model, high job demands may lead to exhaustion (Bakker, Demerouti, de Boer, & Schaufeli, 2003; Bakker, Demerouti, & Verbeke, 2004) and burnout (Bakker, Demerouti, de Boer, & Schaufeli, 2003; Bakker et al, 2005; Hakanen,

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Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006; Llorens, Bakker, Salanova, & Schaufeli, 2006), because of the energy depletion that they invoke in employees. When experiencing burnout or exhaustion, employees should have less energy left to engage in OCB (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006). Thus, I postulate that higher levels of job demands lead to lower levels of OCB.

This detrimental effect of job demands on OCB aligns with theory of stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), which argues that employees' responses to stressors influence their performance through a process of cognitive coping. Hockey (1997) suggests two ways in which individuals respond to excessive demands. One way is to increase effort through increased mental and physical activity, which is the active coping mode; the other way is to anticipate and accept reduced performance and engage in a downward adjustment of performance targets, which is the passive coping mode. With the active coping mode, employees should get exhausted over time, such that the resulting energy depletion hinders their involvement in extra-role activities such as OCB. In the case of passive coping, employees tend to lose focus on how their task execution can help their organization (Hockey, 1997). Regardless of the coping mode they resort to, the result is that, under conditions of high job demands, employees should be less likely to engage in extra-role behaviors that help their organization. Taken together, high job demands deplete or induce a shortage in employees' expendable energy such that they may choose not to devote to extra-role behavior such as OCB, as explicated in more detail next for each of the three job demands under study.

3.1.1. Work Overload and OCB

Employees who have a hard time keeping up with the pace of work imposed on them may consider OCB a distraction that keeps them from meeting work-related goals (Boyd et al., 2011; Podsakoff et al., 2009). If so, they may feel less compelled to leverage their skills to engage in activities for which they are not directly rewarded or that are not part of their formal job description. Thus, in the presence of strong work overload, engaging in OCB is more likely beyond employees' reach or capability. In the same vein, Kaplan, Bradley, Luchman, and Haynes (2009) reason that employees who experience stress, e.g., due to high workload in this case, tend to engage less in OCB than their counterparts who do not experience stress, because they lack the time and energy to contribute to "non-essential" discretionary acts such as OCB. Further, employees may also lose the motivation to help their organization when feeling "forced" to operate under strong time pressure to execute tasks successfully, such that they stay away from behaviors that are not explicitly included in their job description. Irrespective of the specific reason – a lack of motivation to carry out extra-role tasks or the incapability to do so – work overload should have a negative association with OCB.

Hypothesis 1a: There is a negative relationship between employees' work overload and their OCB.

3.1.2. Interpersonal Conflict and OCB

The stress emerging from interpersonal conflict with colleagues in the organization should also reduce employees' OCB. As explained in Kaplan et al.'s (2009), meta-analytic overview, sources of interpersonal stress, such as emotion-laden conflict, should reduce OCB, since employees no longer have the luxury of time, energy and

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money to focus on "voluntary" OCB. When employees experience high levels of interpersonal conflict, they focus their energy and time on solving relational issues, rather than allocating energy to work-related ones (Bouckenooghe et al., 2013). For example, the presence of interpersonal conflict enhances employees' perceived uncertainty in relation to their organizational functioning (Jehn & Mannix, 2001), induces feelings of jealousy, frustration and anger (Jehn & Bendersky, 2003), and undermines their overall happiness in the workplace (De Dreu and Weingart, 2003; Jehn 1995). Thus, employees' propensity to engage in behavior that helps their organization should be lower when they are anxious about restoring good relationships with other organizational members. Furthermore, emotional disagreements over personal matters, whereby discussions about work-related issues appear as personal attacks rather than as constructive input (Jehn & Mannix, 2001), diminish the chance that new ideas for organizational improvement are developed and propagated (Jehn 1995; Murnigham & Conlon 1991), such that the likelihood of OCB decreases.

> *Hypothesis 1b: There is a negative relationship between employees' interpersonal conflict and their OCB.*

3.1.3. Dissatisfaction with the Current Organizational Situation and OCB

According to the threat-rigidity hypothesis, people tend to "freeze" when they are unhappy about their work situation (Ocasio, 1995; Staw, Sandelands, & Dutton, 1981), such that they are less likely to go out of their way to engage in behaviors that are not directly expected of them. In other words, when employees are dissatisfied about how decisions are made or how the organization performs in general, they experience that their preferences are unattended and threatened, such that the resulting stress that the

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threat causes (cf. Cohen & Wills, 1985) reduces their enthusiasm to carry out activities that could help their organization.

This negative relationship between dissatisfaction and OCB can also explained by the aforementioned active and passive modes of coping with job stress (Hockey, 1997). In the case of active coping, employees may spend significant energy in invoking change, which inevitably depletes their energy levels and hence may lead to exhaustion, turning them away from OCB; or, they may choose to actively leave the organization, thereby removing all possibilities of OCB. In the case of a passive coping response to dissatisfactory organizational functioning, employees may either become indifferent to the organization's well-being, allowing conditions to worsen, or passively wait for top management to do the right thing, and thus refrain from OCB. Taken together, these arguments suggest that the likelihood of OCB is lower when employees are dissatisfied with the organization's current situation.

Hypothesis 1c: There is a negative relationship between employees' dissatisfaction with the organization's current situation and their OCB.

3.2. The Role of Organizational Commitment

I further hypothesize that employees' organizational commitment mediates the aforementioned relationships between the various job demands and OCB. In particular, I argue that the level of OCB will be higher to the extent that employees are more committed to their organization, and that such commitment in turn is negatively influenced by the job demands that they experience.

3.2.1. Organizational Commitment and OCB

Committed employees tend to strongly identify with their organization and are actively involved in the workplace (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Following previous research that finds job attitudes to serve as antecedents to behaviors (Lim, Cortina, & Magley, 2008), I suggest that organizational commitment (an attitude) fuels OCB (a behavior).

As noted above, I focus on the affective facet of organizational commitment, or employees' emotional attachment to their organization (Meyer & Allen, 1984), which is one of the most commonly studied workplace attitudes (Griffin, Stoverink, & Gardner, 2012, p. 141). Affective commitment reflects employees' personal motivation to work for the organization, and the desire to be associated with it and contribute to its success (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Illies, Scott, and Judge (2006) suggest that instances of OCB fluctuate depending on "affective and attitudinal states" (p. 562, cf. Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2011). Previous empirical studies (Becker, 1992; Johnson & Chang, 2006; O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986; Shore & Wayne, 1993) and meta-analyses (Colquitt, Scott, Rodell, Long, Zapata, Conlon, & Wesson, 2013; LePine et al., 2002) note a positive association between organizational commitment (particularly its affective component) and OCB. The argument is that the presence of positive feelings toward the organization prompts employees to engage in discretionary behaviors that facilitate its success. For example, if employees feel that the organization treats them fairly or values their well-being, they will reciprocate by offering OCB (Schaninger & Turnipseed, 2005, cf. Paillé, 2010). Thus, the key mechanism that connects organizational commitment with OCB is that the positive feelings that employees hold toward their organization prompt their motivation to engage in behaviors that benefit the well-being of that organization. Conversely, employees who exhibit low organizational commitment likely devote less

effort to activities that are not directly required of them, because they are not particularly

concerned about how their reduced OCB might harm the organization (Brown & Leigh,

1996).

> *Hypothesis 2: There is a positive relationship between employees' organizational*
>
> *commitment and their organizational citizenship behavior.*

3.2.2. Job Demands and Organizational Commitment

In this section, I argue that employees' organizational commitment will be lower

to the extent that they experience higher job demands. Thus, job demands do not only

impact workplace behaviors, such as OCB, but also workplace attitudes. Previous

research shows that both challenge and hindrance stressors are positively associated with

anxiety (Rodell & Judge, 2009). Hence, job demands (i.e., sources of stress) are likely

sources for generating negative feelings due to the anxiety they cause. According to the

JD-R model, severe job demands may turn into various negative feelings, such as anxiety,

frustration or anger, because meeting those demands requires energy that employees do

not have in such situations (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Consequently, the presence of

high job demands should make employees less emotionally attached to their organization,

and reduce the likelihood that they exhibit positive attitudes such as organizational

commitment.

Under instances of high *work overload,* employees feel challenged to complete

tasks successfully. When nonetheless trying hard to do so, they may inadvertently

develop negative feelings toward their organization and become less attached to it.

Hakanen, Schaufeli, and Ahola (2008) argue that higher workload leads to lower work

engagement, an attitude that is akin to organizational commitment (Saks, 2006).

Similarly, Wefald, Smith, Savastano, and Downey (2013) find that job stress has a negative relationship with work engagement, and Saks (2006) concludes that such engagement is positively related to commitment. Ahuja et al. (2007), in their investigation of IT workers, specifically show that work overload causes lower levels of organizational commitment. Thus, these studies suggest that the level of work overload that employees experience should be negatively related to their organizational commitment.

> *Hypothesis 3a: There is a negative relationship between employees' work*
> *overload and their organizational commitment.*

I also hypothesize that there is a negative relationship between employees' *interpersonal conflict* and their organizational commitment. Interpersonal conflict entails destructive arguments with organizational peers, leading to perceptions of poor treatment, and thus negative workplace emotions (Miles, Borman, Spector, & Fox, 2002).The presence of strong emotional-laden disagreements among employees causes animosity, such that feelings of incompatibility with the surrounding work context emerge, which in turn should negatively affect employees' general attitudes vis-a-vis their organization (Kacmar, Bachrach, Harris, & Noble, 2012). Similarly, interpersonal conflict is dysfunctional by decreasing employees' commitment to organizational decisions (Amason, 1996), which in turn may transcend to a lower perceived bond with the entire organization. Thus, when employees become stressed because of the negative, adverse relationships they have with colleagues, the resulting negative feelings may spill over to their attitudes toward the organization in general. Negative experiences in interpersonal

relationships trigger negative attitudes in the workplace, e.g., negative affect (Ilies et al., 2011), which in turn should reduce organizational commitment levels.

Hypothesis 3b: There is a negative relationship between employees' interpersonal conflict with colleagues and their organizational commitment.

The aforementioned threat-rigidity hypothesis suggests that when employees are *dissatisfied* with how their organization functions or performs, they may feel violated and consequently find it challenging to remain enthusiastic about working for the organization (Staw et al., 1981). Thus, strong dissatisfaction with how the organization is functioning or makes decisions creates stress such that employees may "freeze" emotionally (De Clercq, Castañer, & Belausteguigoitia, 2011) and develop negative feelings for their organization. A multitude of factors can initiate dissatisfaction, for instance, when an organization performs poorly, stirs up doubts about employment stability, or lacks a proper performance appraisal system. In these circumstances, employees may become more concerned about the self and less about the organization, such that their commitment to it is lower. In other words, employees who are unhappy with their organization's current situation may respond to their discontent by reducing their attachment to their employer. The negative relationship between employees' dissatisfaction with the current situation and their organizational commitment also mirrors the well-established positive association between job satisfaction and organizational commitment found in previous research (e.g., Currivan, 2000; Donavan, Brown, & Mowen, 2004).

Hypothesis 3c: There is a negative relationship between employees'

dissatisfaction with the organization's current situation and their organizational

commitment.

3.2.3. The Mediating Role of Organizational Commitment

Hypotheses 3a-c, combined with Hypothesis 2, suggest a mediating role of organizational commitment, such that job demands reduce OCB *through* their negative attitude toward the organization. This mediating role of organizational commitment aligns with attitude-behavior theory (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), which posits that employees' experiences with their immediate work environment inform their work attitudes, which in turn form the basis for their work behaviors. Previous research has provided evidence for the mediating role of organizational commitment between several factors and OCB, such as psychological ownership (Vandewalle, Van Dyne, & Kostova, 1995), perceived organizational support, (Bishop, Scott, & Burroughs, 2000; Liu, 2009), work status (Conway & Briner, 2002), and procedural fairness (Lavelle, Brockner, Konovsky, Price, Henley, Taneja, & Vinekar, 2009). Similarly, I hypothesize that organizational commitment mediates the negative relationships between employees' job demands and OCB, such that high job demands diminish OCB *because* of lower organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 4a-c: Employees' organizational commitment mediates the

relationships between their job demands (work overload, interpersonal conflict,

dissatisfaction with the organization's current situation) and their organizational

citizenship behavior.

3.3. The Role of Social Interaction

The JD-R model proposes that relational resources can serve as buffers for different job demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Similarly the hypotheses in this section posit that employees' social interaction buffers,or protects against, the negative influence of job demands on organizational commitment (and hence diminishes the likelihood of lower OCB).

Social support is probably the most well-known relational resource that has been proposed as a buffer against job strain (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). I use social interaction and social support interchangeably because social companionship (e.g., spending time with others in informal settings) gives an individual more access to support (Cohen & Wills, 1985). I postulate that employees' social support helps them to manage and subdue the negative attitudes that emerge from high job demands. There is ample evidence that collegial relationships with coworkers can buffer the impact of stress (Cummins, 1990; Bliese, & Britt, 2001). Ilies et al. (2011) find that the level of social support that employees receive in their organization protects them against the negative consequences of stressful work situations. Similarly, Bakker et al (2005) conclude that strong social relationships with supervisors help reduce the negative impact of job demands on burnout since employees who enjoy such relationships feel emotionally supported. In their examination of dentists, Hakanen, Bakker, & Demerouti (2005) find that peer contacts diminish the negative effects of job demands (e.g., workload and physical work environment) on their work engagement.

In the context of this study, I propose a buffering effect of social interaction with respect to its attenuation of the negative effect of job demands on organizational

commitment. In the presence of high social interaction, employees should more easily

find support in each other for figuring out how they can cope with the negative attitudes

that arise from demanding work conditions, such as conditions marked by high levels of

work overload, interpersonal conflict, and dissatisfaction with the organization's current

situation. Conversely, in the *absence* of such social interaction, the emergence of

negative feelings toward the organization, stemming from high job demands, is more

likely, such that the negative effect of such job demands on organizational commitment is

particularly strong.

3.3.1. The Buffering of Work Overload

Under conditions of high social interaction, the negative effect of employees'

work overload on their organizational commitment, should be attenuated. Social

interaction implies that there is more openness in communication (Nahapiet & Ghoshal,

1998), such that it is easier for employees to express their concerns about facing work

overload, and for colleagues to understand these concerns. Similarly, when employees

maintain strong social interactions, their web of network ties becomes stronger, such that

they have more opportunities to seek each other's advice on how to manage excessive

workloads (Venkataramani, Green, & Schleicher, 2010). For example, an employee who

enjoys high levels of social interaction with colleagues likely has access to superior

information important for the completion of a certain task. Not only are they privileged

with greater information access, but the provision of information is faster also, when

compared with those that do not enjoy such interactions (Burt, 1992; cf. LePine, Methot,

Crawford, & Buckman, 2012, p. 184). Social support from colleagues can help

employees get their work done in a timely fashion, which may help diminish the strain-

inducing effect of work overload (Van der Doef & Maes, 1999). Further, the feeling of being "in the same boat", created by social interaction (Tsai & Ghoshal, 1998) should decrease the likelihood that negative attitudes ensue vis-à-vis the entire organization, and hence that employees become less committed to their employer. Conversely, in the absence of social interactions with colleagues, employees' job demands may escalate into severe stress (Bakker et al., 2005; Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2003; Lee & Ashforth, 1996; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), which in turn translates into their negative attitude toward the organization.

In short, an advice network should help employees to better cope with the negative attitudes that may arise vis-a-vis their organization when encountering work overloads, and hence their withdrawal from organizational commitment should become less likely. In contrast, when employees interact with one another in formal ways only, and hence social interaction is low, they should become more stressed by workload pressures, such that they can less easily divert or ward off the negative feelings created by these pressures, which in turn should attenuate the likelihood to remain committed to their organization.

> *Hypothesis 5a: The negative relationship between employees' work overload and their organizational commitment is moderated by the level of social interaction with their colleagues, such that this relationship is weaker at higher levels of social interaction.*

3.3.2. The Buffering of Interpersonal Conflict

Second, social interaction should cause employees to be less affected by interpersonal conflict, and put personal clashes in perspective (De Clercq, Thongpapanl,

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& Dimov, 2011). When employees share healthy social relations, they are more willing to understand others' perspectives without being overly sensitive to agreements, such that interpersonal conflict can be more effectively managed (Langton & Robbins, 2006, p. 171). Also, when employees build strong relationships with their coworkers – to the extent that these relationships satisfy their personal needs, i.e., making them feel connected with others at a personal level – they will be more attached to their work (Halbesleben, 2012, p. 120). Bakker et al. (2005) find that emotional demands do not result in high burnout levels when employees have high-quality relationships with their supervisors and when social support is high, because of the instrumental help and emotional support they received.

Repeated social interactions may also help employees to know each other's differences better, and thus understand that different people have different personalities (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Consequently, strong social interactions make employees less sensitive to the downsides of interpersonal conflict, because they help them to better understand the nature of such conflict, and hence the emergence of negative feelings and subsequent withdrawal from positive attitudes towards the organization should be subdued. Evidence of this buffering role of social interaction is found in a study by Ilies et al (2011), who find that social interaction buffers the effect of interpersonal conflict on negative affect, a construct that is akin, though not identical, to affective commitment.

Conversely, when faced with a lack of emotional support through informal relationships, employees should be more sensitive to interpersonal differences and less inclined to figure out the reasons behind interpersonal disagreements, which should intensify the impact of these disagreements on the building of negative feelings towards

other organizational members, which ultimately could spill over to the organization as a whole, hence negatively affecting employees' organizational commitment

> *Hypothesis 5b: The negative relationship between employees' interpersonal conflict and their organizational commitment is moderated by the level of social interaction with their colleagues, such that this relationship is weaker at higher levels of social interaction.*

3.3.3. The Buffering of Dissatisfaction with the Current Organizational Situation

Finally, I hypothesize a buffering role by social interaction on the negative consequences of employees' dissatisfaction with their organization's current situation. Since coworkers experience similar situations at work, they may provide situation-related support through social interactions (Rousseau, & Aubé, 2010). Dissatisfied employees may find it easier to express their concerns about the organization to colleagues with whom they share close informal relationships. Likewise, these colleagues are likely to listen to employees' concerns about dissatisfactory issues, which makes the latter feel more supported. Social interaction should thus attenuate the negative impact of employees' dissatisfaction with the organization's current situation on their organizational commitment, because such interaction may provide the knowledge needed to better understand current organizational problems and shortcomings and ways to address them, or just raise the possibility that employees' concerns are heard and acknowledged (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Oldroyd & Morris, 2012). In all, dissatisfaction is easier to deal with if employees maintain strong social interactions with organizational peers.

Conversely, in situations where dissatisfied employees do not enjoy cordial, informal relationships with organizational peers, it should be less likely that they perceive that the current organizational situation can be overturned, such that they develop more negative feelings vis-à-vis their employer and thus exhibit lower organizational commitment.

> *Hypothesis 5c: The negative relationship between employees' dissatisfaction with the organization's current situation and their organizational commitment is moderated by the level of social interaction with their colleagues, such that this relationship is weaker at higher levels of social interaction.*

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. Sample and Data Collection

I tested the study's hypotheses based on data collected from employees who work for a private, for-profit logistics organization, headquartered in Mexico. The organization distributes pharmaceutical products, and was founded less than ten years ago. It has enjoyed a spectacular growth since in its inception, counting more than 1,000 people among its employees in 2012. The study's focus on one organization enabled a more situated research design (Ocasio, 1997) capturing the specific aspects of the immediate sub-organizational context in which employees operate. The single-organization focus also prevented the presence of unobserved differences across organizations in their external environments; different organizations might have to cope with different external competitive pressures, which may inform the time available for employees to engage in OCB (Hodson, 2002).

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The organization's top management was explained the purpose of the study and shown a copy of the questionnaire. They were strongly interested to support the study. Respondents were contacted through emails and informed that participation was voluntary. The emails included a website address that allowed the respondents to fill out the survey online if they wished to do so. The data collection relied on a survey instrument, in two rounds. First, 1,100 employees were asked to assess their job demands, organizational commitment, and social interaction; 746 responses were received, for a response rate of 68%, which reflects the strong support of this study by the organization's top management. The average respondent was 34 years old and had worked for 3.5 years for the organization; 79 % were men. Second, one month later, the immediate supervisors of the first-round respondents were asked to assess the level of OCB among their employees. The names of the supervisors were obtained through the organization's human resource department. Responses were received from 707 supervisors, for a response rate of 95%. The analyses are based on these 707 matched pairs of employees and supervisors.

The surveys were originally prepared in English and then translated into Spanish. To avoid cultural bias and ensure validity, the Spanish versions were back-translated into English (Brislin, Lonner, & Thorndike, 1973). A preliminary version of the two surveys was pre-tested with two different sets of employees across the organization, who did not participate in the actual data collection. The feedback from these employees was incorporated into the revised version of the surveys; this procedure helped to increase the readability of the questions and the quality of the data. For both survey rounds, the participants were guaranteed complete confidentiality, repeatedly assured in the survey

that there were no right or wrong answers, and were asked to answer the questions as honestly as possible, in order to minimize the possibility that their responses were subject to social desirability or acquiescence bias (Spector, 2006).

4.2. Measures

The items for the constructs were measured on seven-point Likert scales, ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 7 ("strongly agree"). All items used were derived from previously established scales. The dependent variable on the one hand, and the independent, mediator, moderator, and control variables on the other hand were assessed by different respondents. An overview of the measurement items for each of the constructs is shown in Table 1 (including the factor loadings and t-values of the individual items, and the construct reliability and average variance extracted (AVE) for each of the six constructs).

4.2.1. Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Organizational citizenship behavior was captured using four items taken from previous research (De Cremer et al., 2009; Konovsky & Organ, 1996): (1) this employee undertakes action to protect the company from potential problems, (2) this employee has a cooperative relationship with supervisor and others in the company, (3) if necessary, this employee is prepared to work overtime, and (4) this employee develops the necessary skills and knowledge that are of benefit to my organization (Cronbach's alpha = .92).

4.2.2. Work Overload

Work overload was assessed with four of the eight items from a Dutch scale developed by Van Veldhoven & Meijman (1994): (1) I often have to work too fast, (2) I often work under time pressure, (3) I often have to deal with a backlog at work, and (4) I often have problems with the pace of work (Cronbach's alpha = .80).

4.2.3. Interpersonal Conflict

Following Dyer and Song (1998) and Jehn and Mannix (2001), interpersonal conflict was measured with a four-item scale; the items were: (1) My colleagues and I often get angry while working together, (2) There often are tensions in the relationship between my colleagues and myself, (3) My colleagues and I do not get along well with each other, and (4) My colleagues and I generally dislike interacting with each other (Cronbach's alpha = .70).

4.2.4. Dissatisfaction with the Current Organizational Situation

Dissatisfaction with the current organizational situation was measured with a three-item scale based on De Clercq, Castañer, and Belausteguigoitia (2011) and Yuan and Woodman (2010): (1) Many things in my company need improvement, (2) The performance of my company needs to be improved, and (3) The performance of my work unit needs to be improved (Cronbach's alpha = .84).

4.2.5. Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment was assessed with a six-item scale, drawn from Meyer and Allen (1991); the items included: (1) I really feel the problems of the company like if they my were my own, (2) I experience a strong feeling of belonging

towards the company, (3) I feel emotionally linked to this company, (4) I feel completely

integrated with the people of this company, (5) This company means a lot to me, and (6) I

would be happy if I stayed the rest of my professional career in this company

(Cronbach's alpha = . 88).

4.2.6. Social Interaction

Social interaction was assessed by a three-item scale adapted from Tsai and

Ghoshal (1998), and Yli-Renko, Autio, & Sapienza (2001): (1) My colleagues and I

spend significant time together in social situations, (2) My colleagues and I maintain

close social relations with each other, and (3) My colleagues and I know each other on a

personal level (Cronbach's alpha = .84). [1]

4.2.7. Control Variables

To account for alternative explanations of employees' organizational commitment and

OCB, I controlled for three demographic characteristics, age, gender and education

(Cropanzano, Rupp, & Byrne, 2003; Lee & Allen, 2002). I also controlled for employees'

tenacity in light of the acclaimed association of persistence with prosocial behaviors

(Padilla-Walker, Day, Dyer, & Black, 2013).

4.3. Assessment of Measures

Following Anderson and Gerbing (1988), I estimated a six-factor measurement

model using AMOS 20.0. Table 1 shows the results of the confirmatory factor analysis

(CFA) indicating significant factor loadings for all items. The fit of the measurement

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[1] The original scale included a fourth item ("My relationship with colleagues is very informal"), which was omitted from the analyses because of its very low factor loading.

model was good: $\chi^2_{(237)} = 932.066$, normed fit index (NFI) = .90, confirmatory fit index (CFI) = .92, and root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA) = .06. I found evidence of the convergent validity of the six focal constructs in the significant loadings of their respective items in the measurement model (t>2.0; Gerbing & Anderson, 1988) and the magnitude of their average variance extracted (AVE) values, which exceeded the .50 threshold (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988).

Insert Table 1 about here

In support of the discriminant validity of the six constructs, their AVE values were greater than the squared correlations between the corresponding pairs of constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), and for all fifteen pairs of factors, I found significant differences between the unconstrained and the constrained models (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988), as shown in Table 2. For example, the chi-square difference between organizational commitment and OCB equaled $\Delta\chi^2_{(1)} = 137.132$ (p < .001). Table 3 shows the bivariate correlations, means, standard deviations, and alphas of the study's variables.

Insert Tables 2 and 3 about here

4.4. Analytical Procedure

I used regression analysis to test the study's hypotheses. Following Aiken and West's (1991) and Cohen and Cohen's (1983) recommendations, I entered the variables into the models in distinct steps. For the prediction of organizational commitment, I first entered the control variables and social interaction (Model 1), then the main effects of the job demands (Model 2), and then the interaction effects between the three job demands and social interaction (Models 3 to 5), one at a time to avoid multicollinearity problems and the masking of true interaction effects (Aiken & West, 1991), as recommended in

prior studies that test multiple interactions (e.g., De Clercq, Dimov, & Thongpapanl, 2010; Zahra & Hayton, 2008). A similar procedure was used for the prediction of OCB: a model with the control variables and social interaction (Model 6), the addition of the three job demands (Model 7), and the addition of organizational commitment (Model 8).

The mediation effect of organizational commitment was tested with the Sobel test to determine the significance of the *indirect* effects of the job demands on OCB through organizational commitment (MacKinnon, Warsi, & Dwyer, 1995; Sobel, 1982). As a robustness check, I used the bootstrapping method suggested by Preacher, Rucker, and Hayes (2007), which generates confidence intervals rather than point estimates for the indirect effect of the job demands, thereby avoiding potential statistical power problems that might be caused by asymmetric and other non-normal sampling distributions of indirect effects (MacKinnon et al., 2004).

For the moderating effect hypotheses, I used moderated regression analysis. To minimize the threat of multicollinearity, I calculated the interaction terms by multiplying their corresponding mean-centered components (Aiken & West, 1991). Since the theoretical model combines mediation with moderation, I also assessed the presence of "moderated mediation" effects in a post-hoc analysis, by applying the holistic approach recommended by Preacher et al. (2007), which provides a direct comparison of the strength of the indirect effects of the three job demands on OCB (through organizational commitment) at high and low levels of social interaction. Similar to the aforementioned bootstrapping procedure that tests for mediation, this procedure generates confidence intervals rather than point estimates for the conditional indirect effects (MacKinnon, Lockwood, & Williams, 2004).

4.5. Results

4.5.1. Direct Effects of Job Demands

Table 4 shows the regression results. Hypothesis 1a stated that employees who experience higher levels of work overload should exhibit less OCB. The negative relationship between work overload and OCB in Model 7 was not significant (β = -.036, ns), thus this hypothesis is not supported. Hypothesis 1b stated that employees who experience higher levels of interpersonal conflict should exhibit less OCB. I found support for this hypothesis in the negative relationship between interpersonal conflict and OCB in Model 7 (β = -.100, $p < .05$). Hypothesis 1c stated that employees who are more dissatisfied with the organization's current situation engage less in OCB. There was no support for this hypothesis, as reflected in the corresponding insignificant effect in Model 7 (β = -.038, ns). Overall, there was only partial support for the direct effects of employees' job demands on their engagement in OCB.

Insert Table 4 about here

Hypothesis 2 argued that a positive attitude towards the organization prompts employees to engage in OCB. I found support for this hypothesis in the positive relationship between organizational commitment and OCB in Model 8 (β = .162, $p <$ .001). In Hypotheses 3a –3c, it was predicted that when employees experienced high levels of work overload, interpersonal conflict, and dissatisfaction with the current organizational situation, they would develop negative feelings towards the organization. Model 2 in Table 4 shows support for these negative relationships, for Hypothesis 3a (β = -.052, $p < .10$), Hypothesis 3b (β = -.077, $p < .05$), and Hypothesis 3c (β = -.073, $p < .01$). Overall, Hypotheses 3a-c were supported.

4.5.2. *Mediating Effect of Organizational Commitment*

To test the presence of mediation by organizational commitment, I applied the Sobel test to calculate the indirect effect of work overload on OCB through organizational commitment, according to the relationships between the independent variables and the mediator (Model 2), and between the mediator and the dependent variable (Model 8). The indirect effect of work overload (Hypothesis 4a) was found to be not statistically significant, although the significance level was very close to .10 (t = -1.619, p = .105). The indirect effects of interpersonal conflict (t = -1.972, p < .05) and dissatisfaction with the organization's current situation (t = -2.140, p < .05) were found to be statistically significant, in support of Hypotheses 4b and 4c, respectively.[2]

Preacher et al.'s (2007) bootstrapping procedure, for which I used 5,000 random samples and replacement from the full sample (Shrout and Bolger, 2002), confirmed these results. The bootstrap 95% CI of the indirect effect of work overload yielded a CI that included zero [-.023, .001], indicating no support for Hypothesis 4a. However, the bootstrap 95% CI of the indirect effect of interpersonal conflict yielded a CI that did not include zero [-.032, -.002], consistent with Hypothesis 4b. Similarly, the bootstrap 95% CI of the indirect effect of dissatisfaction with the current organizational situation yielded a CI that did not include zero [-.030, -.002], in support of Hypothesis 4c.

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[2] Recent discussions of mediation (Hayes, 2009) indicate that the presence of a direct relationship between the independent variables (job demands, here) and dependent variable (OCB, here) is not a prerequisite for the presence of a mediation effect, because the individual paths between the mediator variable on the one hand and the independent and dependent variables on the other hand might mask the direct relationship between the latter two variables, particularly when at least one of the relationships is negative. Such relationships are referred to as inconsistent mediation, i.e. a mediation effect can exist even if there is no overall relationship between the independent and dependent variables (MacKinnon, Fairchild, & Fritz, 2007).

4.5.3. Moderating Effect of Social Interaction

In Hypotheses 5a–5c, I predicted a buffering role of social interaction, such that in the presence of close relationships with coworkers, the adverse effects of work overload, interpersonal conflict, and dissatisfaction with the current organizational situation, respectively, on organizational commitment would be attenuated. Regression analyses showed support for these buffering effects, at varying levels of significance: for Hypothesis 5a in Model 3 ($\beta = .033$, $p < .05$), for Hypothesis 5b in Model 4 ($\beta = .027$, $p < .10$), and for Hypothesis 5c in Model 3 ($\beta = .028$, $p < .10$).

These results are visualized in Figure 2A, B and C, respectively, showing that at high levels of social interaction, there was virtually no relationship between work overload and organizational commitment (Panel A), between interpersonal conflict and organizational commitment (Panel B), and between dissatisfaction with the organization's current situation and organizational commitment (Panel C). Conversely, the graphs indicate negative relationships in all three cases when social interaction was low. Thus, when social interaction is low, the three job demands diminish employees' organizational commitment, but when it is high, the negative effects of the job demands disappear.

<u>Insert Figures 2A, B and C about here</u>

As a post-hoc analysis, I relied on Preacher et al.'s (2007) method to assess how the indirect effects of work overload, interpersonal conflict, and dissatisfaction with the organization's current situation on OCB, through organizational commitment, varied across different levels of social interaction. Similar to the aforementioned test for mediation, I computed bias-corrected confidence intervals (CI) with 5,000 random samples and replacement from the full sample (Shrout and Bolger, 2002).

The bootstrap 95% CI of the conditional effect of work overload at one standard deviation below the mean of social interaction yielded a CI that did not include zero [-.044, -.002], and the conditional, indirect effect of work overload on OCB was significant (β = -.017, p < .05) at this lower level of social interaction. Thus when social interaction is low, work overload reduces OCB because of the reduced organizational commitment that such work overload evokes (Preacher et al., 2007). Conversely, the replication of this procedure at one standard deviation above the mean of social interaction led to a CI that included zero [-.010, .016], so the conditional indirect effect of work overload was not significant at this higher level of social interaction (Table 5). In other words, social interaction functions as a buffer against the role of reduced organizational commitment in transforming work overload into lower OCB.

<u>Insert Table 5 about here</u>

The results for interpersonal conflict and dissatisfaction with the current organizational situation mirror those for work overload. For interpersonal conflict, the bootstrap 95% CI of the conditional effect of interpersonal conflict at one standard deviation below the mean of social interaction yielded a CI that did not include zero [-.054, -.002], and the conditional, indirect effect of interpersonal conflict on OCB was significant (β = -.020, p < .05) at this lower level of social interaction. Conversely, at one standard deviation above the mean of social interaction led to a CI that included zero [-.021, .005], so the conditional indirect effect of interpersonal conflict was not significant at this higher level of social interaction (Table 5). Similarly, the bootstrap 95% CI of the conditional effect of dissatisfaction with the current organizational situation at one standard deviation below the mean of social interaction yielded a CI that did not include

zero [-.050, -.004], and the conditional, indirect effect of dissatisfaction with the current organizational situation on OCB was significant (β = -.020, p < .05) at this lower level of social interaction. At one standard deviation above the mean of social interaction, the CI included zero [-.020; .004], so the conditional indirect effect of dissatisfaction with the current organizational situation was not significant at this higher level of social interaction (Table 5).

Taken together, these post-hoc results supported the presence of moderated mediation effects: social interaction functions as a buffer against the role of reduced organizational commitment in transforming work overload, interpersonal conflict, and dissatisfaction with the current organizational situation into lower OCB, through organizational commitment.

5. DISCUSSION

With this thesis, I sought to extend previous scholarship by investigating the role of employees' job demands—namely work overload, interpersonal conflict and dissatisfaction with the organization's current situation—in their engagement in OCB, as well as some mechanisms that inform this process. Previous research that explains OCB has mostly focused on positive factors; I have focused on "negative" stress-inducing factors. Further, the underlying mechanisms that I investigated were organizational commitment and social interaction. I theorized that organizational commitment, and particularly its lack, is a key factor that connects job demands with reduced OCB. Second, I postulated that the indirect effect of job demands on OCB through organizational commitment was stronger in conditions marked by *low* social interaction.

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I found support for the negative direct effect of interpersonal conflict on OCB, but did not find evidence for the presence of negative direct effects of work overload and dissatisfaction with the current organizational situation on OCB. One possible explanation for the lack of a direct effect of work overload is that while employees may see excessive workload as a negative stressor, they could also consider it as a fair measure to motivate them to work harder. For example, Rodell and Judge (2009) refer to workload pressures as challenge stressors – job demands that are viewed as rewarding work experiences that create opportunities for personal growth (Cavanaugh et al., 2000). Thus, these two mechanisms may balance each other out. Similarly, the absence of a direct effect of dissatisfaction with the current organizational situation on OCB may be because the hypothesized stress-inducing, harmful effect of dissatisfaction is countered by the fact that employees who are unhappy about their organization are more likely to engage in OCB in order to improve the current situation (De Clercq, Castañer, & Belausteguigoitia, 2011).

Yet another explanation for the lack of direct effects of work overload and dissatisfaction with the current organizational situation on OCB may be that these job demands operate *through* reduced organizational commitment. The hypothesized mediating effect of organizational commitment for all three job demands theorized that the presence of demanding work conditions diminishes the propensity to engage in OCB *because* of the negative attitudes toward the organization that they fuel (Kaplan et al., 2009). In particular, lower organizational commitment may function as a mechanism by which high levels of job demands reduce employees' engagement in OCB. Accordingly, I postulated that when employees experience high levels of job demands, their efforts to

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cope with the resulting anxiety may reduce their willingness to do more than is expected

from their job description because they feel less emotionally attached to their

organization. I found support for this argument for two of the three job demands

(interpersonal conflict and dissatisfaction with the current organizational situation), but

not for work overload, although the mediation effect of organizational commitment in

that case was almost significant.

An explanation for the weak mediating effect of organizational commitment

between work overload and OCB could perhaps be that this mediating effect is

conditional, as was implied by the proposed theoretical framework. In fact, the results

provide evidence for the presence of such conditional indirect effects for all three job

demands. In particular, I found that the indirect effect of work overload, interpersonal

conflict and dissatisfaction with the organization's current situation on OCB through

organizational commitment depends on the level of social interaction, which captures the

extent to which employees maintain informal relationships with one another (Nahapiet

and Ghoshal, 1998). Organizational commitment connects job demands with reduced

OCB less strongly when employees maintain close, personal relationships with their

colleagues in the organization.

This buffering role of social interaction follows the JD-R argument that the

relative importance of stressful work conditions for reducing positive workplace

outcomes diminishes in the presence of relevant job resources (Bakker and Demerouti,

2007). In particular, overburdened employees' reluctance to engage in OCB, because of

their negative attitudes toward the organization, is subdued when they can leverage useful

resources embedded in their relationships with other organizational members

(Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2007), such as advice about how to better cope with excessive workloads, a better understanding of interpersonal differences, and a well-rounded discussion on how to address the prevailing flaws of the organization. Further, informal relationships enhance the propensity to buy into organizational values and practices (Tsai & Ghoshal, 1998), such that employees may become more willing to accept ceratin adverse work situations, such as time constraints for task execution, interpersonal clashes with colleagues, and dissatisfaction with the organization.

Conversely, when employees have limited access to relational resources, the negative attitudes stemming from high work overload, interpersonal conflict, and dissatisfaction with the organization's current situation are more likely to be activated, such that the indirect relationship between these job demands and OCB through organizational commitment becomes stronger. Overall, then, the results of this thesis support the argument that the stress associated with high job demands transforms more easily into lower OCB *because* of employees' reduced organizational commitment.

5.1. Limitations and Future Research

This study has a few limitations whose consideration offers opportunities for further research. First, some caution is needed before I draw causal inferences, in that the relationships I examined could be susceptible to reverse causality. For example, employees who engage in OCB may develop more positive attitudes toward their organization because of the personal satisfaction they achieve through OCB (Podsakoff et al., 2009). Although the direction of the study's hypotheses was grounded in extant theory, and there was a one-month time gap between the assessment of organizational commitment and OCB, further research could use longitudinal designs that span longer

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periods to investigate causal processes that link job demands, organizational commitment, and OCB, as well as the boundary conditions that might influence the process.

Second, I focused on one mediating attitudinal factor (organizational commitment) only. Other attitudes could be considered as well, such as turnover intentions (Lee & Ashforth, 1996), job satisfaction (Glick, Jenkins, & Gupta, 1986), and task enjoyment (Bakker, van Veldhoven, & Xanthopoulou, 2010). Further research could compare the relative potency of these different attitudes for turning job demands into lower OCB.

Third, I focused on one contingency factor (social interaction) that influenced the strength of the relationship between job demands and organizational commitment—and hence the indirect relationships between the job demands and OCB through organizational commitment. Additional research could investigate how other factors—such as trust (Tsai & Ghosal, 1998), internal resource competition (Luo, Slotegraaf, & Pan, 2006), the type of rewards system (Collins and Clark, 2003), or decision autonomy (Nahrgang, Morgeson, & Hofmann, 2011)—shape the role of organizational commitment in channeling work overload, interpersonal conflict, and dissatisfaction with the organization's current situation into reduced OCB. Such research could also look at the impact of constellations of multiple contextual factors on the influences of various job demands on OCB.

Fourth, the results are based on an organization from Mexico. Although my theoretical arguments were general and not country-specific, cultural factors could interfere with my conceptual framework. For example, in a high uncertainty avoidance

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country such as Mexico, people may be more sensitive to work circumstances that create uncertainty and stress (Hofstede, 2001, p 117), so the potency with which social interaction buffers the negative effect of work overload on OCB through reduced organizational commitment may be stronger than it would be in more risk-prone countries. Cross-country studies could provide insights into the relative importance of social relationships for preventing high levels of job demands to turn into lower OCB across different cultural contexts.

5.2. Practical Implications

OCB is beneficial for organizations, as it entails employees' willingness to do more than what is expected from their job descriptions. This study indicates that organizations should not only focus on "positive" factors to stimulate OCB, but also avoid "negative" stress-inducing ones that could prevent such OCB. In today's work environment, employees are exposed to various levels of stress. While efforts must be made to eliminate or reduce sources of workplace stress, some stress may be inevitable because of heavy workloads, interpersonal frictions, and disagreements about where the organization is heading. This study indicates that when employees have insufficient time to complete their daily tasks successfully, experience interpersonal clashes, or believe that the way that the organization is currently functioning is not without flaws, the conversion of the accompanying stress into negative energy directed at the organization can be countered by the presence of strong social relationships.

In particular, the study shows that to understand the pitfalls that highly demanding work conditions may have for employees' OCB, these work conditions must be considered in combination with the presence of informal relationships. Thus,

organizations that seek to nurture good citizenship among their employees should match the immediate work context that surrounds them, ranging from task execution to interpersonal relations to organizational functioning, with an appropriate internal, supportive relational environment. They should create an environment in which employees feel encouraged to interact with one another informally, including outside the workplace, to help alleviate the stress that comes with demanding work conditions (Langton & Robbins, 2006). When employees can access relevant resources to undertake their jobs successfully, through personal relationships with colleagues, they can cope better with the time pressures, interpersonal disagreements, and dissatisfaction issues they confront; ultimately, the reluctance to engage in OCB will be less likely to arise. Thus, employers who would like to encourage OCB should consider and implement ways to ensure healthy relations among their employees in the presence of stressful work conditions.

5.3. Conclusion

I have extended previous research by examining the effect of employees' perceptions of job demands—work overload, interpersonal conflict, and dissatisfaction with the current organizational situation—on their propensity to engage in OCB, and the role of organizational commitment and social interaction in this process. I find that an explanation for why these job demands decrease OCB is the resulting lack of commitment that employees exhibit toward their organization, and this is particularly so when employees experience interpersonal conflict with colleagues or are dissatisfied with the current organizational situation. Further, I reveal how the role of reduced organizational commitment (for all three job demands) depends on the internal social

context in which employees operate, especially in terms of the informal nature of their relationships with organizational peers. The presence of strong social interactions helps employees cope with the stress that comes with job demands, acting as a buffer against the emergence of negative attitudes toward the organization and thus against their reluctance to contribute to their organization's well-being. I hope this study encourages further investigations of how stress-inducing factors inform employees' propensity to engage in OCB, and particularly how their harmful effects can be mitigated.

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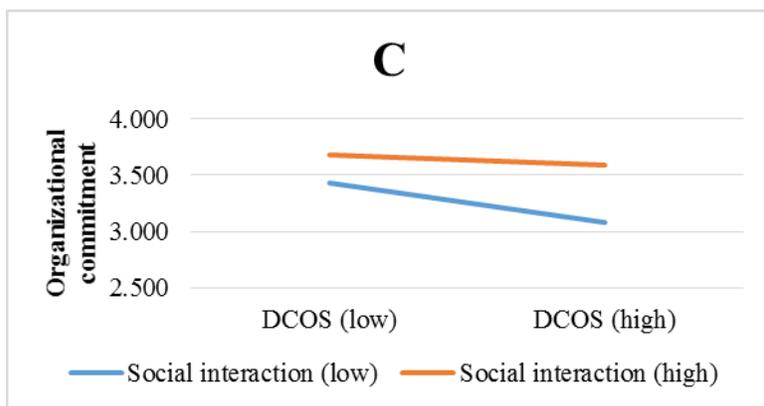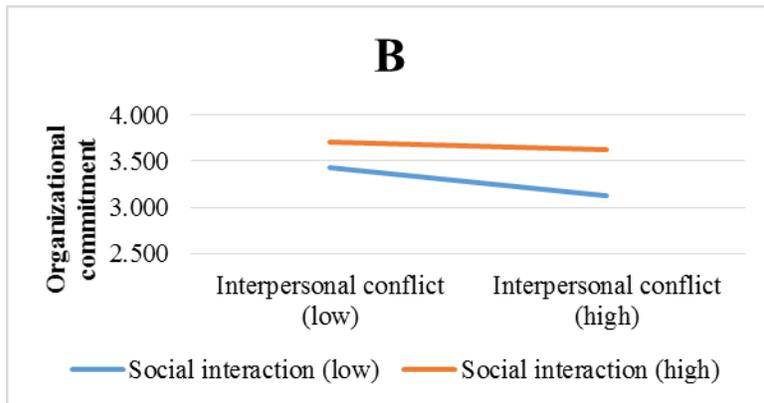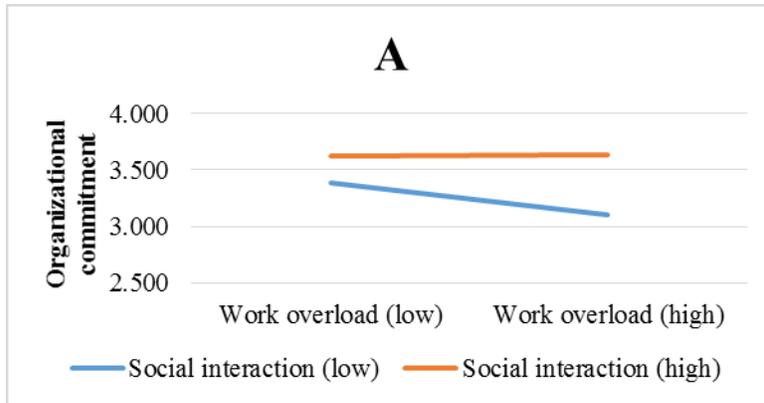
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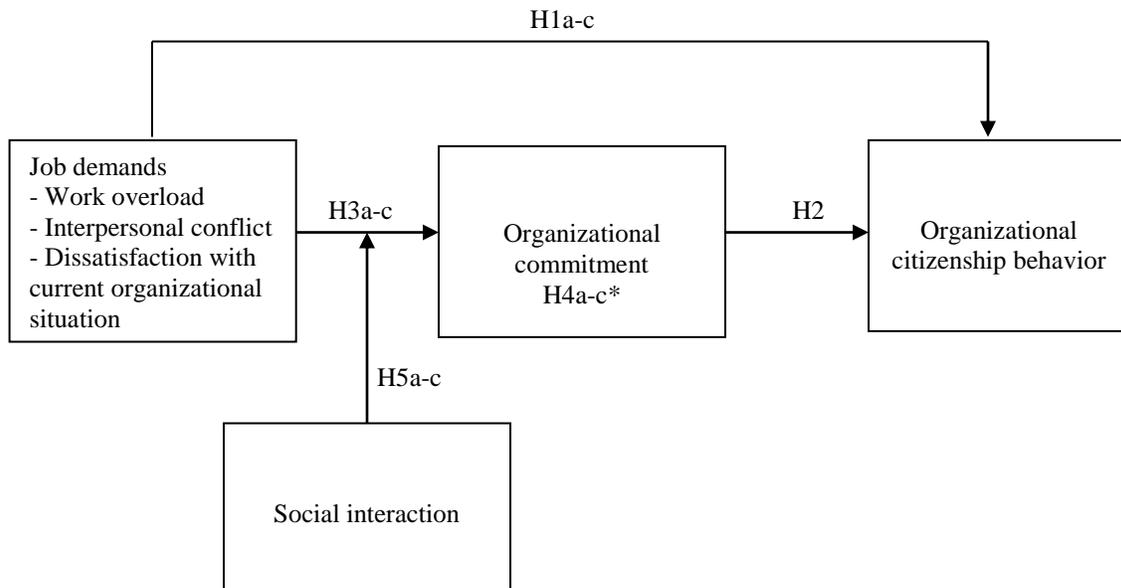
Notes:

* H4a-c reflect the mediating effect of organizational commitment on the relationships between the three job demands and organizational citizenship behavior.

Figure 2: Moderating effect of social interaction on the job demands-organizational

commitment relationship

DCOS = Dissatisfaction with the current organizational situation

Table 1: Factor loadings and t-values

	Factor loading	t-value
OCB (α = .92; CR=.93; AVE=.76)		
The employee undertakes action to protect the company from potential problems	.855	
The employee has a cooperative relationship with his or her supervisor and others in the company	.929	33.737
If necessary, the employee is prepared to work overtime	.837	28.303
The employee develops the necessary skills and knowledge that are of benefit to the organization	.861	29.750
Work overload (α = .80; CR=.80; AVE=.51)		
I often have to work too fast	.774	16.004
I often work under time pressure	.873	16.529
I often have to deal with backlog at work	.628	
I often have problems with pace of work	.524	11.861
Interpersonal conflict (α = .70; CR=.80; AVE=.53)		
My colleagues and I often get angry while working together	.831	21.356
There often are tensions in the relationship between my colleagues and myself	.883	21.914
My colleagues and I do not get along well with each other	.285	7.133
My colleagues and I generally dislike interacting with each other	.749	
Dissatisfaction with the current organizational situation (α = .84; CR=.85; AVE=.65)		
Many things in my company need improvement	.804	19.498
The performance of my company needs to be improved	.894	19.924
The performance of my work unit needs to be improved	.716	
Organizational commitment (α = .88; CR=.89; AVE=.58)		
I really feel the problems of the company like if they were my own	.630	15.574
I experience a strong feeling of belonging towards this company	.830	20.083
I feel emotionally linked to this company	.876	21.003
I feel completely integrated with the people of this company	.692	17.002
This company means a lot to me	.818	19.830
I would be happy if I stayed the rest of my professional career in this company	.692	
Social interaction (α = .84; CR=.84; AVE=.65)		
My colleagues and I spend significant time together in social situations	.694	
My colleagues and I maintain close social relationships with one another	.941	18.626
My colleagues and I know each other on a personal level	.755	18.456

Table 2: Test for discriminant validity

		χ square		Δχ square
		Uncons-trained	Cons-trained	
Work overload	Interpersonal conflict	300.518	333.785	33.267***
	Dissatisfaction with the current organizational situation	241.982	264.172	22.190***
	Organizational commitment	478.265	729.380	251.115***
	OCB	236.035	414.854	178.819***
	Social interaction	217.109	390.330	173.221***
Interpersonal conflict	Dissatisfaction with the current organizational situation	71.720	128.424	56.704***
	Organizational commitment	299.520	668.578	369.058***
	OCB	85.351	357.816	272.465***
	Social interaction	60.838	253.650	192.812***
Dissatisfaction with the current organizational situation	Organizational commitment	244.354	514.948	270.594***
	OCB	46.955	221.686	174.731***
	Social interaction	11.914	189.266	177.352***
Organizational commitment	OCB	271.809	408.941	137.132***
	Social interaction	255.749	345.659	89.910***
OCB	Social interaction	49.191	177.594	128.403***

Notes: *** p < .001
All Δχ square values are greater than 3.84. Therefore, there is evidence of discriminant validity among the constructs.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics and correlations

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1 OCB	5.821	1.221	(.93)									
2 Work overload	4.091	1.381	-.105**	(.80)								
3 Interpersonal conflict	2.181	1.263	-.153**	.336**	(.70)							
4 Dissatisfaction with the current organizational situation	4.956	1.442	-.084*	.355**	.264**	(.84)						
5 Organizational Commitment	5.900	1.017	.159**	-.168**	-.191**	-.159**	(.88)					
6 Social Interaction	3.823	1.586	-.017	-.077*	-.066	-.125**	.215**	(.84)				
7 Age	33.730	7.931	-.025	.026	.017	.076*	.147**	-.050	-			
8 Gender	.215	.411	.007	-.097**	-.030	-.070	.037	-.072	-.193**	-		
9 Education	4.292	.967	.147**	-.144**	-.188**	-.037	.128**	-.042	.000	.152**	-	
10 Tenacity	5.784	1.205	.049	.003	-.069	.052	.241**	.073	-.001	-.049	.036	-

Notes: n = 707; * p < .05; ** p < .01

Table 4: Regression results

	Organizational commitment					OCB		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
Age	.022***	.023***	.023***	.023	.024	-.005	-.004	-.008
Gender	.197*	.166+	.154	.161	.153	-.059	-.079	-.106
Education	.123***	.090*	.092*	.090	.091	.187***	.154**	.139**
Tenacity	.190***	.191***	.191***	.190	.193	.044	.041	.010
Social interaction	.139***	.122***	.121***	.122	.119	-.014	-.027	-.047
Work overload		-.052+	-.049+	-.051	-.050		-.036	-.027
Interpersonal conflict		-.077*	-.076*	-.077	-.076		-.100*	-.087*
Dissatisfaction with current organizational situation		-.073**	-.074**	-.073	-.079		-.038	-.026
Work overload × Social interaction			.033*					
Interpersonal conflict × Social interaction				.027+				
Dissatisfaction with current organizational situation × Social interaction					.028+			
Organizational commitment								.162***
R^2	.144***	.181***	.187***	.185***	.186***	.025**	.045***	.060***
ΔR^2		.037	.006	.004	.005		.020	.015

Notes: n = 707; + $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table 5: Bootstrapping results for conditional indirect effects

	Level of social interaction	Indirect effect	Lower limit 95% confidence interval	Upper limit 95% confidence interval
Work overload	Low (–1 SD)	-.017*	-.044	-.002
	High (+1 SD)	.001	-.010	.016
Interpersonal conflict	Low (–1 SD)	-.020*	-.054	-.002
	High (+1 SD)	-.006	-.021	.005
Dissatisfaction with the current organizational situation	Low (–1 SD)	-.020*	-.050	-.004
	High (+1 SD)	-.005	-.020	.004

Notes: n = 706; * p < .05