The effects of social work characteristics on organizational citizenship behavior – the role of high involvement work processes

Bachelor Thesis Human Resource Studies

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Abstract

This research examines the effect of perceived social support and task interdependence on organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and the moderating effect of high involvement work processes (HIWP) on these relationships. Building on the social exchange theory and the AMO-theory, a cross-sectional research has been conducted with a sample of 372 employees and their supervisors from different branches and organizations. Multiple regression and multilevel analyses were used to examine the direct effects of perceived social support and task interdependence on OCB and the moderating effect of HIWP. Results showed that perceived social support is positively related to OCB and this relationship is found to be moderated by HIWP. However, no evidence was found neither for the direct relationship between task interdependence and OCB nor for the moderating effect of HIWP on this relationship. Directions for future research and practical implications are suggested.

Keywords: perceived social support, task interdependence, high involvement work processes, organizational citizenship behavior

Introduction

Because of the rapid changes in the environment, organizations must adapt if they are to be successful (Brown, 2014). This necessarily calls for voluntary behavior from members of an organization. Thus, organizations should be capable of shifting its members' self-centered behaviors to behaviors and attitudes which act for organizational development (Lee, Kim, & Kim, 2013). With regard to this issue, the interest paid to organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) has dramatically increased since its introduction into the literature (Smith, Organ, & Near, 1983). OCB is generally defined as the set of positive workplace behaviors that are not required from the employee's role or work description and that support organization members and/or the work environment (Carpenter, Berry, & Houston, 2014; Organ, 1988). Previous research found that job satisfaction, organizational commitment, perceptions of organizational justice, personality characteristics, task characteristics, and leadership behavior were significant predictors of OCB (Podsakoff, Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Maynes, & Spoelma, 2014).

However, organizational researchers have devoted far less attention to the relational perspective in which social work characteristics are examined as antecedents of OCB (Grant & Parker, 2009; Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006). Since today's nature of work is inevitably intertwined with interpersonal relationships, connections and interactions (Grant & Parker, 2009), this relational perspective cannot be neglected. Morgeson and Humphrey (2006) provided attention to this relational perspective by identifying socially relevant aspects of work which, as well as other socially aspects still to be identified, are worthy of empirical investigation. Following this reasoning, this paper will address the need to investigate the relationship between social work characteristics and OCB (Chiu & Chen, 2005; Grant & Parker, 2009; Oldham & Fried, 2016). It is expected that social work characteristics will motivate employees to reciprocate with increased OCB based on the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Organ, 1988).

According to Oldham and Fried (2016), more research is needed about specific strategies and practices that might be implemented in order to better understand the conditions under which social work characteristics enhance OCB. Especially since social work characteristics are mainly out of HR's control and thus more difficult to change. This study focuses on a specific bundle of HR practices by which the attributes substantially work together to have a more positive effect on employee outcomes compared to individual HR practices (Alfes, Shantz, Truss, Soane, 2013). Specifically, the bundle of high involvement work processes (HIWP) are considered to play an important role moderating the relationship

between social work characteristics and OCB by enhancing the employees' skills, motivation and opportunity to actively participate at work (AMO-theory; Boxall & Macky, 2009; Butts, Vandenberg, DeJoy, Schaffer, & Wilson, 2009; Paré & Tremblay, 2007; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000). HIWP are generally defined as one type of participatory initiative which involve employees in key aspects of decision making (Butts et al., 2009). Moreover, HIWP can serve as a buffer for employees from constraints and controlling policies of the organization by promoting employee freedom, involvement and autonomy, without violating informal policies and job descriptions (Oldham & Fried, 2016).

Altogether, the goal of this paper is to examine the relationship between specific social work characteristics and OCB and whether this relationship is influenced by the employees' perceptions of HIWP implemented in their organization. This goal is being pursued with the help of the following research question:

"To what extent are specific social work characteristics related to organizational citizenship behavior, and how might high involvement work processes affect these relationships?"

The answer on this research question is theoretically relevant. First, it contributes to the social exchange theory and AMO-theory by providing insight in the relationship between social work characteristics and OCB and whether HIWP have a moderating effect on this relationship. Second, the findings of this study contribute to the gaps in the literature as identified by Grant and Parker (2009) and Oldham and Fried (2016). Besides, this research is practically relevant for several stakeholders. Organizations and (HR) managers could gain a better insight in the importance of a socially embedded work design and its effects on the organizational citizenship behaviors of their employees. Moreover, they gain insight in whether implementing HIWP are useful to enhance the relationship between social work characteristics and OCB.

A cross-sectional research has been conducted in order to collect empirical data and to measure to what extent the hypotheses in this research could be confirmed. A sample of 372 employees and their supervisors from different branches and organizations filled in the questionnaires, resulting in a response rate of 89.9%.

Theoretical development

Social work characteristics and OCB

Considerable interest has been paid to organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) in the literature. As a result, a great deal is known about the nature of this behavior (Carpenter et al.,

2014). OCB is generally defined as the set of positive (prosocial and proactive) workplace behaviors that are not required from the employee's role or work description and that support organization members and/or the work environment (Carpenter et al., 2014; Organ, 1988). Examples of such behaviors are: helping colleagues, preventing work-related conflict with others, making innovative suggestions to improve the overall quality of the department and showing deep concerns and active interests in the life of the organization (Williams and Anderson, 1991).

This study responds to the calls for researchers to investigate social work characteristics as antecedents of OCB. Humphrey, Nahrgang and Morgeson (2007) found evidence for social characteristics of jobs, such as support and interdependence, to predict variance in work outcomes over and above enriched job characteristics such as autonomy and job complexity. Still, neither this meta-analysis nor other research investigated which specific social work characteristics are most relevant to OCB (Chiu & Chen, 2005; Grant & Parker, 2009; Oldham & Fried, 2016; Oldham & Hackman, 2010). Therefore, this paper will focus on a specific set of two social work characteristics. Perceived social support and task interdependence are expected to be important predictors of the employee's willingness to go above and beyond the prescribed roles that the employee has been assigned to, based on the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Organ, 1988). Perceived social support reflects the degree to which an employee perceives that their job provides opportunities for advice and assistance from others and that their work environment values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Interdependence reflects the degree to which the job depends on others and others depend on it to complete work, also referred to as the "connectedness" of jobs to each other (Kiggundu, 1981). This definition includes two distinct forms of interdependence: (a) the extent to which work flows from one job to other jobs (initiated interdependence), and (b) the extent to which a job is affected by work from other jobs (received interdependence). This paper focuses exclusively on task interdependence, rather than the broader set of interdependence employees may share (Humphrey et al., 2007). The relationships between these social work characteristics and OCB will be further explained in this section.

Employees' experiences and abilities to carry out their work are heavily influenced by the degree to which the employee perceives that their job provides opportunities for social support from actors in their work environment such as coworkers, leaders and the organization (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). The relationship between perceived social support and OCB can be explained based on the social exchange

theory (Blau, 1964): when one person treats another well, the reciprocity norm obliges the return of favorable treatment. When a job provides favorable treatment from the organization, supervisors and coworkers, employees feel that they care about their contributions and values their well-being, which motivates the employees to reciprocate with increased citizenship (Grant & Parker, 2009). Moreover, Wayne, Shore and Liden (1997) found support for the importance of both organizational support and leader support as predictors of OCB. Additionally, Halbesleben and Wheeler (2015) found support for their model where employee's perceived coworker support was positively related to reciprocated OCB. These results further support the social exchange theory whereby employees perform their activities well and even go above and beyond their prescribed roles that they have been assigned to in exchange from the benefits provided by their organization, leader and coworkers. This leads to the first hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1: Perceived social support is positively related to organizational citizenship behavior (OCB).

Grant and Parker (2009) argue that the effects of interdependence depend on the type or form of interdependence under consideration, they also refer to this as "the type-contingent perspective". For example, Kiggundu (1981) proposed that initiated interdependence leads to felt responsibility for others' work outcomes which enhances work motivation and job satisfaction. On the other hand, he proposed that received interdependence should be associated with negative outcomes because it reduces autonomy by being dependent on the actions of others. Combining these ideas, Pearce and Gregersen (1991) introduced reciprocal interdependence, which occurs when employees both initiate and receive interdependence. The study demonstrated that reciprocal interdependence cultivates the highest level of felt responsibility, and thus motivate helping and citizenship behaviors. The reciprocal interdependence is also found to be associated with increased opportunity for interaction and increased recognition of the need for coordination of effort and helping to solve problems (Anderson & Williams, 1996). Furthermore, De Jong, Van der Vegt and Molleman (2007) found that individuals perceive the relationship as more beneficial when task interdependence is reciprocal, which leads to more trusting and helping behavior. These findings are in line with the social exchange theory: the interdependent and contingent transactions have the potential to generate a high-quality relationship, as a result, employees are more likely to reciprocate with increased citizenship and helping behaviors towards other individuals and the organization (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Gouldner, 1960). Following this

reasoning and previous empirical findings, it is expected that (reciprocal) task interdependence is positively related to OCB.

Hypothesis 2: Task interdependence is positively related to organizational citizenship behavior (OCB).

The moderating role of high involvement work processes (HIWP)

The organization's approach to their human resources management (HRM) sets the tone and conditions of the employee-employer relationship which, in turn, is instrumental in encouraging employee citizenship behavior (Morrison, 1994). The fact that social work characteristics mainly are out of HR's control and thus more difficult to change, stresses the importance of the role of HRM in encouraging OCB. This study examines the employees' perceptions of HRM practices rather than the intended HRM practices rated by HRM or line managers, as employees' perceptions may be more proximal predictors of individual attitudes and behaviors (Khilji & Wang; Nishii et al., as cited in Alfes et al., 2013). Namely, individuals can interpret the same HRM practices in different or even contrary ways (Conway and Monks, 2008). Recently, researchers have increasingly focused on the effects of combinations of individual HRM practices, or 'HRM bundles', on employee outcomes (Alfes et al., 2013). These HRM bundles can be additively or synergistically related by which the effects are substantially greater than any individual practice alone (Becker, Huselid, Pickus, & Spratt, 1997). This implies that bundles of individual HRM practices may be more relevant for determining employees' OCBs.

The HRM bundle most effective to have a moderating effect on the relationship between social work characteristics and OCB consists of high involvement work processes (HIWP) based on the AMO-theory. HIWP revolves around a system of inclusion (PIRK), this system provides employees with mutually reinforcing variables: 'increased decision-making power (P), access to critical information (I), exposure to rewards (R) linking individual performance to organizational outcomes, and opportunity to expand task- and organizational-related knowledge (K)' (Butts et al., 2009, p. 123; Leana, Ahlbrandt, & Murrell, 1992). In other words, HIWP empower employees to make more decisions, provide them with the knowledge and information to do so, and reward them for doing so (Boxall & Macky, 2009). This parallels the AMO-theory: for HIWP to enhance the positive relationship between social work characteristics and OCB, it must positively enhance employees' abilities (through enhancing knowledge), motivations (through rewards) and opportunities (through

empowerment and information) to actively participate in their work (Appelbaum, Bailey, Berg, & Kalleberg, 2000; Boxall & Macky, 2009; Butts et al., 2009; Paré & Tremblay, 2007). As Lee (as cited in Paré & Tremblay, 2007) also pointed out, employees must have the capability, willingness and opportunity to perform both their prescribed and their extra-role behaviors (OCB).

Additionally, prior research found support for HIWP to be enhancing OCB when the four attributes (power, information, rewards and knowledge) synergistically work together to provide employees with the ability, motivation and opportunity to actively participate in their work (Kizilos, Cummings, & Cummings, 2013; Paré & Tremblay, 2007). However, the explicit moderating role of HIWP on the relationship between social work characteristics and OCB has not been explored yet. As noted by Bowen and Schneider (2014), it becomes necessary to explore how HRM practices interact with other practices and issues (e.g. social work characteristics) because they both influence employee experiences and perceptions (e.g. OCB). When taken together, this reasoning and previous empirical findings suggest that the positive relationships between perceived social support, task interdependence and OCB increases when organizations increases their HIWP. This leads to the third hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: High involvement work processes (HIWP) positively moderate the relationship between (3a) perceived social support and OCB, and (3b) task interdependence and OCB; as the level of HIWP increases, the positive relationships between these social work characteristics and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) increases.
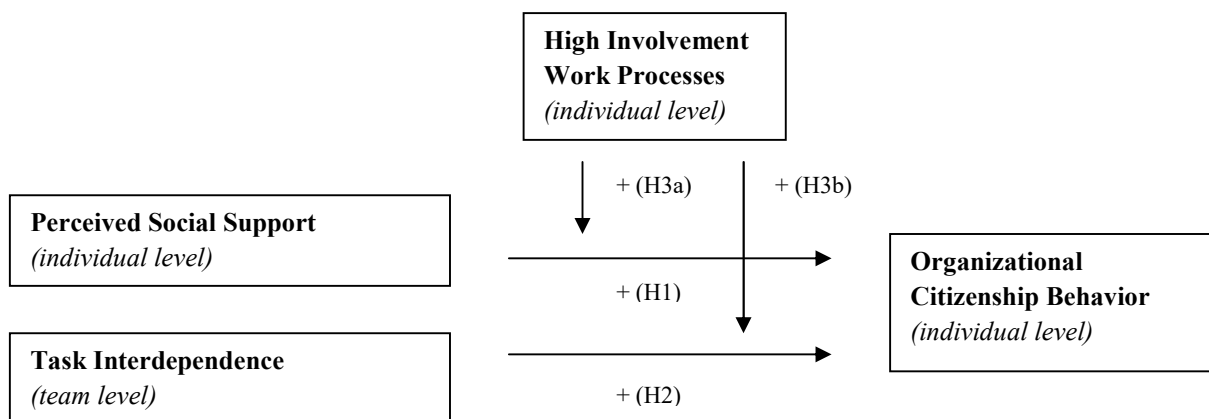
Figure 1. Conceptual model

Methods

Study Design

The data used in this research are part of a larger investigation on well-being and performance. Only parts of the questionnaire were used and relevant to this study. This included the questions that measured the following constructs: perceived social support, task interdependence, high involvement work processes (HIWP) and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Quantitative, cross-sectional, data from employees and their supervisors were used in order to measure these constructs.

Sample

The population of interest included employees and their supervisors working for organizations operating in the Netherlands. The 76 departments under study consisted out of groups of employees in an organization who work together in a functional area and all report to the same supervisor. The departments consists of at least 7 employees, excluding the supervisor.

A total of 372 respondents returned the questionnaires, which results in a response rate of 89.9%. The employees worked an average of 28.12 hours per week (M = 28.12, SD = 14.50). Most of the employees had an unlimited contract (63.4%), 18.5% had a fixed-term contract, 7.8% were employed through employment agencies and 9.1% had a different type of contract. Furthermore, the sample consisted of 43.5 % male respondents and 54.8% female respondents. The employee's age ranged from 17 to 69 years old (M = 36.84, SD = 12.89). On average, employees worked 8.96 years in their organization (M = 8.96, SD = 9.40).

Procedure

The data were collected by students of Tilburg University using two sampling strategies: convenience sampling and implicit stratified sampling. Firstly, students contacted two departments within their own networks (convenience sampling). Secondly, for each participating department a sampling frame was created based on the employees' age and gender. Subsequently, a fixed interval and a random start was used to select five employees from each department (implicit stratified sampling). Additionally, the data were collected on individual and team level using two different forms of questionnaires, one for the employee and one for the supervisor. The respondents were provided with a cover letter with additional information about the aim of the study, the procedure, confidentiality and anonymity.

Measures

The constructs were measured based on several previously published scales. For all scales, scores were calculated by computing a new variable and taking an average across (or sum of) the items, with a higher score denoting a higher degree in that construct. For example, a higher score on perceived social support denotes a higher level of perceived social support. Principal axis factoring was used to test the construct validity. The criteria of eigenvalue > 1 (Kaiser's criterion) and Catell's scree test were used to choose the amount of factors. Principal axis factoring indicated a one-factor solution for all the constructs, which can be seen in the Appendix. The final scales of all constructs had less than 5% missings. Scale reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's α and Lamdba-2.

Perceived social support. A 4-item scale was used in order to measure perceived social support (Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Davis-LaMastro, 1990). As data were collected of employees within work units, the referent was changed from 'organization' into 'work unit'. The employees indicated how well their work environment supports them on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree). An example item included "My work unit shows very little concerns for me" (reversed score). The one-factor solution explained 57.10% of the total variance in perceived social support. Chronbach's α (.74) and Lambda-2 (.74) were both good.

Task interdependence. To measure task interdependence, a 4-item scale was adapted from Van der Vegt, Emans and Van de Vliert (2001). Supervisors indicated the extent to which employees in their team are dependent upon each other to finish their work. Items were scored on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree). An example item included "People in my group depend on each other for the completion of their work". The factor and reliability analyses were performed using aggregated data to represent the team's level of task interdependence. The one-factor solution explained 48.39% of the total variance in task interdependence. Chronbach's α (.64) and Lambda-2 (.66) were both acceptable.

High involvement work processes. A 10-item scale developed by Vandenberg, Richardson and Eastman (1999) was used to assess the employees' perceptions regarding the presence of policies and programs supporting the four primary characteristics of HIWP: power, information, rewards and knowledge. The employees were asked whether they are offered these HR activities (0= no, 1 = yes). An example item was: "Help employees develop the careers they want". The one-factor solution explained 43.41% of the total variance in HIWP. Chronbach's α (.85) and Lambda-2 (.86) were both great. For this scale, an index

score was calculated by computing a new variable and taking the sum of all items; a score of 10 indicated that all high involvement work processes were present.

Organizational citizenship behavior. A shortened scale adapted from Goodman and Svyantek (1999) was used to measure OCB. Employees were asked to indicate the frequency to which they showed organizational citizenship behaviors, ranging from 1 = never to 5 = very often. An example item included "I volunteer to do things not formally required by the job". The one-factor solution explained 61.90% of the total variance in OCB. Chronbach's α (.80) and Lambda-2 (.80) were both satisfying.

Control variables: gender, age and organizational tenure. Previous researchers have indicated that women are more likely to display OCB compared to men (Kidder, 2002). Furthermore, Wagner and Rush (2000) indicated that antecedents to OCB may depend on the age of the organizational member. Lastly, Morrison (1994) showed that an employees' organizational tenure is positively related to OCB. Therefore, the employees' gender (1 = male, 2 = female), age and organizational tenure were included as a control variables.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics and correlations.

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Gender [a]	1.56	.50	1						
2. Age	36.84	12.89	-.015	1					
3. Organizational tenure	8.96	9.40	-.030	.665**	1				
4. Perceived social support	3.74	.59	.027	-.099	-.106*	1			
5. Task interdependence	3.99	.69	.014	.002	.058	-.001	1		
6. HIWP	5.98	3.09	-.037	-.046	-.052	.227**	-.098	1	
7. OCB	3.01	.77	-.064	-.107*	-.033	.301**	-.016	.248**	1

Note. [a] Gender: 1 = male 2 = female | *p < .05; **p < .01

Results

This study investigated whether there are significant direct effects between perceived social support and OCB (hypothesis 1) and between task interdependence and OCB (hypothesis 2). And additionally, whether HIWP moderate those two relationships (Hypothesis 3a and 3b). Before doing this, all continuous predictors were centered in order to make the intercept meaningful. The mean centered variables have a mean of exactly zero. Furthermore, we

checked every predictor for multicollinearity, normality of residuals, linearity, and homoscedasticity. All scales showed no multicollinearity as Tolerance was not smaller than 0.1 and VIF was not bigger than 10. The Normal Probability Plot showed no major deviations from normality for all predictors, as all points lay in a reasonably straight diagonal line from bottom left to top right. Thus, linearity and normality was good for all predictors. Also the assumption of homoscedasticity is met, scores were randomly scattered and there was no systematic pattern of clustering of scores.

Descriptive statistics

Table 1 provides the means, standard deviations, and correlations between the variables at individual level. Perceived social support is positively correlated with high involvement work processes ($r = .227$, $p < .001$) and organizational citizenship behavior ($r = .301$, $p < .001$). Furthermore, high involvement work processes and OCB are positively correlated ($r = .248$, $p < .001$). However, no significant correlations were found between task interdependence and other variables.

Hypothesis testing

First, the direct effect of perceived social support on organizational citizenship behavior and the moderating role of high involvement work processes on this relationship will be investigated (hypothesis 1 and hypothesis 3a). Multiple regression analysis was used to measure whether the direct and moderating effect were significant. Second, the direct effect of task interdependence on OCB and the moderating role of HIWP on this relationship will be analyzed, controlled for perceived social support (hypothesis 2 and hypothesis 3b). Since task interdependence was primarily measured on team level and both HIWP and OCB were measured on individual level, multilevel analysis was applied as the statistical method of choice.

Perceived social support, HIWP and OCB

Perceived social support is found to be positively associated with OCB, including a beta coefficient of medium strength (B = .376, SE (B) = .066, $p < .001$; Table 2, Model 1). This confirms hypothesis 1: the higher the level of perceived social support, the higher their level organizational citizenship behavior.

Table 2

Regression coefficients (dependent variable = OCB).

	Model 0		Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	B	SE (B)	B	SE (B)	B	SE (B)	B	SE (B)
Gender [a]	-.142	.081	-.151	.078	-.139	.077	-.122	.077
Age	-.008	.004	-.007	.004	-.007	.004	-.007	.004
Organizational tenure	.004	.006	.006	.005	.007	.005	.006	.005
Perceived social support			.376**	.066	.323**	.067	.307**	.067
HIWP					.042**	.013	.037**	.013
Interaction perceived social support x HIWP							-.043*	.020
R^2		.021		.106		.134		.146
ΔR^2		.021		.084		.029		.012
F Change		2.47		32.17**		11.26**		4.67*

Note. [a] Gender: 1 = male 2 = female | B is the unstandardized beta; SE (B) is the standard error for the unstandardized beta| *p < .05; **p < .01

Before testing the moderating effect, the direct effect of HIWP on OCB will be analyzed. Adding HIWP to the model resulted in a significantly improved model, including a medium increase in R^2 (ΔR^2 = .029, *F Change*(1,340 = 11.26, *p* = .001; Table 2, Model 2). The analysis showed that HIWP have a direct and positive effect on OCB, including a beta coefficient of small strength (B = .042, SE (B) = .013, *p* = .001; Table 2, Model 2). This means that employees who perceive a higher level of HIWP are more likely to exhibit OCBs. Adding the interaction term to the model resulted in a significantly improved model, including a small increase in R^2 (ΔR^2 = .012, *F Change*(1, 339) = 4.67, *p* < .05; Table 2, Model 3). Specifically, this analysis showed that HIWP do have a moderating effect on the relationship between perceived social support and OCB, including a beta coefficient of small strength (B = -.043, SE (B) = .020, *p* < .05; Table 2, Model 3).

To facilitate interpretation of the interaction, the moderating effect of HIWP is graphically illustrated in Figure 1. The relationship between perceived social support and OCB is plotted at low and high levels of HIWP (one standard deviation below and above the mean) following the procedure of Aiken and West (1991). The simple slope analysis revealed that when HIWP were high, OCB was high and the positive relationship between perceived social support and OCB was marginally significant (B = .175, SE (B) = .096, *t* = 1.829, *p* =

.068). When HIWP were low, the relationship between perceived social support and OCB was significantly positive (B = .438, SE (B) = .086, *t* = 5.122, *p* = .001). This indicates that HIWP weakens the positive relationship between perceived social support and OCB, thereby rejecting hypothesis 3a. These results will be further interpreted in the discussion section.
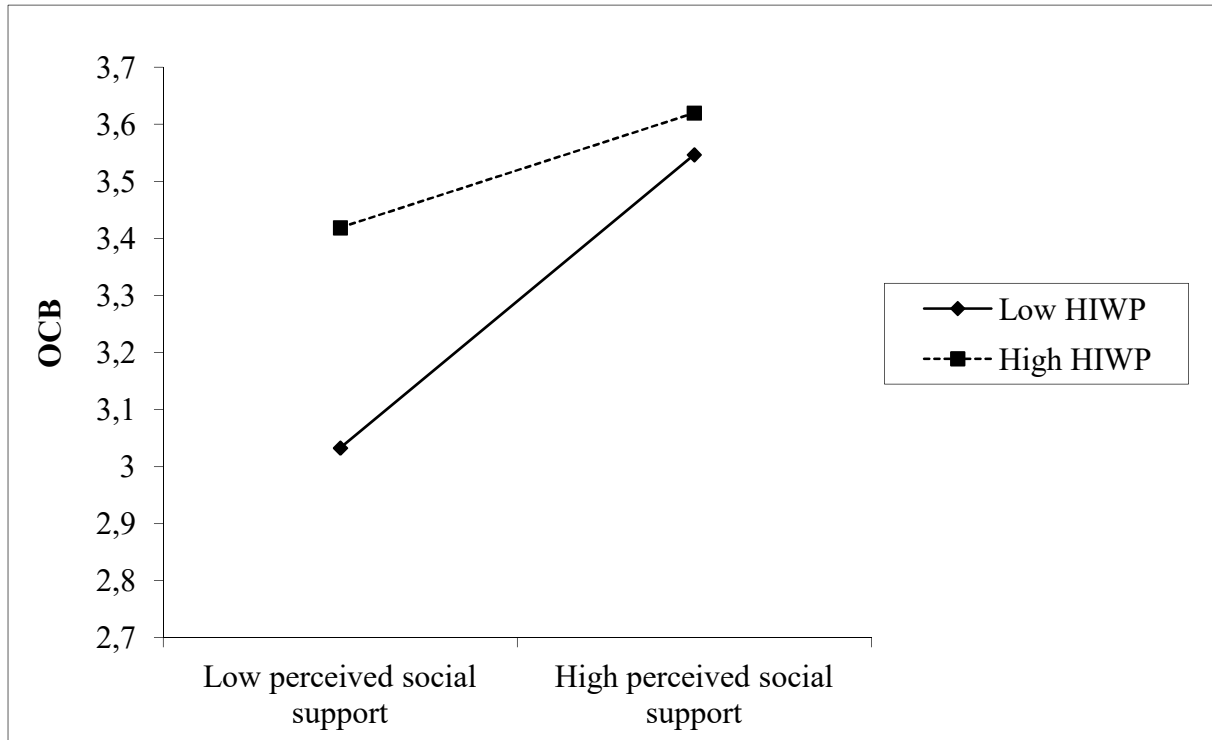

Figure 1. Interactive effects of high involvement work processes (HIWP) with perceived social support on organizational citizenship behavior (OCB).

Task interdependence, HIWP and OCB

Controlling for perceived social support, no support was found for task interdependence to be positively related to OCB (B = .000, SE (B) = .083; *p* = .998; Table 3, Model 1). Additionally, no support was found for HIWP to have a moderating effect on the relationship between task interdependence and OCB, as indicated by the non-significant interaction term (B = -.017, SE (B) = .018; *p* = .364; Table 3, Model 3). However, including HIWP results in a significantly improved model ($\Delta\chi2$ = 38.61 (1), *p* < 0.05). Results indicate that HIWP is positively associated with OCB, regardless the presence of perceived social support and task interdependence (B = .039, SE (B) = .014; *p* < .01; Table 3, Model 2). When taken all together, hypothesis 2 and hypothesis 3b are rejected.

Table 3

Results of hierarchical linear modeling (dependent variable = OCB).

	Model 0		Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	B	SE (B)	B	SE (B)	B	SE (B)	B	SE (B)
Gender [a]	-.158	.082	-.158	.082	-.136	.082	-.135	.082
Age	-.005	.004	-.005	.004	-.003	.004	-.003	.004
Organizational tenure	.004	.005	.004	.005	.004	.005	.004	.005
Perceived social support	.359**	.066	.359**	.066	.310**	.066	.310**	.066
Task interdependence			.000	.083	.011	.084	.019	.085
HIWP					.039**	.014	.039**	.014
Interaction task interdependence x HIWP							-.017	.018
Level 1 residual	.356 (.03)		.355 (.03)		.325 (.03)		.324 (.03)	
Level 2 residual	.16 (.04)		.16 (.04)		.17 (.04)		.17 (.04)	
Model fit (-2 LL)	677		677		638		.637	

Note. [a] Gender: 1 = male 2 = female | B is the unstandardized beta; SE (B) is the standard error for the unstandardized beta| *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$

Discussion

Summary of findings

The goal of this research was to examine the relationship between specific social work characteristics and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and whether this relationship is influenced by the employees' perceptions of high involvement work processes (HIWP) implemented in their organization. The specific social work characteristics being explored in this study were perceived social support and task interdependence.

Perceived social support was found to be positively related to OCB and this relationship is found to be moderated by HIWP. Results indicated that HIWP weaken the positive relationship between perceived social support and OCB. No evidence was found for both the direct relationship between task interdependence and OCB and the moderating effect of HIWP on this relationship to be significant. Moreover, there was a noticeable finding beyond the hypotheses tested in this study. Namely, HIWP was found to be directly and positively related to OCB, regardless the presence of the social work characteristics. These findings will be explained in greater detail in the next section.

Interpretation of results

In this study, evidence was found for the direct positive relationship between perceived social support and OCB. This means that employees exhibit positive (prosocial and proactive) workplace behaviors that are not required from their prescribed roles that they have been assigned to, in exchange for the social support they perceive from their work environment. This finding extends the previously used social exchange theory. When a job provides social support, employees feel that their organization, supervisors and coworkers care about their contributions and values their well-being, which will motivate them to reciprocate with increased OCB (Blau, 1964; Grant & Parker, 2009).

Concerning the moderating effect, HIWP was found to weaken the positive relationship between perceived social support and OCB. Specifically, when HIWP were low, the relationship between perceived social support and OCB was significantly positive. This positive relationship was only marginally significant under the conditions of high HIWP. However, OCB was always higher when HIWP were high compared to when HIWP were low. In other words, when an employee perceives a low level of HIWP, social support in their work environment is particularly important for the employee to exhibit OCBs. On the other hand, when an employee perceives a high level of HIWP, social support in their work environment is of lesser importance for the employee to exhibit OCBs. Noteworthy, Jiang, Chuang and Chiau (2015) found a similar interaction in their study. They found that service-oriented high performing work systems (HPWS) reduced the influences of service leadership on employee outcomes, such that the influence of service leadership was stronger when HPWS were lower than they were higher. Thus, leadership was of particular importance in influencing positive employee outcomes under the conditions of a poor HR system. These prior empirical findings provide an accurate interpretation and confirmation of our results. Although it was expected for HIWP to strengthen the relationship between perceived social support and OCB, these findings are still in line with the AMO-theory. HIWP positively enhances employees' abilities, motivations and opportunities to actively participate in their work which, in turn, empower employees to perform both their prescribed and organizational citizenship behaviors (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Boxall & Macky, 2009; Butts et al., 2009; Paré & Tremblay, 2007). This will be of particular importance when an employee perceives a low level of social support from their work environment.

The direct relationship between task interdependence and OCB, as well as the moderating effect of HIWP on this relationship, were not found to be significant. The level of task interdependence a team has might not have a lot of influence on the OCBs the employees

exhibit. The social exchange theory was used to develop the direct effect of task interdependence on OCB. However, no evidence was found for the task interdependence of teams to encourage the team members to reciprocate with increased OCBs through the high-quality relationships that may be generated by the contingent and interdependent interactions with each other. This could be due to the assumption that the level of task interdependence is perceived differently across the individual team members, especially since individuals can interpret the same practices or issues in different or even contrary ways (Conway and Monks, 2008). Moreover, prior research from De Jong et al. (2007) did found evidence for individuals to perceive the relationship as more beneficial when task interdependence is reciprocal, which leads to more OCBs. Furthermore, the insignificant moderating effect of HIWP on the relationship between task interdependence and OCB is also expected to be due to the assumption of the differences in individual perceptions within a team. Especially since this study did find a moderating effect for HIWP on the other social work characteristic (perceived social support). Therefore, it is still expected that the social exchange theory and the AMO-theory are applicable to relate (individually perceived) task interdependence to OCB and to explain the moderating effect of HIWP on this relationship.

Lastly, this study focused on HIWP as a moderator rather than as a main effect on OCB. However, it is noticeable that a positive relationship between HIWP and OCB was found, regardless the presence of the social work characteristics. Therefore, this study supports prior research which already investigated this positive direct relationship thoroughly (e.g. Kizilos et al., 2013; Paré & Tremblay, 2007).

Limitations and implications future research

Although this study offers some new perspectives on social work characteristics, OCB and HIWP, there are several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the cross-sectional design limits the extent to which causal relationships can be derived. All measurements are obtained at a single point in time which might provide different results if a different timeframe had been chosen. Future research should use a longitudinal design instead, to get a more in-depth perspective in the relationships explored in this study.

Second, the scales used to measure the constructs had to be changed due to constraints in the data collection procedure. Although the currently used scales are of good quality, future researchers are being recommended to consider using the initial scales. In particular, perceived social support and task interdependence were initially to be measured by the Work Design Questionnaire (WDQ) (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006). This questionnaire is more

recent and validated by other researchers (e.g. Humphrey, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2007). On top of that, the WDQ provides additional social work characteristics, such as feedback from others and interaction with people outside the organization, which could also be worthy of empirical investigation. Also, task interdependence is measured at individual level in the WDQ. Although this study did not find a significant relationship between (team level) task interdependence and OCB, it does not mean that no relationship exist. Therefore, future research should look further into the difference between measuring task interdependence on individual level and team level, and whether this difference influences employee outcomes such as OCB. Furthermore, a more comprehensive measure would have been used for OCB. This measure consisted of two scales, one scale at individual level (OCB-I) and the other at organizational level (OCB-O) (Ilies, Scott and Judge, 2006). Future research should follow Ilies et al.'s (2006) recommendation for conceptualizing OCB as a latent construct that causes behavior targeted both at individuals and at the organization (Ilies, Scott, & Judge, 2006).

Finally, there are some recommendations for future research based on the interesting findings about the significant relationship between perceived social support and OCB and the moderating role of HIWP. First of all, no prior research have investigated the moderating role of HIWP on corresponding relationships. Future research should be encouraged by this study to further investigate this moderating role of HIWP. More specifically, the surprising result of HIWP to weaken the relationship between perceived social support and OCB is worthy of more empirical investigation.

Practical implications

Organizations and (HR) managers should be aware of the importance of the socially embedded work design and the effects on organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) of its members. An important factor for increasing employees' OCBs, is the level of social support an employee perceives. When jobs provide employees with social support from the organization, supervisors and coworkers, employees will feel that their work environment cares about their contributions and values their well-being, which will motivate the employees to reciprocate with increased helping behaviors. Although this study did not find evidence for task interdependence to be an important predictor for OCB, this social work characteristic should not be neglected. Prior research did find evidence for this relationship to exist (De Jong et al., 2007), which indicates that task interdependence could also encourage employees to reciprocate with OCBs because of their contingent and interdependent high-quality relationships (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

Furthermore, it is important for organizations and (HR) managers to know when and why HIWP are most effective and useful to enhance the relationship between social work characteristics and OCB. Based on the results, employees will exhibit the highest OCBs when they perceive that a high level of HIWP is implemented. Thus, employees will be able, motivated and be given the opportunity to exhibit OCBs when organizations empower employees to make more decisions, provide them with the knowledge and information to do so and reward them for doing so. On the other hand, when organizations or (HR) managers choose not to implement HIWP (yet), it is extremely important that employees perceive that their work environment supports them in order to enhance their OCBs. However, when employees already perceive that their work environment is socially supporting them, the added value of HIWP will be much lower compared to when employees perceive a low level of social support.

Conclusion

The interest paid in organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) has dramatically increased since its introduction in the literature. Because of rapid changes in the environment, organizations must be capable of increasing its employees' behaviors and attitudes which act for organizational development (Lee et al., 2013). Research has already indicated several predictors of OCB, such as organizational commitment and personality characteristics (Podsakoff et al., 2014). However, the relational perspective in which social work characteristics are considered as antecedents of OCB has mostly been neglected. Therefore, this study considered two social work characteristics (perceived social support and task interdependence) as important predictors of OCB based on the social exchange theory. Furthermore, high involvement work practices (HIWP) are considered to play a moderating role in enhancing this relationship based on the AMO-theory. Especially since social work characteristics are more difficult to change and mostly out of HR's control. Results show that perceived social support was positively related to OCB and that HIWP weakens this relationship. No support was found for the direct relationship between task interdependence and OCB and the moderating effect of HIWP on this relationship. These findings help organizations and (HR) managers to gain insight in when and why HIWP are most effective and useful to enhance the relationship between social work characteristics and OCB.

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Appendix

Factor tables

Table 4

Factor analysis and reliability of perceived social support

Scale	Perceived social support
My work unit really cares about my well-being.	**.71**
My work unit shows very little concerns for me. (R)	**.52**
My work unit strongly considers my goals and values.	**.64**
My work unit cares about my opinion.	**.74**
Eigenvalue	2.28
% of variance	57.10
Cronbach's α	.74
Lambda-2	.74

Note: Factor loadings over .40 appear in bold.

Table 5

Factor analysis and reliability of task interdependence

Scale	Task interdependence
In order to complete their work, people in my group have to obtain information and advice from each other.	**.40**
People in my group depend on each other for the completion of their work.	**.69**
People in my group have a one-person jobs; they rarely have to check or work with others. (R)	**.46**
People in my group have to work closely with their colleagues to do their work properly.	**.68**
Eigenvalue	1.94
% of variance	48.39
Cronbach's α	.64
Lambda-2	.66

Note: Factor loadings over .40 appear in bold.

Table 6

Factor analysis and reliability of high involvement work processes (HIWP)

Scale	HIWP
Help employees develop the careers they want.	**.54**
Provide employees with accurate and realistic information about job duties and responsibilities.	**.63**
Set goals and standards for employees' work performance.	**.65**
Provide feedback and performance evaluation.	**.67**
Link employees' rewards to how well they actually perform the job.	**.62**
Reward employees for providing excellent customer service.	**.55**
Incorporate changes or innovations suggested by employees or employee groups.	**.64**
Regularly share information about the company's overall operating results, business plans, and goals with the employees.	**.60**
Involve employees in the design of new practices, systems, and methods for enhancing productivity.	**.70**
Involve employees in major decisions that will directly affect their work.	**.58**
Eigenvalue	4.37
% of variance	43.71
Cronbach's α	.85
Lambda-2	.86

Note: Factor loadings over .40 appear in bold.

Table 7

Factor analysis and reliability of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB)

Scale	HIWP
Volunteers to do things not formally required by the job.	**.73**
Help others when their workload increases.	**.65**
Make innovative suggestions to improve the overall quality of the department.	**.73**
Willingly attends functions not required by the organization, but helps in its overall image.	**.71**
Eigenvalue	2.48
% of variance	61.90
Cronbach's α	.80
Lambda-2	.80

Note: Factor loadings over .40 appear in bold.