Making organizations meaningful: What’s volunteering got to do with it?

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• Making organizations more meaningful: What's ‘volunteering’ got to do with this?
• Conceptualize
  • Combining management with volunteering literatures
Theme: Making Organizations Meaningful

• “Meaningfulness at *micro levels* ... engaging employees in work so as to maximize human potential”

• Q: How can employees (paid and unpaid) make their organizations meaningful, to themselves and to others?
Meaningful Organizations

• Large extant literature on employee satisfaction and wellbeing and its relationship to making organizations more meaningful...

• Two concepts from the management literature:
  1. Job Crafting:
  2. Organizational Citizenship behavior (OCB):
“.... job crafting ... an important process through which employees cultivate meaningfulness, and in so doing, create valuable outcomes for themselves and their organizations.”

– undertaken by employees to ‘craft’ their jobs to better suit their values, strengths and passion

– Amy Wrzesniewski & Jane E. Dutton

– What is it?
Job Crafting:

Who is more likely to reframe/revision/reconfigure their work in this way?

• Some of the individual level factors predicting job crafting:
  - cognitive ability
  - self-image
  - perceived level of control
  - readiness to change, proactive ...

• Employees who see their jobs as a ‘calling’ —
  - (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997)

• ‘Calling’ jobs focus on enjoyment of fulfilling, socially useful work ... a service for the ‘other’
What Motivates Job Crafting?

CONTROL: The need for control or mastery...the desire to make part of their work their own.

- Motivated to exert some control over the work environment ..to achieve some control over their lives

2. SELF-ESTEEM: To create positive images of “work” for themselves and others... ...to make work ‘attractive’.

- Motivated to secure positive perceptions of who they are... as identified by their work

3. BELONGING: To establish connections that address the needs of belonging or connectedness.

- Motivated to feel more connected to the organization and /or to others in the organization


Organizational Citizenship Behaviors

- **OCB** - “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. ........the behavior is rather a matter of *personal choice*, such that its omission is not generally understood as *punishable*. (Organ, 1988)

- “form of ‘helping behavior’
- related to ‘*altruism*’, ‘*individual initiative*’, ‘*volunteering*’
  to take on extra responsibilities
  
OCB and Job Crafting

• Related to job crafting, but a difference:
  - OCB: Helping behaviors
    - Directly impacts
      - Others and the Organization
  - JC: Changing job parameters
    - Indirectly impacts
      - Others and the Organization

Both could end up creating ‘meaningfulness’ for the employee with positive outcomes for the employer.
What Motivates Organizational Citizenship Behavior?

- Social exchange relationship between the employee and the organization
- Motivated by a form of **reciprocity** (Organ, 1988)

**Intrinsic Motives:**
1. Helping others *(altruistic/social)*
2. Helping the organization *(reciprocity)*

**Extrinsic motives:**
1. To create a positive impression *(approval)*
2. To establish a favorable account for the future relationship *(career related)*
3. To receive tangible or intangible rewards or benefits *(career related)*
4. To protect against shortcomings / failures *(protective /career)*

- *Influenced by employee’s trust in the organization and degree of organizational commitment to employee*

- *(Moorman, Blakely, & Niehoff, 1998).*
Both costly behaviors to the employee to undertake
Both may have benefits to the employer (and employee)
Q: Which type of employee is most likely to undertake such personally costly behaviors?

In hiring decisions.....Who to hire?
Volunteering: generally considered an discretionary, altruistic activity where an individual provides services for no financial gain though an organization. ...... service that is often intended to promote the welfare of others

Meaningfulness is a primary driver of volunteering behavior

MTV – multidimensional: altruistic and egoistic motives:

– to help others, to reciprocate, to make social connections, actualize values (create meaning) increase self-esteem
Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI). Clary et al. (1998)

- Six psychological functions served by volunteerism

1. Values- to help others
2. Understanding- to explore their own strengths and expand their understanding of the cause, other volunteers, and the organization
3. Social- to increase social interactions, strengthen existing relationships, and to gain others approval
4. Career.-to gain career related experiences and to increase job prospects.
5. Protective. to “work through [their] own personal problems” and “a good escape”
6. Enhancement: to make themselves feel more important and needed...increases my self-esteem”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volunteer motivations</th>
<th>Job crafting Motivations</th>
<th>OCB Motivations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>[Discretionary activity ...control of leisure time]</strong></td>
<td>[work as a calling...]</td>
<td>[going the extra mile- through discretionary activities]</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>To help others</strong></td>
<td>Exert some <strong>control</strong> over the work environment</td>
<td><strong>To help others</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Help the cause -<strong>reciprocity</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Expand understanding of self and cause</td>
<td><strong>Self-esteem</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reciprocity</strong> to organization</td>
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<td>Explore <strong>own strengths</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>To increase <strong>social</strong> connections &amp; approval</td>
<td><strong>Social</strong> connections with others...belonging or connectedness</td>
<td><strong>Social</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>To gain <strong>career</strong> experiences</td>
<td>To use <strong>own strengths</strong></td>
<td><strong>Career-</strong> related</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Protective:</strong> To “work through [their] own personal problems” and “a good escape”</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Protective</strong> against mistakes (current and future)</td>
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<td>Increases my <strong>self-esteem</strong></td>
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• Given significant overlap of motivations....

1. Is there a relationship between behaviors of ‘organizational citizenship’ and ‘job crafting’ of employee to his or her private volunteering?

2. Are employees who volunteer [on their private time] more likely to engage in job crafting, organizational citizenship behaviors at their work?

3. Are impacts of behaviors in one domain (volunteering) transferable to other domains workplace (family)?
Positive Externality: OCB and JC?

- As motivations for **Volunteering** and **OCB** and **JC** are overlapping
- Q: Are volunteers more likely
  - To undertake OCB ?
  - Do Job Crafting ?
- Why this might be so?
  - **Volunteering** OCB and JC
- Is it likely that volunteering in the private domain provides certain desired benefits, that volunteers would like to see replicated in their work domains ?
  - If volunteering compensates for factors motivating JC will JC occur?
  - Is Volunteering a Compensatory activity? or one that has spill overs leading to JC
- **Benefits of volunteering:**
  - ‘Warm glow’ from engaging in prosocial behaviors
  - Tangible extrinsic rewards: approval of peers, social networks, favorable identity, reputation, career-related,…
VOLUNTEERING: POSITIVE EXTERNALITY?

• When paid employees volunteer (*privately*), is there some indirect positive effects on their organizations?
  ➢ Do they make their organizations more ‘meaningful’?

• Is there a **positive externality** of their volunteering that is reaped by the employer/other employees/and volunteer/family?

• Does volunteering by an employee result in:
  ➢ An increase in skills & social networks for the employee
  ➢ OCB: The willingness to go the extra mile by the employee
  ➢ JC: Likelihood of employee to perceive jobs to be ‘calling’... helping others thereby create meaning...
ARE those who volunteer ‘better’ employees?

- Do employers know this...and look for employees who volunteer?
- Is volunteering a signal in the labor market that is valuable?
  - Used for resume building?
- IF it has only signaling value ....why continue volunteering once you have the job?

• Nearly 30% of American adults who are fulltime employees and 35% who work part-time volunteer (BLS, 2015)
Do volunteers discover the **GIVER’S GLOW** and **HELPER’S HIGH**

**Empirical Findings:** Research on volunteering suggests volunteers experience

- higher happiness levels (Thoits & Hewitt, 2001; Piliavin, 2003)
- increases in life-satisfaction (Meier and Stutzer (2008))

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- **Neuroscience:** ...using functional MRI shows increase in **brain activity in regions responsible for pleasure and reward** when undertaking charitable donations $ (Harbaugh, et al , 2007) ..time?

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- Review of the experimental and empirical research shows that giving indeed causes **increased happiness** [and that happier people give more]- **a circular feedback exists** (Anik et al, 2009)

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Volunteers:

- Q: Are volunteers ‘happy’, ‘satisfied’ and therefore ready to ‘give’ at their work domains?
- **Circular feedback through multiple domains**
  - Positive feelings elicited through volunteering might lead to a enrichment among domains.
- Multiple roles may not necessarily deplete individual’s resources
  - (Marks, 1977- theory of ‘expansion’ approach to human energy it may even create energy for use in that role or in other role performances)
- **Do they develop a ‘giving muscle’ that like all muscles-**
- **Can we measure ‘flexing’ this ‘muscle’?**
  - Frequency of volunteering
  - Intensity of volunteering
  - Tenure and type of volunteering

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\[ \text{giving muscle} \]
Positive Externalities of Volunteering

Q: Do the benefits of private volunteering accrue in multiple domains (workplace & family) in which the volunteer is engaged?

• Q: How are these benefits related to OCB and Job Crafting in the workplace
  – Thereby making more meaningful organizations?

• What does this mean for
  – Management: Hiring practices?
  – CSR: ‘Employer Supported Volunteering’ practices?
  – What might these benefits be in the family domain?
    • Is there a volunteer’s ‘high’?
    • Is there a ‘use it or lose it’ component?
Some initial evidence...

• **Q:** Is volunteering beneficial in the workplace?
  
  Rodell (2013) found a positive indirect relationship between volunteering and job performance, including task performance (+), citizenship behavior (+), and counterproductive behavior (-) through job absorption. 
  
  Volunteering was not a job distraction.

• Ramos et al (2015) considered the relationship between volunteering and health within the context of working life.

  Volunteering was associated with a greater sense of work-life balance and health, controlling for individual job characteristics.