

RESEARCH REPORT

Guilty and Helpful: An Emotion-Based Reparatory Model of Voluntary Work Behavior

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This study proposes a dynamic reparatory model of voluntary work behavior. We test the hypothesis that when people are made aware of their high level of negative behavior at work (i.e., counterproductive work behavior) and are informed that their behavior is counternormative and undesirable, the knowledge that they violated social norms induces guilt. This guilt, in turn, results in compensatory behavior that is positive in nature (i.e., organizational citizenship behavior). We report results from a field experiment involving normative feedback about employees' counterproductive work behavior to support this model. The findings indicate that undesirable behaviors in the workplace can be redressed by making employees aware of the negative consequences of these behaviors.

Keywords: counterproductive work behaviors, feedback, guilt, organizational citizenship behaviors

Much has been written in the past two decades about the importance of emotions and emotional processes for organizational behavior (e.g., Brief & Weiss, 2002; Gooty, Gavin, & Ashkanasy, 2009), and research on the emotional antecedents or consequences of important organizational constructs, processes, and outcomes has been increasingly prevalent (see Barsade, Brief, & Spataro, 2003; Elfenbein, 2007). However, with few notable exceptions (e.g., Barclay, Skarlicki, & Pugh, 2005; Judge, Scott, & Ilies, 2006; Weiss, Suckow, & Cropanzano, 1999), much of the research on relevant emotional processes has focused on broad affective dimensions (moods) such as positive and negative affect, to the neglect of discrete emotions (Brief & Weiss, 2002; Gooty et al., 2009).

Given the importance of specific emotions for cognition and behavior (Gooty et al., 2009; Izard, 2009) and the differentiated behavioral action tendencies associated with specific emotions (e.g., Frijda, 1986; Roseman, Wiest, & Swartz, 1994), we believe that the influences of specific emotions on employees' actual behaviors at work represent an area that is ripe for important

theoretical and empirical contributions to the organizational behavior literature. Therefore, this study focuses on the production and subsequent behavioral consequences of guilt—a discrete, specific emotion that is known to have important intrapersonal and interpersonal consequences (Morris & Keltner, 2000; Tangney, 1991; Tangney, Stuewig, & Mashek, 2007). More specifically, guilt is thought to be a moral and self-conscious emotion that arises from a negative evaluation of a specific behavior and that motivates actions aimed toward reparative outcomes (e.g., Lindsay-Hartz, 1984; Morris & Keltner, 2000; Tangney, 1991).

Drawing upon theorizing about normative influence (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004; Cialdini, Kallgren, & Reno, 1991), we propose that people experience guilt when they realize that they have violated important social norms. Knowledge that one has violated social norms by engaging in behavior that is disapproved of in the given setting induces guilt, which then motivates reparatory behavior (Bierbrauer, 1992; Savani, Morris, & Naidu, 2012). In this article we examine whether informing people who have engaged in an above-average amount of counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs; see Dimotakis, Ilies, & Mount, 2008) that they have violated normative expectations would induce feelings of guilt and thereby motivate them to take reparative action, such as engaging in organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs).

Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

Social Norms

Research on social norms has distinguished two types of norms: *descriptive norms*, which specify what most people are doing in a

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given context, and *prescriptive norms*, which specify what most people approve and disapprove of in a given context (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004; Cialdini et al., 1991). Both types of norms are powerful determinants of human behavior.

For example, Schultz, Nolan, Cialdini, Goldstein, and Griskevicius (2007) gave families feedback on their electricity consumption compared to their neighbors. Households that consumed above-average energy decreased their level of consumption when presented with information about the descriptive norm (i.e., their electricity consumption was above average), but a more dramatic reduction was observed when descriptive information was combined with prescriptive information (i.e., excessive electricity consumption is undesirable). Together with prior research (see Cialdini, Reno, Kallgren, 1990; Kallgren, Reno, & Cialdini, 2000), the study by Schultz et al. suggests that a combination of descriptive and prescriptive information can effectively reduce counternormative behavior and promote socially desirable behavior.

To our knowledge, this method of providing normative feedback has not been applied to negative workplace behaviors. Furthermore, researchers in the tradition of social norms have not examined the specific mechanisms through which normative feedback reduces undesirable behavior. In the present research, we examine guilt as a specific emotion induced by violation of both descriptive and prescriptive norms that is responsible for driving reparative action.

Guilt: A Helpful Emotion?

Guilt is considered a moral emotion because it is focused “on some past behavior that is inconsistent with the set of internalized standards—often, but not necessarily, moral in nature” (Tangney, 1990, p. 103). The experience of guilt gives rise to motivation and behavior oriented toward reparation (e.g., apologizing, changing one’s actions; Morris & Keltner, 2000; see Tangney et al., 2007, for a review). For example, Ketelaar and Au (2003) found that individuals who felt guilty, or who were made to feel guilty, after not cooperating in a strategic game engaged in more cooperative behaviors subsequently. Similarly, Tangney, Miller, Flicker, and Barlow (1996) found that, compared to shame and embarrassment, guilt was more likely to be associated with reparative actions such as admitting one’s fault and wanting to make amends.

Given that people experience guilt when they realize they have violated social norms (Bierbrauer, 1992), we expected that employees would experience guilt if they realized that they had engaged in behaviors that are disapproved of in the organization. Because guilt motivates reparative behavior (Tangney et al., 1996), we further hypothesized that the feelings of guilt would lead to intentions and behaviors aimed at repairing the harm caused by initial counternormative behaviors. In sum, we examined the role of guilt, induced by normative feedback, in the interplay between “negative” (harmful) voluntary work behaviors (i.e., CWBs) and “positive” voluntary behaviors that promote cooperation among employees and support the organization (i.e., OCBs).

Voluntary Behaviors at Work: The Influence of Normative Feedback

Counterproductive behavior refers to “behavior intended to hurt the organization or other members of the organization” (Spector &

Fox, 2002; p. 271) and can include physical and verbal aggression, withdrawing effort at work, and so on. All of these behaviors are discretionary and violate the norms and legitimate interests of the organization (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Whereas previous research has primarily focused on investigating the antecedents of counterproductive behaviors (e.g., Greenberg, 1990; Hershcovis et al., 2007; Mount, Ilies, & Johnson, 2006; Penney & Spector, 2005), we focused on the emotional outcome of receiving normative feedback about CWBs and the actions that these resulting feelings motivate. Counterproductive behaviors are not uncommon in the workplace, and because normative feedback has proved effective in changing social behaviors (e.g., Schultz et al., 2007), it may be a useful tool for the management to address such negative work behaviors. To examine this issue, we studied employees who engaged in relatively high levels of CWBs and gave them normative feedback that they were engaging in more CWBs than others in the workplace (i.e., that they were violating the descriptive norm), while also making it clear that these behaviors were harmful for other employees and for the organization in general (i.e., that they were violating a prescriptive norm).

Given that the feedback would make individuals with relatively high CWBs realize that they had violated the social norms, the feedback was likely to make them feel guilty. Consistent with the functionalistic view of emotions, guilt is one of the most important psychological mechanisms through which individuals become socialized by internalizing and conforming to the social norms within their culture (Ausubel, 1955). To feel guilty, employees have to recognize that their behavior causes (or has the potential to cause) negative effects on the organization or its members and is thus disapproved of (Hoffman, 1982; Tangney, 1991). That is, not only the behavior itself but the appraisal of the negative behavior as being against prescriptive norms ultimately determines one’s emotional reactions (Smith & Ellsworth, 1985; Weiner, 1980).

Hypothesis 1: Employees with a relatively high level of CWBs who receive normative feedback about these behaviors will experience increased levels of guilt, compared to employees with a relatively high level of CWBs who do not receive such feedback.

Following previous research (Schultz et al., 2007), we expected that guilt induced by feedback that one engages in an above-average level of CWBs would reduce CWBs subsequently. However, we were concerned that providing people with CWB feedback and then immediately measuring their CWB intentions or subsequent CWB behaviors would make the purpose of the study transparent to participants. Furthermore, the functionalist view on emotions (Ausubel, 1955) suggests that guilt not only decreases negative behaviors but also increases positive behaviors (as compensation). Therefore, we focused on OCBs. These are discretionary behaviors that are neither explicitly required by the employment contract nor directly recognized by the formal reward system but contribute to the effective functioning of the organization (Organ, 1988, 1997). If a person has engaged in CWBs—that is, engaged in behaviors that have hurt the organization in some respects—and thereafter feels guilty about these behaviors, then a proactive way of making up for the past wrongs would be to engage in voluntary behaviors that help the organization in some

way. In this sense, OCBs can represent reparative behaviors that reduce the guilt associated with past CWBs.

According to Penner, Midili, and Kegelmeyer (1997), employees engage in OCBs to accomplish personal goals and needs. These authors identified and tested three OCB motives: being concerned about organizational interest, expressing prosocial values, and engaging in impression management (Rioux & Penner, 2001; Finkelstein & Penner, 2004). Like the functionalist nature of the theory on OCB motives, the view of guilt as a useful emotion with potential positive consequences (Tangney, 1990) is a functional one; therefore, we propose that alleviating the guilt that follows the realization that one has engaged in undesirable behavior is another kind of motive that should be in a comprehensive theoretical model on OCB motives.

In specific terms, we first hypothesized that receiving feedback about the performance of counterproductive behavior (and the awareness of its implications) would produce intentions of engaging in reparative positive behaviors aimed at counterbalancing the previously conducted negative actions, which in turn would predict actual behaviors (such as OCBs). Therefore, employees who are informed about the undesirability of their counterproductive behavior would be oriented to action tendencies and behavior aimed at repairing the (potential or actual) harm.

Hypothesis 2: Among employees with a relatively high level of CWBs, receiving normative feedback about these behaviors predicts greater (a) intentions to perform OCBs in the future and (b) actual performance of OCBs through OCB intentions.

Second, we propose that alleviating the guilt associated with normative feedback about high levels of CWBs is the functional motive behind the compensating for CWBs with OCBs; thus, experienced guilt should mediate the effect of CWB feedback on OCB intentions and behaviors. Being made aware of their conduct against the norms represents the first part of the causal chain that induces increased feelings of guilt, which, in turn, produce action tendencies and behaviors aimed at remedying the harm caused by the previously conducted counterproductive behavior.

Hypothesis 3: Among employees with a relatively high level of CWBs, experienced guilt predicts (a) intentions to perform OCBs in the future and (b) actual performance of OCBs.

Hypothesis 4: Among employees with a relatively high level of CWBs, experienced guilt will mediate the effect of normative feedback on (a) intentions to perform OCBs and (b) actual performance of OCBs.

In sum, we hypothesized that normative feedback about the undesirability of employees' relatively high level of CWBs would increase feelings of guilt and that these feelings would produce action tendencies (OCB intentions) and, through these intentions, actual behaviors (OCBs) as responses aimed at repairing the potential harm produced by CWBs. In the following sections we describe a field experiment designed to test these hypothesized effects, the results of this field experiment, and their implications for theory and practice.

Method

Participants and Procedures

Full-time employees comprising clerical and technical professionals and administrative personnel from a large midwestern university were invited to participate in the study. In the invitation e-mail, they were informed of the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, and the anonymous nature of the data collection process (i.e., the responses could not be linked to any personal identifying information). Participants were rewarded for their participation with an entry into a random drawing for 10 gift cards of \$50 each.

Participants were asked to complete three web-based surveys during the course of a week. One week was judged to be sufficient to avoid common method concerns associated with cross-sectional or near-cross-sectional designs yet sufficient to remain within the timeframe of what Izard (1989) called the *inertia* of emotions. Surveys were distributed through e-mail messages that contained web links.

On Monday morning, we administered the first survey, whereby participants reported their levels of previous CWBs, experienced guilt, and demographic information. Thereafter, half of the participants were randomly assigned to the feedback condition the other half to the no-feedback condition. Participants in the feedback condition were again divided into two conditions—low CWB versus high CWB—based on whether their self-reported CWBs in the first survey were below or above the sample mean. On Tuesday morning, participants in the feedback condition were provided their CWB scores, along with information about the prevailing prescriptive norm: “a high [CWB] score is undesirable because it indicates negative impact on the organization and the other employees.” Those participants reporting a CWB score above the sample mean were told that their score was higher than the average score for the sample, whereas those with a CWB score below the mean were told that their score was lower than the average. Participants in the no-feedback condition were not provided any information about their CWBs. All participants then indicated their current feelings of guilt and their intention to perform OCBs in the near future. Three days after this second survey was completed, participants completed the final study survey, in which they reported their actual levels of OCBs conducted since the second survey.

A total of 172 individuals agreed to participate in the study. Participants were predominately Caucasian (88%) and female (87%). The average age of the participants was 45.9 years ($SD = 9.3$), and their average tenure was 13.7 years ($SD = 9.0$). Of these participants, 16 failed to respond to the second survey, and another 10 participants failed to respond to the third (last) survey. This yielded a final sample of 156 participants when Time 2 variables (i.e., intention to perform OCBs and guilt) were used as outcomes and a final sample of 146 participants when the Time 3 outcome variable (i.e., actual OCBs) was used in the analyses.

Measures

Guilt. We measured guilt with four items from the guilt subscale of the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule—Expanded Form (PANAS-X; Watson & Clark, 1994). Participants were

asked to rate the extent to which the emotional adjectives (e.g., “guilty,” “blameworthy”) described the way they currently felt, using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Very slightly or not at all*) to 5 (*Extremely much*). Internal consistency reliabilities for this scale were .70 and .89 for the Time 1 and Time 2 administrations, respectively.

Counterproductive work behavior. Participants rated their past behavior using 17 items adopted from the Work Deviance Behavior Scale (Bennett & Robinson, 2000). Sample items are “Played a mean prank on someone at work” and “Taken an additional or longer break than is acceptable at your workplace.” Participants reported how frequently they have displayed such behaviors in the past using a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*Never*) to 4 (*Several times a year*) to 7 (*Daily*). The reliability for this scale was .78.

Organizational citizenship behavior. We measured OCBs using the 16-item scale described by Lee and Allen (2002). Sample items are “Assist others with their duties” and “Offer ideas to improve the functioning of the organization.” For *OCB intentions* (measured at Time 2), participants reported the extent that they were willing to engage in such behaviors in the future on a scale ranging from 1 (*Very slightly or not at all*) to 5 (*Very much*). The scores on this scale were internally consistent ($\alpha = .93$). At the last survey, participants reported their levels of *OCBs performed* since the second survey on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*Very slightly or not at all*) to 5 (*Very much*). The reliability of these scores was $\alpha = .92$.

Analyses

As our hypotheses are concerned with the effects of normative feedback about CWB (“CWB feedback” hereafter)—the manipulated (dichotomous) variable in this field experiment—on the emotion and behavior of employees who displayed relatively high

levels of CWBs, we focused our analyses and interpretation of results on participants whose CWB scores were higher than the sample mean (“high CWB group” hereafter). There was no reason to expect that feedback on CWBs would influence the experience of guilt, intentions, and behaviors of those who engaged in relatively few of these behaviors (cf. Schultz et al., 2007). Nevertheless, we conducted the same sets of analyses with those who reported CWB scores lower than the sample mean (“low CWB group” hereafter), and we present these results for comparison purposes.

Results

Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations of the study variables, whereas Tables 2 and 3 present the correlations between the variables for the high CWB and low CWB groups. Among participants with a CWB score higher than the overall sample mean (i.e., the high CWB group), receiving feedback (vs. no feedback) was positively related to guilt ($r = .23, p < .05$), OCB intentions ($r = .33, p < .01$), and OCBs performed ($r = .24, p < .05$). In contrast, none of these correlations was statistically significant among participants with a CWB score lower than the sample mean (i.e., the low CWB group).

To test the hypotheses, we specified a multigroup path model in which we linked normative feedback to guilt, which was in turn linked to OCB intentions and behaviors (see Figure 1). We controlled for Time 1 measures of guilt and actual level of CWB. In line with our theorizing, we focused on the path estimates for the high CWB group in our reports. Initially, we tested a hypothesized model whereby OCB intentions fully mediate the effect of guilt on OCB behaviors. This model had a marginally good fit with the data, $\chi^2(6) = 12.80, p = .05$, standardized root-mean-square residual (SRMR) = .08, and CFI = .88. Adding the direct path from guilt to OCB behaviors significantly improved the model fit,

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for the Study Variables Across Groups Determined by CWB Levels and Feedback Condition

CWB levels	Feedback condition	CWBs (T1)	Guilt (T1)	Guilt (T2)	OCB Intentions	Actual OCBs
High CWB group	No feedback					
	Mean	2.12	1.32	1.10	3.60	2.95
	SD	0.32	0.57	0.22	0.84	0.87
	N	33	33	28	28	25
	Feedback					
	Mean	2.18	1.21	1.42	4.09	3.38
Low CWB group	No feedback					
	Mean	1.29	1.13	1.04	3.97	3.34
	SD	0.29	0.26	0.13	0.53	0.83
	N	47	47	37	37	33
	Feedback					
	Mean	1.25	1.12	1.07	4.14	3.44
	SD	0.24	0.31	0.17	0.62	0.88
	N	48	48	48	48	45

Note. The high CWB group comprises participants with CWB scores higher than the sample mean, and the low CWB group comprises participants with CWB scores lower than the overall sample mean. CWB = counterproductive work behavior; OCB = organizational citizenship behavior.

$\chi^2(6) = 6.84, p = .14, SRMR = .06$, and comparative fit index (CFI) = .95. Therefore, we examined the path coefficients in this model to test our hypotheses.

In support of Hypothesis 1, we found that CWB feedback had a significant positive effect on the experience of guilt among employees in the high CWB group ($\beta = .23, p < .05$). Not surprising, this effect was not significant for the low CWB group ($\beta = .07, ns$). To examine the overall (not mediated) effects of normative feedback on OCB intentions and behaviors (Hypothesis 2), we estimated a simpler model that excluded Time 2 guilt from the model shown in Figure 1. This model had a very good fit to the data, $\chi^2(2) = 1.14, p = .56, SRMR = .03$, and CFI = .99. Path estimates showed that receiving feedback was positively related to OCB intentions ($\beta = .30, p < .01$) for the high CWB group, supporting Hypothesis 2a. This relationship was not significant for the low CWB group ($\beta = .13, ns$). In addition, for the high CWB group, OCB intentions were positively related to OCB behaviors ($\beta = .39, p < .01$), and there was no significant remaining direct effect from feedback to OCB behaviors. Results therefore supported Hypothesis 2b that CWB feedback affects OCB behaviors through OCB intentions.

Hypothesis 3 proposes that experience of guilt after receiving normative feedback is positively related to OCB intentions. As shown in Figure 1, Time 2 guilt was positively associated with OCB intentions among those in the high CWB group ($\beta = .22, p < .05$) but not for those in the low CWB group ($\beta = .05, ns$). Hypothesis 3 was therefore supported. Consistent with Hypotheses 4a and 4b, which state that the experience of guilt mediates the effect of CWB feedback on OCB intentions and behaviors, we found no significant direct effect of CWB feedback on OCB intentions or behaviors after accounting for mediation effect of guilt. In conjunction with the significant effect of CWB feedback on the experience of guilt as reported above, these findings show that the experience of guilt mediated the effect of CWB feedback on OCB intentions and behaviors.¹

Discussion

The data collected for this study supported our general hypothesis that increased levels of guilt, experienced as a result of being

Table 2
Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations Among Variables for Participants in the High CWB Group

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. CWB feedback (Time 2)	0.61	0.49	—				
2. CWB level (Time 1)	2.15	0.37	.05	—			
3. Baseline guilt (Time 1)	1.29	0.49	-.16	.01	—		
4. Guilt (Time 2)	1.31	0.69	.23*	.00	-.05	—	
5. OCB intention (Time 2)	3.90	0.73	.33**	-.07	-.31**	.24*	—
6. OCB behavior (Time 3)	3.22	0.87	.24*	-.22	-.20	.26*	.43**

Note. The high CWB group comprises participants with CWB scores higher than the sample mean. The sample sizes were $N = 76$ (Time 1 variables), $N = 71$ (Time 2 variables), and $N = 68$ (Time 3 variables). CWB feedback (1 = receiving feedback, 0 = receiving no feedback) and gender (0 = male, 1 = female) were coded as dummy variables. CWB = counterproductive work behavior; OCB = organizational citizenship behavior.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 3
Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations Among Variables for Participants in the Low CWB Group

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. CWB feedback (Time 2)	0.56	0.50	—				
2. CWB level (Time 1)	1.34	0.21	-.04	—			
3. Baseline guilt (Time 1)	1.12	0.27	.02	.23*	—		
4. Guilt (Time 2)	1.07	0.17	.06	.18	.26*	—	
5. OCB intention (Time 2)	4.07	0.58	.14	-.24*	.03	.02	—
6. OCB behavior (Time 3)	3.40	0.86	.06	-.29**	.06	.18	.44**

Note. The low CWB group comprises participants with CWB scores lower than the overall sample mean. The sample sizes were $N = 96$ (Time 1 variables), $N = 85$ (Time 2 variables), and $N = 78$ (Time 3 variables). CWB feedback (1 = receiving feedback, 0 = receiving no feedback) and gender (0 = male, 1 = female) were coded as dummy variables. CWB = counterproductive work behavior; OCB = organizational citizenship behavior.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

made aware of one's own previous negative work behaviors, can have a compensatory or reparatory effect on individuals' intentions and actual behaviors. Specifically, we found that among participants who reported relatively high levels of past CWBs, those who received feedback about their level of CWBs (that also indicated that these behaviors have negative consequences) demonstrated increased levels of guilt and also reported higher intentions to engage in OCBs and higher levels of actual OCBs. Furthermore, feelings of guilt induced by normative feedback mediated the relationship between receiving feedback and intending to perform and actually performing higher levels of OCBs. Not surprisingly, providing people who engaged in lower than average CWBs did not affect their feelings of guilt or their subsequent OCB intentions and behaviors. Therefore, it is the combination of relatively high CWBs and normative feedback about these behaviors that produces feelings of guilt and subsequent reparatory tendencies and actions.

Contributions

We believe this research contributes to the organizational behavior literature in at least three areas. First, our findings suggest a dynamic phenomenon in which negative and positive voluntary behaviors influence each other in such a way that allows individuals to reach an equilibrium corresponding to their personal level of comfort in their exchange with the organization. These dynamics occur when people receive feedback about and normative evaluations of their behaviors. Social norms thus influence em-

¹ Our data included a measure of trait agreeableness from the four-item Mini-International Personality Item Pool (Mini-IPIP) subscale (Donnellan, Oswald, Baird, & Lucas, 2006; $\alpha = .74$). In an additional analysis, we ran a regression with OCB behaviors as the dependent measure; feedback, guilt at Time 2, and agreeableness (along with all two-way and three-way interactions) as predictors; and guilt at Time 1 as a covariate. The only significant effect was a two-way interaction between feedback and agreeableness ($\beta = .42, SE = .19, t(59) = 2.28, p < .03$, indicating that the effect of feedback on OCB behaviors was stronger for more agreeable participants. Agreeableness is thus an individual difference variable predicting whether (or to what extent) people would engage in reparative action upon being informed of their negative work behaviors.

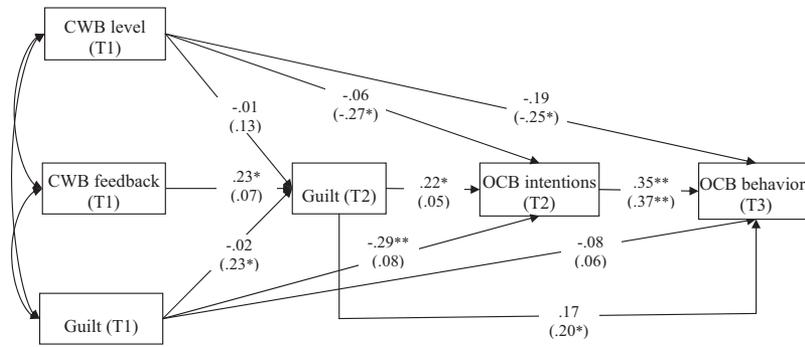


Figure 1. Multigroup structural equation modeling comparisons between high and low counterproductive work behavior (CWB) groups. Standardized coefficient estimates for the high CWB group appear on top, with estimates for the low CWB group in parentheses below. Overall model fit indices: $\chi^2 = 6.84$, $df = 4$, $p = .14$, standardized root-mean-square residual = .06, comparative fit index = .95.

employees' equilibrium point when they are made salient by normative feedback. We see this phenomenon as being similar to the self-regulation of moral behavior (e.g., Sachdeva, Iliev, & Medin, 2009), by which behaving immorally has a negative influence on individuals' perceptions of self-worth, and then individuals engage in moral behavior in an attempt to regain some of that lost self-worth.

Second, we believe the ideas advanced in this article and the findings of our empirical study contribute to the literature concerning motives for OCBs. That is, we proposed and found that compensating for previous misdeeds, in an attempt to reduce guilt, influences employees to engage in OCBs. Our findings suggest, broadly, that moral motives driven by guilt should be included in a comprehensive functionalist framework for understanding why employees engage in OCBs along with their being concerned about organizational interest, expressing prosocial values, and engaging in impression management (Rioux & Penner, 2001; Finkelstein & Penner, 2004). This study also adds to previous conceptual and empirical work that has linked *positive* emotions to OCBs (e.g., Ilies, Scott, & Judge, 2006; Spector & Fox, 2002) by demonstrating the desirable effect of a negative emotion—guilt—in promoting citizenship behavior.

Finally, this study makes a methodological contribution to the research on voluntary work behaviors. With a field experimental design, we examined the actual work behavior among full-time employees, and the feedback provided was based on participants' actual levels of past CWBs. This therefore should alleviate concerns about the generalizability of the findings, an issue shared by laboratory studies. Moreover, we studied an integrated behavior–emotion–intentions–behavior sequence, uncovering a fuller picture of the interplay between positive and negative work behavior.

Limitations

As with any research, our study has certain limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, we were dependent on self-reports to assess participants' levels of both CWBs and OCBs. However, we believe that the use of self-reports in our study is adequate for the following reasons. With respect to CWBs, an individual's CWBs might not always be known to others, as people conducting CWBs

would seek to avoid having others learn about such behavior. Because the individual might be the best informed source of behavior ratings (Berry, Carpenter, & Barratt, 2012), our use of self-reports was appropriate in this instance. Also, we manipulated CWB feedback, and we assessed the studied variables at separate points in time, thus alleviating the common methods bias concern, a main concern about self-reported data.

With respect to our dependent variables (both measures of OCBs were self-reported), employees' self-report measures of OCBs have been found to correlate with supervisors' ratings of employees' OCBs (Van Dyne, Graham, & Dienesch, 1994). Nevertheless, future research needs to test our theory with more objective, behavioral measures of OCB as the dependent measure. In addition, although we examined whether feedback on employees' CWBs would influence subsequent OCBs because we were interested in testing our hypotheses about the approach-oriented consequences of guilt, future research can examine whether such feedback also reduces subsequent CWBs, as would be predicted by theory and research on social norms.

Although we provided CWB feedback and measured OCBs after a gap of 3 days to reduce potential experimental demand effects, there is some possibility that participants might have been trying to engage in impression management. For example, participants provided with negative CWB feedback might subsequently report engaging in more OCBs simply because they wish to convey a more positive impression to the experimenter. To address this concern, future research could measure OCBs through reports of coworkers or supervisors rather than through the participants themselves, as noted above.

The present research did not distinguish the targets of CWBs and OCBs. Certain types of CWBs, such as taking office supplies home, are directed against the organization, whereas other types, such as spreading rumors about a colleague, are directed against coworkers. Similarly, certain OCBs, such as volunteering for a holiday party at work, are targeted toward the organization, whereas others, such as helping a colleague, are directed toward coworkers. Future research can examine whether the effect of CWB feedback on OCBs is target-specific, that is, feedback on organizational CWBs leads to greater organization-related OCBs but not necessarily coworker-related OCBs, and vice versa, or

whether feedback on one type of CWB generalizes to both types of OCBs. It would also be interesting to examine whether OCBs that have a different target than the initial CWBs would be as helpful in reducing guilt compared with OCBs directed toward the same target. Furthermore, future research assessing multiple OCB dimensions could investigate which types of such behavior are more effective in reducing guilt.

Another limitation of our study concerns the possibility of self-selecting into the study on behalf of our participants. While participants were randomly assigned to the two experimental conditions, we cannot claim that our study sample was randomly drawn (as is the case with most field studies). The self-selection bias might have led our sample to be more representative of employees who perform relatively lower CWBs, because employees with high CWBs might be less willing to participate in studies aimed at investigating such behavior. However, such bias would introduce range restriction in our sample, making our results conservative.

Implications for Theory, Research, and Practice

The findings of this research point to the importance of guilt as a motivational emotion; unlike other negative emotions (e.g., anger), which spur negative behaviors at work (Spector & Fox, 2002), guilt can have positive consequences by motivating behavior aimed at compensating for previous misdeeds. More generally, given the theory reviewed and advanced in this article and our empirical findings, we recommend that future theoretical and empirical work consider the role of distinct emotions in models of voluntary work behavior and distinguish the reparatory potential of guilt from other negative emotions.

If employees regulate the balance of positive and negative work behaviors, and they do so, in part, based on guilt, as suggested by our findings, what determines individuals' characteristic "set-point" for such a balance or ratio of positive to negative voluntary behavior? Around this set-point positive and negative behaviors oscillate and influence one another in order to maintain a morally equitable relationship between the employee and the organization. Our results suggest that descriptive (i.e., standing relative to others) and prescriptive (i.e., social approval) information about such behavior is a likely influence. Dispositional personality traits may also influence individuals' set-point, as our additional analysis concerning agreeableness suggests (see footnote 1). Also, it is possible that individuals' broad view of themselves (e.g., core self-evaluations; Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, 2003) would be relevant here. In more specific terms, following the social-psychological theory on the self-regulation of moral behavior (Sachdeva et al., 2009), we suggest that one's self-worth at work, defined as one's view of one's worth in the context of one's relationship with one's organization and colleagues, may be related to one's preferred ratio of positive to negative voluntary work behavior. Negative work behaviors would decrease self-worth at work, especially when employees attribute these behaviors to internal and controllable causes, and such decreased self-worth at work should lead to positive voluntary behaviors (see Spector and Fox, 2010, for a similar argument).

Moreover, the regulation of employee voluntary behavior can be seen as a function of comparing one's self-worth at work to what one perceives one is worth to the organization. If employees

actively make such comparisons, then mistreatment at work (e.g., injustice) unbalances this comparison toward a higher self-worth at work to organizational-worth ratio and is likely to lead to negative voluntary work behaviors, as shown by previous research (e.g., Judge et al., 2006). Conversely, positive treatment in the organization (e.g., high-quality leader-member exchange [LMX]) is likely to unbalance the comparison toward a lower self-worth at work to organizational-worth ratio, and this is likely to lead to positive voluntary work behaviors such as OCBs, as shown by numerous studies (see Ilies, Nahrgang & Morgeson, 2007, for a meta-analysis). We do not have data to test these speculations, but we hope that our theorizing and our suggestive findings will lead to interesting and important future research that examines such phenomena.

In the present research, we did not distinguish different motivations that participants might have for engaging in CWBs. Some employees might have engaged in CWBs to actively pursue undeserved personal interests, whereas others might have engaged in CWBs because they felt that their coworkers, boss, or the organization treated them unfairly. It is possible that the effect of CWB feedback might be less potent on employees who engaged in CWBs reactively rather than proactively. Future research can test this possibility.

Finally, we believe our findings can be of interest to practitioners. First, our research design and findings provide initial evidence for the feasibility of potential interventions designed to promote citizenship behaviors, thus potentially alleviating some of the problems associated with high levels of negative discretionary behaviors in the workplace (see Dimotakis et al., 2008). That is, providing normative feedback to employees about their levels of negative discretionary behaviors and the potential or actual consequences of these behaviors (i.e., prescriptive feedback) seems to be effective in encouraging them to make up for their previous behavior by performing increased levels of positive discretionary behaviors (in our case, OCBs). Importantly, we demonstrated that such interventions are not only feasible but relatively easy to administer by utilizing a confidential survey design. Furthermore, practitioners can of course provide more elaborated prescriptive information about the consequences of CWBs (e.g., quantifying the costs for the organization), which should enhance the positive effects of such interventions.

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